

# Luke 3:21 - 4:30

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[ 0 : 00 ] And I'm going to turn to Luke chapter 3. Luke chapter 3. I'm going to look at that passage that we read together. It's on page 1030. Stick it in your Bibles. And so we're going to jump around quite a bit this morning.

Now, when you come to a passage like this, there are two approaches really that you could take. And one we could call it the about me approach. And if you do that, you can get two sermons out of it.

The first sermon would focus really on verses 21 and 22. And it would be about the importance of being baptized. And the first point would be from verse 21. Well, we should be baptized because Jesus is baptized.

Point two would come from verse 22. There's a threefold blessing that comes to those who are baptized. There's a special touch of the Holy Spirit. There's a knowledge of the love of God. And there's the pleasure of God.

And then you could skip the genealogy, couldn't you? You could skip that from verse 23, really, to 37. And go straight to chapter 4, verses 14. Genealogies are a bit like appendix, aren't they?

[ 1 : 37 ] Very often people think, well, they're best totally ignored or even removed completely. And that's what people think about genealogies. So we come to our second sermon in chapter 4.

And it would be a three-pointer. It would be a strategy for avoiding temptation. The point in verse 1 would be, be filled with the Holy Spirit. And then the second then would be, from verse 2, be alert in times of weakness.

Jesus was hungry. And then point 3 would be, immersed in the Bible. Jesus quotes the Bible. And the conclusion to that three-point sermon, be filled with the Spirit, be alert in times of weakness, and quote lots of the Bible, would be, if you follow that procedure, the devil will leave you, verse 13.

Now, any of that, some of that, very little of that, is true. But there are sermons out there like that.

But let me tell you, I am absolutely convinced that that has got nothing to do with Luke 3 and 4.

Except in a very broad sense that we might come back to. And the passage, although I talked about the Trinity in verse 22, the passage is not actually a theological discourse on the Trinity.

[ 2 : 49 ] There's lots of reformed preachers that take it like that. What is Luke about? Luke is about God. The Gospel of Luke is about God and his purpose for the whole world.

Through John the Baptist and Jesus, Luke's project is to give us certainty about these things, isn't it? That is why Luke has written the book. Just flip back to Luke chapter 1.

He has written to give Theophilus, this guy, an orderly account, so that, verse 4, you may know the certainty of things that you've been taught. It's not about how great baptism is.

It's not a doctrinal treatise on the Trinity. It's not about a handy way to resist temptation. To take it that way throws us back on technique or ritual rather than Jesus.

So the second approach I want to take this morning, is the first approach it's about me, and the second approach is it's all about Jesus. It's about Jesus. The reason why I'm taking a bigger chunk this morning is there's one big theme.

[ 3 : 54 ] There's one big theme that unites the whole chapter, and it flows from the earlier chapters of Luke. Now John has just finished his work of preparation, but in verse 20, Herod has locked him up.

Herod has put him in prison. In verse 21, Jesus makes his first public appearance. And our section here, from 321 to 413, is concerned with Jesus' preparation, if I can put it like that.

Preparation for the start of his public ministry in the synagogue. So from 14, verse 4, you see Jesus comes out in public. He starts to teach.

Now, crassly, if you want to put it like this, this section is a little bit like when you've left home, and you've gone off to university, or you're faffing around doing little jobs, before you get your professional qualifications, and you start your job proper.

Your career. That is a crass description of what is going on. But that is what is going on. It is about the qualifications of Jesus to do the job.

[ 5 : 03 ] To do the job he's called to do. So what is the big theme of the passage? You don't need to be a rocket scientist, do you? Look down at the theme. It is there. It is Jesus, the Son of God.

So verse 22, you are my Son. Verse 23 to 37 seems to have one big theme, doesn't it? Which I think you can guess. And the devil, verse 3 and verse 9.

It's there, isn't it? That's the theme. The climax of the baptism. You are my Son. The genealogy. It is concerned with what?

Fatherhood? No, it's not concerned with fatherhood. It is all concerned with sonship. And it comes to conclusion with the great declaration, the Son of Adam, the Son of God. Jesus is the Son of Adam, the Son of God.

And then as we move into chapter 4, where does the devil attack? His challenge is once again on the sonhood of Jesus. So in verse 3 and in verse 9. And it's been there right since, this theme has been there right since the beginning of Luke's Gospel.

