

**“When Good News is Bad News” – Luke 4:14-30**  
Messiah Bible Church – July 5, 2026 - Adam Casalino

**Introduction:**

The older I get, the more I prefer older movies. The best are in black and white, am I right? But ever since I was a boy I loved movies starring *The Marx Brothers*. Now, if you are under the age of 40 you probably know nothing about the Marx Brothers. They were four Jewish brothers who made classic, slap-stick comedies. There was Zeppo, Chico, Harpo... but my favorite had to be Groucho.

He was the one with the iconic eyebrows and glasses. He was a fast talker and smooth operator, usually conning his way into high society. Groucho was famous for talking in circles around some stuffed shirt. Usually a man with a monocle. The man would get so mad at what Groucho said that his top hat would fly off or the buttons would burst off his shirt. *Groucho made making someone angry an artform.*

**Have you ever made someone that angry?** So angry, that their shirt buttons flew off? Maybe. You probably made your parents that angry, once or twice. Most of the time, we get people angry because we did something we shouldn't have. But sometimes, not often, people get angry at someone for doing the right thing.

**That's pretty rare, but one person who did this all the time was Jesus.** Here was a man, the only man, who never did anything wrong. Yet people kept getting mad at him. Usually they were the religious leaders. But there was one time when Jesus made a group so mad, they tried to do the unthinkable. Those people were from his very hometown, Nazareth.

**But why did they get so angry?** What actually happened? Well, we're going to look at that today. My message is "*When Good News is Bad News.*" We're going to learn something very important about the gospel, about Jesus our Lord, and your relationship with him. Please turn to Luke 4:14.

**Part 1: Luke 4:14-21 - “The Good News is Announced”**

**A little bit of history:** Jesus, the Son of God, became a human being. He was born in Bethlehem and grew up in a town called Nazareth, being raised by Mary and Joseph. At one point during his earthly ministry he returned to Nazareth, but they didn't expect him. That encounter is recorded in Matthew 13:54–58 and Mark 6:1-6. The story we're going to read (Luke 4:14-30.), takes place *earlier*, according to Luke, at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Let's look at verse 14:

**Luke 4:14–16 (ESV)** — 14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. 15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. 16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

**So, we're at the very start.** Jesus was recently baptized by John, overcame Satan in the wilderness. Now, he's in Galilee, teaching. One of the towns he visits, of course, is Nazareth. Their services weren't that much different than ours today: they sang songs, read from Scripture, and someone taught.<sup>1</sup> Jesus was asked to read and, we'll soon find out, teach.<sup>2</sup>

**Luke 4:17–21 (ESV)** — 17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” 20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

**Wow. Let's put ourselves in this moment:** Jesus is in Nazareth, his hometown, at the synagogue on the Sabbath (think: church on a Sunday). They give him the floor and he reads a famous passage from Isaiah. He sits down (they sat when they taught<sup>3</sup>) and everybody's looking at him. Keep in mind, news about him is already spreading. They are the edge of their seats wondering what's about to happen. They're all looking at Jesus and he says, “This prophecy has just been fulfilled.” Woah!

This is our first point: **The Good News is Announced.** Jesus proclaimed to them the good news. He said that this prophecy from Isaiah is now happening! What is Jesus talking about? He read Isaiah 61:1 and part of verse 2. Notice the opening line, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has *anointed me...*” Isaiah is speaking the words of the “Anointed One,” otherwise known as the Messiah. Isaiah prophesied the inaugural words of the promised savior of Israel! Jewish people have studied this passage for centuries; they were eagerly awaiting for it

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<sup>1</sup> Schreiner, Thomas R, *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible: Luke*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House. 1995), 3:811: “Usually such a service included hymns, prayers, a reading from the Torah, a reading from the Prophets, and a sermon.”

<sup>2</sup> Vincent, Marvin Richardson, *Word Studies in the New Testament, Vol. 1*, (New York: New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), Logos: “After the liturgical services which introduced the worship of the synagogue, the ‘minister’ took a roll of the law from the ark, removed its case and wrappings, and then called upon some one to read. On the Sabbaths, at least seven persons were called on successively to read portions of the law, none of them consisting of less than three verses. After the law followed a section from the prophets, which was succeeded immediately by a discourse. It was this section which Jesus read and expounded.”

