Luke 3:21-4:13 // Finally, A New Hope

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Preacher: Martin Ayers

[0:00] The second reading is found in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 3, and that's on page 1029 in the Church Bibles.! Now, Jesus himself was about 30 years old when he began his ministry.

He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli. And there's a list of names and we're going to pick it up at verse 38. The son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.
Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for 40 days he was tempted by the devil.
He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. The devil said to him, If you are the son of God, tell this stone to become bread.
Jesus answered, It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone. The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.
[1:30] And he said to him, I will give you all the authority and splendor it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours.

Jesus answered, It is written, Worship the Lord your God and serve him only. The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.
If you are the son of God, he said, throw yourself down from here. For it is written, He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully. They will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.
Jesus answered, It is said, Do not put the Lord your God to the test. When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.
This is the word of the Lord. Thanks, Ishmael, for reading that for us. And if you could keep your Bibles open, page 1029, 1030, that would be really helpful as we look at this together.
[2:37] And you can find an outline inside the notice sheet, as is our custom. But also today, I've put that first reading, the Isaiah 42 one, just at the bottom of the notice sheet there, that I'll be referring to.

Most importantly, let's ask for God's help as we turn to his word. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we see in your word this morning that Jesus loved your word and he lived out your word.
And we thank you for him. We ask that your spirit will be with us today and he will speak your word to us now. And he will be at work in us so that we experience the reality of your promise that your word is more precious than pure gold and sweeter than honey.
For we ask in the name of our Savior, Jesus. Amen. Amen. Well, in football, in the world of football, I am totally enthralled by the penalty shootout.
This is a picture of Argentina's penalty shootout in the World Cup final. And there is just something extraordinary about the way that in national football, millions of people are watching and it comes down to one man or one woman and they have to take this brave walk from the center circle with the ball alone and put the ball on the penalty spot and they take a couple of strides back and they look towards the goal and they look at the ball and then they look at the goal again and they almost always, they let out this great sigh.
[4:24] They go... And there's this kind of stillness that falls. And I think to myself at that moment, the hopes and dreams of millions of people come down right now to, can he do it?

Can she do it? And I'm English, so like growing up in the 90s, like I basically need therapy for I am just totally scarred.
There were pictures, when I was looking for a picture to depict the agony and ecstasy of a shootout, there were pictures I just couldn't look at because it just was, it's too soon.
It's still... So, but this summer, Chloe Kelly for the Lionesses, she did it. She has this, you know, she lifts her leg and then, and it works and she scored and people went, millions of people were

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celebrating.
We were on holiday in France, whole campsite celebrating. She did it, so we did it. That was the thing. So I want you to relate to this, people of Scotland. And so I asked a reliable source, Jonathan Hamilton, and he tells me that the Scottish equivalent of this is, came five years ago in November 2020 when Scotland, after 22 years of hurt having not qualified for the finals of a major tournament all that time, they were playing Serbia and it came down to a penalty shootout and the 10th penalty that Serbia took, at that point, it was 5-4 Scotland and David Marshall, in goal, saved it for Scotland. [6:13] Euphoria, absolute scenes. David Marshall could say, I did it, the whole of Scotland said, we did it. And COVID restrictions were abandoned for an evening partying in the streets.

And I, not legally, not necessarily by Jonathan Hamilton, by the way, I'm just, there were people, there was euphoria. And I, I think that the reason that I and lots of us have been built psychologically in this way that we can find ourselves so gripped by this, a moment like that is because of moments like the one we're looking at in Jesus' life today in the Bible where of course the stakes were unimaginably, unthinkably higher.
Nothing less than eternal despair for the world, or eternal hope and salvation for anyone who comes to him. It's a most wonderful moment as a man steps forward to do what every one of us was powerless to do and he invites us today that if we want to we can share fully in his victory. That's what's happening in our passage with stakes out of this world. Now last week we started a new sermon series in this book Luke's Gospel. He says at the beginning that he wrote it a carefully investigated orderly account so that we would have absolute confidence that Jesus really can save us.
We can put our hope in him. And we saw last week John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus. He was a great man, he was a magnificent speaker drawing in crowds but he said someone far greater than me is coming and I can only baptize you with water but he can baptize you with the Holy Spirit.
[8:09] So John is pointing people to this coming one who really can wash us clean before God and really can by God's Spirit coming into us change us from the inside out.