[ 6 : 07 ] So it just came back to chapter 1, verse 35. The angel answered to Mary and said, The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God. Now we should expect, shouldn't we, as we read Luke's Gospel, the connectedness. Because we know, don't we, as we've just seen from Luke 1, that Luke isn't writing randomly.

He's not writing a memoir of just different memories. He is writing an orderly account. So if our passage is about the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God, what does it say about it?

Now we're going to jump around a little bit, a lot more than we usually do. So tuck that piece of paper into Luke 3 as a bookmark. That is base camp, alright? My first point is this, Jesus is the unique Son of God.

Jesus is the unique Son of God. How are we to understand the baptism of Jesus? Well, the best way to understand the baptism of Jesus is to let the Bible, and particularly let Luke himself, interpret it for us.

[ 7 : 16 ] We allow the Bible, don't we? The Bible is a self-interpreting book. It helps us. If it is God who is speaking, there is no higher authority for interpreting it.

We must allow God to interpret his own words. Now how does Luke record the words of Jesus? And the apostles, so that we can understand this baptism?

Accompanied, isn't it, by the visible descent of the Holy Spirit, and the audible voice of God the Father. So look at chapter 4 and verse 18. Jesus speaks himself.

Jesus says, as he begins his public ministry, chapter 4 and verse 18, the Spirit of the Lord is on me. It's a reference back, isn't it?

To the baptism. Because he has anointed me. And he goes on to describe his task. The baptism is an anointing for Jesus' work. Now let's go to Acts chapter 10.

[ 8 : 17 ] Right? Acts chapter 10, which is on page 1104. Page 1104. Let's hear the sound of leaves rustling. Alright? Acts chapter 10, and verse 37 and 38.

Peter is speaking. And he's preaching after the first Gentiles have believed the gospel. And this is what he says. He says, You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee, after the baptism that John preached.

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. So Luke, in both volumes, he wrote Acts, records Jesus and Peter saying about the reception of the Spirit at his baptism, it is about an anointing.

So the question is, what kind of anointing is it? And the answer lies in Luke chapter 3, verse 22. You are my son, whom I love.

With you I am well pleased. Now we've become youth to this in Luke's gospel as we've read it. But what Luke does is really interesting.

[ 9 : 32 ] He doesn't quote in full and exactly passages from the Old Testament. But he echoes. He echoes in order to set up lots of connections.

So as we read Luke's gospel, we think, that reminds me, that echoes, that echoes. Always follow those trains of thought if you can. Alright? There are two main connections, two main echoes here. So the first is in Psalm 2. Okay? Let's go there. Psalm 2. Which is on page 543. Page 543.

What happens in Psalm 2? I hope you know it. The earthly rulers, they get together and they plan and they conspire against God, against the Lord. And against who else?

The Son. The Anointed One. And in verse 6 of Psalm 2, God has installed this king, his son, on Zion, my holy hill.

[10:36] And God addresses, he speaks to this king, in verse 7. And he says to them, he says to him, he said to me, you are my son. Today I have become your father.

And again in verse 12, this king, this anointed king, is described as God's son. And it makes total sense against the background of the Old Testament. Where God's king is anointed as a prophet to speak the words of God.

And he receives the Holy Spirit to do his job. So let's go further back. Let's go back to 1 Samuel, chapter 16. 1 Samuel, chapter 16.

When I get there, I'll tell you the page number. It's page 287. Page 287. 1 Samuel, chapter 16, and verse 13.

Samuel is anointing king David. So Samuel took the horn of oil, his horn containing oil, and anointed him, poured it upon him, in the presence of his brothers.

[11:45] And from that day on, the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. So back to Luke chapter 3.

Can you see the same pattern? John baptizes Jesus, who receives the Spirit, and is called God's son.

So the baptism of Jesus is a coronation ceremony. The anointing ceremony. The baptism of Jesus is where he is publicly anointed as God's ruler and king.

Now let's deal with the other echo. Okay? Maybe it's not such a clear echo to you, but it's there. It's in Isaiah chapter 42, and verse 1. Okay? Isaiah chapter 42, and verse 1.

Which is on page 727. Maybe you're thinking, I don't know my way around the Bible very well. Now is a great time to start, isn't it? Alright? They can teach you the song in Club 16.

[12:49] Isaiah 42, and verse 1. It's on page 727. And the prophet Isaiah begins to speak about his servant. And these chapters unfold what it's going to mean for the servant of the Lord.