<sup>3</sup> Ibid: “Sat down. As about to teach; that being the habitual position of a Jewish teacher.”

to be fulfilled. And Jesus just told them, “Today’s the day.” Which of course means Jesus just told them, “**I am** the person Isaiah was prophecy about!”

**Let’s spend some time looking at Isaiah’s prophecy.** In the beginning, long ago, God had made a perfect earth; humanity spoiled it with sin. Even Israel sinned and suffered because of it. But God promised that someone would come who would restore what was lost by sin. What had been lost? Because of sin, humans were living in darkness. They suffered poverty, depression, oppression. They were in prisons of lust, hate, envy, greed. They were in bondage to Satan and doomed to die. But according to Isaiah 61, the anointed one was going to end all of that.

**When the Messiah comes he will proclaim the good news to all us poor people that hope has come!** The captives will be set free. The blind will see--both literally and spiritually! The oppressed will receive liberty. And all of us will have access to the Lord’s favor. Notice the final line that Jesus read about the year of the Lord’s favor? This was a reference to the year of jubilee. Every fifty years, during the OT era, the people enjoyed the cancellation of debts, the restoration of property, freedom from slavery; even the land took a break!<sup>4</sup> Isaiah was saying that the coming Messiah would usher in a year of jubilee so great, it would never end. A perpetual state of joy that we know as eternal life. This is the promise of the gospel: *that we will be restored to fellowship with God because the curse of sin will be broken.* This is what the Jews thought of when they read this passage. That was their hope: an endless era of joy and freedom.

**But how was Jesus going to do all this?** How was he going to be able to heal, restore, and set us free? How was Jesus going to break the curse and save us from eternal death? He would restore what was lost through sin, by taking our sin onto himself when he suffered on the cross. The punishment we deserved Jesus willingly took onto himself. That is the good news Jesus is proclaiming, right here in Nazareth.

**The people of Nazareth wouldn’t have known all of that.** But we can be certain that they understood the main idea: that Jesus was proclaiming himself to be the promised Messiah who would save Israel from its bondage and suffering. That’s enough to get anyone excited. So, how do you think they would respond? Maybe with gratitude? Maybe with eagerness? Maybe by asking Jesus, “How can we receive this freedom?” Well, they didn’t do any of that.

## **Part 2: Luke 4:22 - “The Good News is Perverted”**

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<sup>4</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary. Vol. 1.* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), Logos: “The reference here is the ‘Year of Jubilee’ described in Leviticus 25. Every seventh year was a “Sabbatical year” for the nation, when the land was allowed to rest; and every fiftieth year (after seven Sabbaticals) was set apart as the “Year of Jubilee.” The main purpose of this special year was the balancing of the economic system: slaves were set free and returned to their families, property that was sold reverted to the original owners, and all debts were canceled. The land lay fallow as man and beast rested and rejoiced in the Lord.”

In the next verse we find out what they did:

**Luke 4:22 (ESV)** — 22 And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”

Write this down as point 2: **The Good News is Perverted**. Now, let’s walk through this carefully. Jesus is teaching the people. And take note of their attitude: the Bible says they were speaking *well of him*.<sup>5</sup> They were *marveling* at his gracious words.<sup>6</sup> But what’s this that they say?

**“Is this not Joseph’s son?” What did they mean by that?** Like I said, later on, according to Matthew and Mark, we see skepticism from Nazareth. They say he can’t be the Messiah. That’s possibly what they mean here. “This can’t be the Messiah, he’s Joseph’s boy!”<sup>7</sup> If that’s the case, they are judging Jesus by the flesh. They’ve known him all his life, they know his family. They had all these lofty ideas about the Messiah and they couldn’t wrap their heads around this carpenter’s boy being the Son of David, their savior. They were letting appearances slam the door to faith.

