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Weekly Devotional

## **The Message Jesus Never Preached**

by Mark A. Segraves

How long have you been attending church services? I'm forty-years-old and I have calculated that in my lifetime, I have been to more than 8,000 services and heard more than 8,000 messages. That's a lot of church and a lot of messages. The truth is... I can't remember more than a handful of the messages I've heard. But it's like the man who couldn't remember every wonderful meal his wife had prepared for him in forty years of marriage. His memory might be lapsing, but every meal was important! I'm so thankful for every message I've been blessed to hear because I've needed every one!

The Bible itself is full of messages preached by everyone from a seemingly crazy ark-builder to an Egyptian ruler. Adam preached a message of instruction to his sons, Cain and Abel. He probably told them to have the right attitude, do things the right way and offer God what He requires, not what we think is valuable. Cain didn't get the message. Noah preached a message of warning to a generation of reprobates -- men whose hearts were darkened by the curse of sin. Joseph preached a message of integrity to everyone around him by his actions. Moses preached a message of law -- obey and receive a reward, disobey and receive a curse. David preached a message of praise, in good times and bad times. Jeremiah preached a message of burden for the people of God who were living below their privilege. Joel preached a message of restoration for a people who had suffered judgment because of their disobedience. John the Baptist preached a message of repentance to a people who had become more interested in the laws of God than in the person of God, people who were more interested in ceremony than relationship. So what did Jesus preach? And, perhaps more importantly, what did He NOT preach?

We can see the content of Jesus' message at the moment of His first public ministry appearance. After being led by the Spirit into a time of fasting and temptation from the enemy in the wilderness, He returns to His people and immediately visits a synagogue. This is what happened:

*And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down (Luke 4:17-20a, KJV).*

What an incredible message! Good news to the poor, healing to the broken, deliverance to the imprisoned, vision to the blind... absolute freedom to those bruised by the chains of bondage and a time of supernatural restoration. I love

how Luke records what happens next: He closed the book! Why is that so important? You only realize the magnitude of that action when you actually read the passage which Jesus read directly from Isaiah 61. We'll pick it up near the end of the reading: "*To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God*" (Isaiah 61:2). Wait a minute! Jesus didn't say anything about vengeance! He preached the acceptable year of the Lord and SHUT THE BOOK!

In other words, Jesus preached grace... but He did not preach judgment! Oh, there were times when Jesus would warn religious hypocrites or unbelievers of a future time when God's judgment would come, but for that day... for that time... the message was grace!

By the way, that's still the message of Jesus to you! The day of judgment has not yet come and the day of grace is here. If you will turn your faith toward Jesus and fully accept the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ as full payment for your sin, God will continue to pour out His grace in your life.

**Prayer:** Amazing God, thank you for amazing grace! You have every right to unleash holy vengeance upon unholy people, but instead You poured out Your wrath on Yourself in the person of Jesus Christ. I don't deserve it, but I accept it. I thank You for it! In Jesus' name, Amen!

**Point to Ponder:** Judgment is coming soon, but grace is here.



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