And he reveals that he will be the one who will suffer and die in the place of God's people. And the New Testament is very, very clear that the suffering servant is Jesus of Nazareth.

And so the prophet Isaiah, speaking on behalf of God, said, Here is my servant whom I behold, my chosen one in whom I delight. I will put my spirit on him.

And he will bring justice to the nations. Can you hear the echoes? You are my son whom I love. With you I'm well pleased.

God's king, Jesus, is also his servant who will ultimately suffer for the salvation of his people. And God has put his spirit upon him. Luke 3 is all about Jesus as God's suffering servant king.

[13:59] Now, if you were here last week, you may remember John's task for Jesus. So let's just go back to that in Luke 3. And in verse 17 to 18, there's that great passage of what Jesus will do.

His winnowing fork, that fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn. But he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

He's going to sort out who are his and who are not. And with many other words, John exhorted the people and preached the good news to them. Although verse 17 doesn't sound like good news to us.

But Jesus is saying, Luke is saying, how can he be the one who separates the wheat from the chaff? How can he be the one who delivers God's people? And baptizes them with the Holy Spirit.

And yet, on the other hand, judges those who refuse to come to him. And he consigns them to everlasting fire. Who is Jesus? How can anybody on earth have claimed to have that kind of right?

[15:11] Well, you've got to understand his identity, haven't you? Verses 17 and 18 set up the end of chapter 3 and the start of chapter 4. I searched for an illustration for this, but I really struggle with it.

The only illustration I can give you, I was at Cardiff Amherst Park once before the Millennium Stadium watching the Army seconds play the Navy or something ridiculous like that.

I don't know why I was, I can't remember why I was there. But I was watching this game, it's quite a good game, it was one of those games where you really couldn't care less who won, you tried to work out how many friends you've got in the Army or the Navy. But there was, at one point, a streaker who ran on the pitch.

There were only about 300 people there, but the military police were there. I was thinking, what on earth are the military police doing at Cardiff Amherst Park in a rugby game?

And the military police ran on the pitch, tackled him like they should, quite roughly, and man-armed him off the pitch. Anyway, what were the military police doing at Cardiff Amherst Park?

[16:11] Surely the military police, their domain is only on a military base, isn't it? Well, that's what I thought. But the person saying next to me told me that, bizarrely, they could police rugby matches played by the Army and Navy.

You see, it's a rubbish illustration, really, but what it's saying to you is it's saying the domain of their authority was far greater than I imagined. I thought they could only have authority on the Army base, but it turns out they can have authority where, I can't remember exactly where, but they could certainly have it on that rugby pitch.

And that is Jesus. His authority is far, far greater than you and I think. The domain of His authority is far greater than you and I think.

Their identity of those military policemen, it covered them to do the job in a far, far greater way than I thought. And this identity of Jesus as the unique Son of God equips him for this task of baptising the faithful with the Holy Spirit and baptising the unfaithful with fire.

He has authority as God's Son to do it. He is the final ruler of heaven and earth and He has the ability as the suffering servant to deliver His people from the unquenchable fires of judgment to the fire that will never end.

[17:39] And in being baptised He demonstrates His commitment to God's purpose. So it's saying to you trust Jesus. Trust Jesus because He is thoroughly equipped for spirit and fire baptism.

You've got no reason to doubt Him this morning. If He is God's unique Son He can do all that He's asked to do. He can rule the nations. He can sift the wheat from the chaff.

But equally do not pass Him off lightly. Don't pass Him off as a naive teacher of the pre-modern age. Luke tells us Jesus is the unique Son of God who has come to rule His rightful domain.

But Luke wants us to know more about the nature of the Son of God. So secondly let's look at the second part of our passage and see that Jesus is the obedient Son of God. Verse 23 to chapter 4 verse 13.

Jesus is the obedient Son of God. Now we've seen echoes of this already before in Luke. It's exciting. The genealogy it's not an appendix is it?

[18:50] That you either ignore or you remove. The genealogy is absolutely crucial to God's purposes. Genealogies in the Bible do not function as precise family trees.

So as you look at the genealogies in Matthew and Luke and other places they are chopped and arranged to make particular points. So let's just imagine for a moment that I was going to try and establish the purity of the Welsh line in my blood.

I'm from Wales but let's try and imagine we were going to establish the purity of the Welsh line in my blood. Well if we were going to write a genealogy of that and draw up a big family tree there are certain things that would have to go wouldn't there?