**That’s very possible and we are going to examine that in full in a moment.** But something else might be going on here, and I suspect this is what’s happening. Keep in mind, that going into this moment, the people of Nazareth seem to respect Jesus. Sure, he’s the boy of a blue collar man, but remember, this is the sinless Son of God. He’s never done anything to wrong a single person in Nazareth; they probably liked him because of that! They showed him honor by asking him to read and teach. And they were speaking well of him. It could be that they are getting excited that their neighbor, someone from Nazareth, was God’s chosen ruler of the world.

**There is a kind of pride that arises when someone from your hometown goes on to become someone important.** When a young boy goes on to become a great athlete or famous actor. *Johnson City & Gil Hodges*. The town itself feels as if they are sharing in that success. So just imagine if a boy from your hometown ends up being the savior of the world! What does that mean *for you*? Do you think, perhaps, that you will benefit from the fact that he grew up in your town?

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<sup>5</sup> Vincent, *Word Studies*: “There was a continuous stream of admiring comment.”

<sup>6</sup> Liefeld, Walter L. and Pao, David W., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Luke*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), Apple Books: “Most expositors take *emartyroun autō* (“bore him witness,” GK 3455) as implying a positive attitude toward what he had said; hence the NIV’s ‘spoke well of him.’ The same verb is used in Acts 22:12 of Ananias, where the NIV has ‘highly respected.’”

<sup>7</sup> Just, Arthur A., *ACCS: Luke*, (Downers Grove, IL: 2003 ) Apple Books: “NAZARETH REJECTS JESUS AS THE SON OF JOSEPH. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA: ...They said, ‘Isn’t this Joseph’s son?’ But how does this diminish the glory of the Worker of the miracles? What prevents him from being both venerated and admired, even had he been, as was supposed, Joseph’s son? ...How absurd!”

**Keep in mind, this is an ancient, tribal society.** Where you come from matters. It's not like today, when people relocate here and there on a whim. Going back centuries, Israelite tribes had rivalries and showed favoritism to their own. Suppose in this moment, as powerful, gracious words flowed from Jesus lips, that the people were thinking, "Oh, this is *Joseph's* son." Our neighbor, our friend. He's one of us. What do you think they might be implying, with that mind?<sup>8</sup>

**Perhaps Nazareth wasn't doubting Jesus' messiahship...** perhaps they were assuming that, because Jesus was one of them, he would show preferential treatment to the people of Nazareth? If Jesus had come from Jerusalem, its residents would have thought the same thing. But, Jesus didn't come from Jerusalem. Instead, this small town from a rural corner of Israel can boast that the Messiah came from there! In other words, they thought God showed favoritism.

**That could be what they're thinking.** But why do I say this is the good news perverted? Had they doubted Jesus was the Messiah, it would be a matter of unbelief. "We are rejecting him, because we refuse to believe this man we all know is the Messiah." That's unbelief. But if they were thinking that, because Jesus was from Nazareth, they'd get special treatment from the Messiah, they were committing an even greater sin.

**Why do I say that?** For one simple reason: Jesus came to save all of us (John 3:16). All who believe in him, the Bible promises, have this eternal life. God does not show favoritism, based on anything! The thought that some people will get special treatment because they grew up with him? That is a perversion of the very grace Jesus died on the cross to give us. It would actually be a form of merit. And nobody can earn, merit, or deserve what Jesus came to give us.

**That's a perversion of the gospel.** These people wanted special treatment. They didn't want to have to believe or even acknowledge they were sinners in need of forgiveness. And Jesus couldn't let the people of Nazareth think, for one second, that he'd show favoritism to them, over anyone else. Which is why he says this.

### **Part 3: Luke 4:23-27 - "The Good News is Denied"**

**Luke 4:23 (ESV)** — 23 And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself.' What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.' "

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<sup>8</sup> Schertz, Mary H., *Believers Church Bible Commentary: Luke*, (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2023) Apple Books: "But there is no reason to construe this limited perspective as hostility. The crowd grows hostile because Jesus challenges their understanding as provincial. It is an example of how quickly provincial goodness can turn to evil when it is challenged by the "other." Jesus' insistence that he does not serve only the children of Israel unmask the provinciality of the people of Nazareth."

Write this down as point 3: “**The Good News is Denied.**” Jesus makes a prediction. It’s a pretty horrible one. He tells Nazareth that one day they will say to him, “Why aren’t you doing miracles here that you did in Capernaum?” Jesus just gave them some very good news, that the year of jubilee, eternal life, has come. But now, he’s telling them that blessings associated with salvation, healing and miracles, won’t be done in their town. That’s devastating.

**What Jesus is saying here is very important:** He isn’t be harsh or mean. He’s just telling them the truth. It could be that they are rejecting him through unbelief and he’s saying, “Because you doubted me, you won’t see the kingdom of God.” Or, “Because you think you deserve eternal life because I grew up here, you won’t be able to receive it.” Either way, it’s pretty bad news. But he’s not finished. What the Lord says next is eye-opening. And it illustrates an important principle about God’s kingdom; how he actually operates in our lives.

**Luke 4:24–27 (ESV)** — 24 And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. 25 But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, 26 and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27 And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”

**A prophet is not acceptable in his hometown?** Why? Perhaps because they doubt he really is a prophet. Or perhaps they think he owes them a miracle.<sup>9</sup> Jesus first references an event from 1 Kings 17:8–16. This was during King Ahab’s reign over Northern Israel, when God brought a terrible drought because of his idolatry. Many people were in need, yet God sends the Elijah to a widow in Zarephath. What’s wrong with that? Well, Zarephath was ruled by the king of Sidon. And his daughter was Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab, the most evil woman in the Bible. God sent Elijah to help a Gentile who was living in an evil nation. Wow. To hear that God showed kindness to an undeserving woman like that, instead of anyone Israel? That would have offended Nazareth.<sup>10</sup>

**But the next story was even more offensive!** It’s from 2 Kings 5:1-14. A man went to see Elisha, asking to be healed of leprosy. Elisha told him to dip in the Jordan river seven times

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<sup>9</sup> Edwards, James R., *PNTC: Luke*, (Grand Rapids: MI, Eerdmans, 2015), Apple Books: “This suggests that the conflict in Nazareth is not related to a specific grievance. Rather, the Nazarenes’ response to Jesus is a microcosm of the chronic hardness of Israel’s heart to the prophets. Like Israel’s prophets, Jesus names the thoughts and intentions that barricade hearts from a proper understanding of God’s saving grace.”

<sup>10</sup> Ibid: “The widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian illustrate the Isaiah text that Jesus just read in the synagogue: they are the poor who receive good news, the captives released, the blind whose sight is restored, the beneficiaries of “the year of the Lord’s favor” (v. 19). Most Jews of Jesus’ day identified themselves—not Gentiles—as the poor and oppressed to whom God shows favor. The widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian emphatically indicate that the divine mercy announced in the Isaiah quotation is extended to Gentiles as well as Jews. If the Jewish people in Nazareth cannot affirm the Isaiah text for Gentiles, then they cannot claim it for themselves.”

and his skin was restored like a baby's. The problem? Naaman was not only a Gentile, a pagan idolator, but the commander of Syria's army. The very same army that constantly fought and oppressed Israel. If there was ever a man who did not deserve healing from God, it was this man!

**Why did Jesus bring these stories up?** He was reminding the people of times God gave blessings to undeserving Gentiles. Not the "deserving" Israelites. You see, in their mind, Israel always merited God's help more than Gentiles, even when Israel was sinning. But God doesn't show favoritism. He never has and he never will. Even in the OT, God helped people who did not deserve his help. But people who think they've earned something with God? They got nothing.

**It's these references that make me think Nazareth was trying to merit Jesus' favor.** Because they're not about faith, per se, but about grace. The widow of Zarephath and Naaman the leper were undeserving, yet God saved them. Grace is God's undeserve, unearned, unmerited favor--which he gives freely to those who cannot do anything to win him over. Yet it looks as if Nazareth thinks they deserve the Messiah's blessings. And to people who think they can earn or deserve God's help, grace looks unfair. It seems wrong. "Aren't we supposed to do everything we can to win God's approval? Isn't this year of jubilee only promised to the really, really good people. Or, barring that, at least to the people who have an "in" with the Messiah--like us?" No, never. So, when the people of Nazareth discover the truth of grace... they don't like it.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Part 4: Luke 4:28-30 - "The Good News is Rejected"**

**Luke 4:28–30 (ESV)** — 28 When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. 29 And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. 30 But passing through their midst, he went away.