My father is English and so Jewish and so that whole family line would have to go. Let's say my great grandfather was married three times.

Well you would choose wouldn't you the wife that best preserves the Welsh blood and excludes the other two. My mother tells me that there is a distant relative on her side who was born in Monmouth which isn't really Wales at all and so we'd get rid of him.

[20:07] We'd exclude him. The point is not precision but to establish the point you're after. Now Luke is precise in this genealogy he gives us but that isn't what we should be reading him for.

When you come to genealogies you've got to think what is the point that's being taught here. So here it's obvious isn't it? It's got a climax.

Verse 38. Can you see it? The son of Seth. The son of Adam. The son of God. Who is Jesus?

Draw the family tree. Follow the line. He is the son of Adam. The son of God. Now how can that be? Well the account of his temptation explains what Luke is up to.

And to understand it we've got to plunge right back into the Old Testament. So this is the most exciting part of the sermon. Let's go back into the Old Testament. Let's go to Genesis chapter 2. The thumb in Luke 3. Genesis chapter 2.

[ 21 : 10 ] Now you know this. Genesis 2 verses 16 and 17. They're in the garden aren't they? And what happens?

God puts Adam on probation. Call it a covenant of works. God puts Adam on probation. And in chapter 2 verse 16 he says Adam you are free to eat from any tree in the garden.

But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for when you eat of it you will surely die. Looks like the three comes along doesn't it? And we know what happens.

The devil comes in the form of a serpent and he tempts Adam and Eve and they give in. And Adam and Eve choose to disobey God. And God curses them and he exiles them from the garden and his presence.

And so Luke Luke wants to present Jesus as another Adam. Another son of God who will be tempted by the devil.

[ 22 : 15 ] And he won't be tempted in the garden of Eden where everything was going for him. Where everything spoke to him about the goodness of God. Where everything pointed him to keep being obedient because of the perfect environment that God has provided you.

No, he is tempted in the wilderness. And yet he doesn't disobey. He doesn't give in.

He is the son of God isn't he? Like Adam who was tempted by the devil but this time he was obedient. Can you see how major the issue is in chapter 4?

The whole of human history hangs on this encounter. But as we come to chapter 4 we discover another dimension. To Luke the count. There's echoes out there.

Echoes, echoes, echoes. So the experience of Jesus is deliberately described in terms that would remind them of Adam but even more so would remind them of Israel's experience.

[ 23 : 19 ] So Jesus finds himself in the desert near the Jordan. Ring any bells? And the number 40 is used. Ring any bells? It's used to evoke in verse 2 memories of Israel's 40 years in the wilderness.

And also when Jesus speaks to the devil of course he's speaking the Bible but where in the Bible? Deuteronomy 6-8. So look with me at verses 3 and 4 of chapter 4.

What is going on? If I spoke to you if I said to you this morning in a Scottish accent there's been a murder there's been a murder what would that remind you of?

Anybody tell me? Taggart isn't it? Alex Ferguson No, Taggart isn't it? If I spoke to you in Elizabeth Beethan English and I started mentioning daggers and ghosts and blood and Scotland I would be alluding to Macbeth.

We do that don't we? People do that in comedy shows or in films. They allude to something by the way that they speak. If I was putting on an American accent and I had a big brown overcoat and I said just one more thing.

[ 24 : 44 ] Who would I be alluding to? Columbo. If I could think of any more international applications I would be speaking of and that is what is happening here. The illusions of chapter 4 drive us back to Deuteronomy 6-8.

How do we understand the temptation of the Son of God to turn the stone into bread? Is Satan hitting a hungry man where it hurts? Well let's go to the Old Testament and let's go to Deuteronomy chapter 8.

I think this is the last one. Deuteronomy chapter 8. It's on page 187. And Moses says to the people, I read from verse 2, Moses says to the people, page 187, Deuteronomy chapter 8, remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these 40 years to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart.

whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you causing you to hunger and feeding you with manna which neither you or your fathers have known to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during those 40 years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son so the Lord your God disciplines you. What's happening in chapter 4 of Luke 4?

[ 26 : 13 ] In the Old Testament God made his people hungry to test them and to teach them that they should depend on God's word as he calls them once again as his son. So the devil attacks

Jesus the son of God.