Write this down as point 4: **The Good News is Rejected**. I don't know how Jesus escaped a violent, angry mob. All I can say is that this wasn't his time to die. So God the Father did not allow them to throw him off the cliff. He just passed through their grasping hands and left. This is how Matthew relates this moment: "*And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea*" (Matthew 4:13) Really!?! A bit of an understatement, huh?

**Why did they get so mad they wanted to kill Jesus?** Just a few seconds earlier, they were speaking well of him. Then, suddenly, they wanted him dead. Yes, he told them he wasn't

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<sup>11</sup> Schertz, *BCBC*: "These stories of God's generosity beyond Israel, coupled with the reading from Isaiah, communicate that the mission of God is for the poor, the captives, the blind, and the oppressed. The people of Nazareth 'get it.' They understand what Jesus wants them to understand. They perceive correctly that the project of God that this son of Joseph has just announced and to which he is committed is for all the people of the world who are poor, captive, blind, and oppressed. They get it, but they do not like it."

going to perform miracles there. But they didn't get mad until he referenced those events from the OT. Jesus explained to them an important truth about grace, an important truth about how God works: God shows his grace to people who don't deserve it. He works in our lives, on the basis of unmerited favor. We do nothing to earn his help. Even the great year of jubilee is not given to good boys and girls who perfectly followed the law. In fact, God intends to give it exclusively to those who don't deserve it, including Gentiles.<sup>12</sup>

**As I said, people who don't understand grace are offended by it.** But Jesus is grace. John says grace comes from "his fullness," meaning, his very being (John 1:16). There's no other way you can receive what Jesus wants to give you; only the basis of his grace. You'd think people would be excited about this. "I can be saved, and I don't have to do anything to earn it? Sign me up!" Yet naturally-minded people, people who think like the world, don't want grace. They've been programmed, all their lives, to think they have to earn everything. Nazareth assumed they earned Jesus' blessings because they grew up with him. We're not in Nazareth, but we naturally think the same way.

**But that is not how God deals with us.** God has always chosen to help rotten people who can do nothing to impress him. In fact, on our own, do the opposite! When we try to merit (earn, be worthy of) God's help, we just make a mess. We often end up doing more evil. God wants us to know that he loves us because of *who he is, not because of what we do*. Jesus wanted Nazareth to know that. They refused to listen, so they rejected his offer of salvation and tried to kill him. And all of us here, if we are not careful, can fall into the same kind of thinking.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid: "It is not the reading of the text from Isaiah or the association of the acceptable year of the Lord with the Jubilee that turns the crowd at the synagogue in Nazareth into a mob. It is Jesus' proclamation that the favor of God extends beyond the boundaries of Israel."

## Part 5: Application

**1) What does this mean for us?** Let's consider what Jesus told Nazareth: The promised Messiah had come! He was announcing good news: that they could enjoy freedom, healing, the year of jubilee. A *never-ending* year of jubilee, where their sin debts would be canceled and they could enjoy restored fellowship with God. That offer still exists today. We, too, can participate in this year of jubilee.

**But what does it take?** As I said, one likely interpretation of their statement could have been that they doubted Jesus was the Messiah. They may have taken one look at him and thought, "This can't be our savior." Some of the moms there probably changed his dirty diapers; how could this normal man be the One? That kind of thinking exists even today. There are people who say the same thing about Jesus. He was just a carpenter's son who had a few nice things to say, but that's all. We can learn from his life, *but he wasn't the Son of God*, the savior of the world.

**There are always people who refuse to believe, because they are looking at appearances.** They trust what they see. They believe what whatever the media/culture claims about Jesus. But the truth is, you can receive this year of jubilee: all your sins can be forgiven and you can be reconciled to your loving heavenly Father. Right now. *But you can't do it yourself.* God has to punish sin. But instead of punishing you, he chose to punish his precious Son in your place. Jesus took all your sin and endured God's anger on the cross, for you. He rose again on the third day, never to die again. You can receive eternal life from him, if you believe.

**Faith is not a good work.** It is not something you muster up in your own willpower. It is simply accepting that *you cannot and will not try to save yourself.* In one sense, you are giving up. You are giving up trying to run your life. You are letting go of the burden of trying to fix your problems, trying to scrub your slate clean. Faith is letting someone else do the hard work for you. You accept Jesus' help by giving your life to him. Trust me, you'll never regret handing it over to him. For anyone here who has never placed their trust in Jesus, the Bible says you must confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead (see Romans 10:9), and you will be saved.

**2) But what does this text mean for the Christians here today?** What if Nazareth really thought Jesus was the Messiah, but assumed they deserved eternal life because he was from their town? It's likely they got so angry at Jesus' words, because he reminded them that God blesses people because of his grace, not because they deserve it. Ironically, that included them! God does not show favoritism. Nazareth could have received all of God's favor and love, if they received it on the basis of grace, not merit.

**Sad to say, most Christians don't understand their need for grace.** We accept that we are saved by grace, but after that... we don't think we need it at all. We think God grades us as Christians based on our performance. We look at the Christian life and assume we're the ones

carrying the load. Any problem, any need, any worry we have... God will help us, yes. But only after we do all the right things we are supposed to do (and we usually assume we are having problems, because we aren't doing enough of the right things). My friends, that is not grace; and that is not the gospel.

**Is there anyone here today that feels broken down?** Anyone who feels like a captive? Are you struggling, do you feel oppressed, despite coming to church and living as holy a life as you can? Does the year of jubilee seem like a fantasy? God wants you to experience everything Jesus died to give you. *But if you think that the Christian life is about what you do for God, you are wrong.* You need grace today, just as much as you did the day you were first saved. Grace isn't just the door into Christianity, it is the road beneath your feet, the sky above your head, and the destination at the end.

**You will never earn anything with God.** And you're not supposed to. Grace is for the undeserving. God wants you to trust him to take care of you. Every part of your life. He doesn't want you thinking like Nazareth, "I merited God's help because of this or that." Now, I know some of you want me to say, "*You still gotta do this or that!*" But listen to me, God is far less concerned with your "doing" and much more concerned with your heart. You can be doing all the "right" things, but still be miles away from his will. Good works take care of themselves, when you are convinced God is not grading you based on your performance. Take some time to learn more about the grace of God. Spend your days meditating on how much God loves you. Consider just how much Jesus suffered for you, to save you. Make that the focus of your daily life and just see how much fruit you'll end up bearing for God!

### **Closing Illustration:**

To end, I'd like to tell you a story. A woman once came up to her pastor and asked him a question. She told him about her family: she, her parents, her grandparents were faithful members of the church. They were there every Sunday. They gave, they served. They were what you call "pillars" of the church. Her in-laws, on the other hand, weren't so much. They were members, but they rarely attended. They didn't do much for the church. Yet whenever they had a problem, when a family member fell sick or something went wrong, they rushed to church and begged God for help. And the pastor said, "Yeah, I know all this. What's your question?"

Well, the woman was upset. She said that God often answered her in-laws' prayers! He always seemed to help them. And she asked, why? Shouldn't God only help the good Christians who are faithfully serving their church?

Pastors love these kinds of questions, by the way! To our natural minds, this doesn't make sense. God helped the family the in-laws? Who never went to church or volunteered?

Shouldn't he have ignored their prayers and only helped the good family, the pillars of the church?

Praise God that's not how he operates. God is kind to all of us. When we are at our lowest, when we are in need, he abundantly supplies help. That doesn't mean we shouldn't volunteer and work hard for God both in and outside of church. But you need to understand that God's grace is for those who don't deserve it, but who still humbly ask him for it. God doesn't show favoritism. It doesn't seem fair. It doesn't make sense to the natural man. But thank God for it. Because we'll never earn his love. Despite that he freely and gladly gives it to us, because of his grace.