It is an attack on his obedience and his trust in God. So when Satan asks Jesus to worship him in verse 7 and he tests God in verse 9 Jesus responds with an answer from Deuteronomy 6 to 9. He responds with an answer that a faithful Israelite would have given in those days. We know don't we? We know the tragic story of Israel in the Old Testament. We know tragically that Israel desired bread more than they desired God's word.

They worship other gods than the true God and they constantly test him. And we know that we do that too. Israel failed God's test.

Israel just like Adam failed God's test. And they experienced God's curse and exile. But all of us have experienced that too.

[ 27 : 28 ] And so John the Baptist at the beginning of Luke's gospel in chapter 3 which we looked at last week quotes the prophet Isaiah to say that Jesus now comes to deliver his people from exile.

Jesus Luke wants you and I to know is the second Adam or the last Adam. Jesus is the true Israel. Jesus is the true son of God.

And when he is tested he triumphs through obedience. Adam was tested and failed. Israel was tested and failed. Jesus was tested and succeeds.

In verse 30 of chapter 4 in Luke's gospel when the devil had finished all this tempting he left him until an opportune time.

He succeeds. And that brings you and I enormous comfort this morning. If we trust in Jesus. If we're believers. Because you and I are very much aware of our sin and our failure aren't we?

[ 28 : 37 ] Before God. And we face temptation to sin and we give in. And maybe this morning you are weary of giving in to temptation.

And you're wondering is it worth to continue struggling on? Now let me ask you what is your security when you fall prey to temptation? Do you do whether you want to admit it or not?

What is your security then? What do you do? It's a great test of our Christianity and our Christian war. What do you do when you fall into sin? Do we resolve not to do it again?

You think I was tired. Next time when the temptation comes I'm going to be more alert. And it won't happen. Well if that's been your strategy so far you know as well as I do the sense of utter despair that when you are most alert you still give in to certain temptations.

And the comfort which Luke gives to you and I this morning is not to develop some kind of technique from chapter four but it is the certainty that Jesus the unique son of God is also the totally obedient son of God.

[ 29 : 50 ] And we trust him in our fight against sin. And far from rushing for the latest technique we hide in the obedience of Jesus.

And the answer to your struggle with temptation and my struggle as we struggle with it with our whole lives is to realise just how great Jesus is.

That is the answer. And maybe we've got a very small view of Jesus. And that is why we so often go back to techniques or our own resolve.

Hand-me-down ways of handling temptation. And the answer is to realise just how great Jesus is. That he is the unique son of God. He is the unique and obedient son of God.

And the answer to a great temptation is a great Jesus. Jesus. A great Jesus who has been completely obedient. But if that is true for those of us this morning who call ourselves Christians, it's got to be true for those who don't call yourself a Christian.

[ 31 : 03 ] Maybe you're listening and you think, well what has this got to do with me? And you're too aware that you, well you are very aware, aren't you? You're aware that you do things that you don't want to do. And you're aware in your life as we all are that you can't do things that you want to do.

And maybe there's a sense isn't there, you've reached that point in your life where there's a sense of slavery at work in you. Now how do you deal with that? Well you probably know don't you by now that you cannot deal with that yourself.

You can go to counselling and go to the shrimp but that will not deal with it. Here is God's solution in Luke's Gospel and it is more amazing than you can ever imagine.

God's unique son, his anointed ruler and suffering servant comes and he lives a life of perfect obedience and he offers that life to God on your behalf at the end of the Gospel.

And trust him and you can be certain God will forgive you. And you will not undergo the baptism of fire which is promised in verse 17 of chapter 3 but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit into the

very life of God which he promises to those who trust him.

[ 32 : 21 ] So the small answer at the end of this Bible chasing that we've done this morning, the small message is this, trust Jesus.

Trust Jesus. Jesus. To every single one of us. However you would describe your relationship with God, trust Jesus. Because it is only his obedience which is adequate to cover your disobedience. obedience. It is only his unique son. As the unique obedient son of God.

That alone is adequate to cover you. As you find yourself cursed and exiled from God outside of him. Because we too like Adam and like Israel have failed the test.

Trust Jesus and in him know the certainty of forgiveness. And in Robin Weeks gives this illustration Gresham Meech is the great theologian in the 1920s started Westminster Salmonie.

[ 33 : 34 ] He was on his deathbed and he telegraphed his friend and colleague John Murray and his words were the active obedience of Christ no hope without it.

There is no hope without the active obedience of Christ. Let's go.