And then one day as the crowds are gathering day by day at the Jordan River to be baptized by John Jesus comes into the water. And what happens next as he's baptized is extraordinary even by the standards of Jesus life these things don't happen very often what happens at his baptism and Luke wants us to know it should give us every confidence to put our hope in Jesus.
So our first point it's on the sheets is at last a Spirit filled God pleasing Son has arrived and the first surprise for us comes in verse 21 right at the very start if you have a look with me when all the people were being baptized Jesus was baptized too and we think hang on why if baptism is this sign we learnt last week of turning back to God of a fresh start with God why would Jesus who's never done anything wrong need to get baptized and I think the answer to that is that he is identifying with us he has come to save us and so fully human he is standing with us and going on the journey and getting it right so uniquely at this baptism things start to happen verse 21 heaven was opened now when we say the heavens were opened we mean the sky we mean it lashed it down don't we the heavens opened but when here the phrase heaven was opened is the spiritual universe the place where God is at home and since we have turned from
God every human being that place has been out of bounds for us there is a barrier between heaven and where we live but here as Jesus comes out of the water and notice Luke tells us that he was delighting in prayer he was in communion with his heavenly father he's praying and the seal between heaven and earth is broken open and we don't know what that looked like but clearly there's a visual element to it because Luke says next the Holy Spirit descends verse 22 on Jesus in bodily form like a dove and then as astonishingly there's an audible voice from heaven you are my son whom I love with you I am well pleased now this is the language of an Old Testament psalm psalm 2 the second psalm in the book of psalms which is prophetic about this coming king for God and it helps us to know that because it helps us see that when the language is being used here in Luke's gospel of Jesus being a son we might jump to thinking what it's talking about is that
Jesus is the eternal divine son he has always been in heaven the son of the eternal father God is a father eternally begetting a son in the unity of the Holy Spirit but when the Bible here when Luke is using the term son here he's not talking about that eternal state of the divine son he's talking about the word son is a title for God's chosen king for God's people and Psalm 2 makes that clear because in Psalm 2 God declares I've installed my king and then the king speaks and he says I will

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proclaim the decree of the Lord he said to me you are my son today I've become your father ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance the ends of the earth your possession so that's what God the father has declared to this coming chosen son and king and here at Jesus baptism the father is declaring that that title is conferred upon Jesus we find another echo of these words that are used at the baptism in the prophet
[12:40] Isaiah that we had in our first reading chapter 42 700 BC and God promises through the prophet Isaiah that he was going to rescue his people from the darkness they're about to endure and there's going to be wonderful hope a wonderful future for God's people and by the time you get to chapter 42 of Isaiah you're thinking but how is this rescue going to come about and we get introduced to a new character a rescuer chapter 42 verse 1 it's on the sheets God says here is my servant whom I uphold my chosen one in whom I delight you see that language there that we've had from the baptism God being well pleased taking delight in this servant and you can see then the link between the spirit coming down at Jesus baptism and what God promised through Isaiah would happen to his servant in Isaiah 42 verse 1 I will put my spirit on him why does he do that to equip him for the mission that he's giving to this servant and the mission is totally extraordinary he says he will bring justice to the nations now we'll come back to verse 2 in a minute but then look at the end of verse 3 of Isaiah 42 he says in faithfulness he will bring forth justice he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth in his teaching the islands will put their hope so here is God saying

I'm sending somebody an anointing by the spirit to put the whole world right he's that big a saviour and even the islands not just the Old Testament people of God but even the islands from Australia to the British Isles will be able to put their hope in this man who's coming so the Lord then goes on to address his servants in those verses in Isaiah 42 and he says to him that he says you will be a light for all the nations and you will open blind eyes and you'll rescue people who are in the darkness of being far from the God who made them so this is the promise that our world needs God to fulfill we look around the world today and we see so much that we just can't fix and we put our hope in politicians and then we get very cynical about them because they don't live up to what we've longed for and we see things in our own lives that we just don't see how we could ever fix in our lives and in ourselves and we look at Jesus' baptism and our hearts can live because God the Father is saying to us he's my man come to him he's the one
I promised he'll put it right at last he's here finally so what about the spirit descending on him in bodily form like a dove well the spirit anoints God's king for his mission and here this I take it what's happening is this manifestation of the Holy Spirit the way it descends is graceful and gentle and that is to communicate to us the manner in which this servant will behave and live when you read Isaiah and these promises of this guy's going to save the whole world he's going to bring justice to the nations we might think well I can see our world needs that but I better keep a safe distance from him he's a mighty man he's not a safe man not a tame lion that kind of idea but when we see the spirit descend gently it reminds us of these verses in Isaiah 42 from verse 2 he will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets a bruised reed he will not break and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out so there are two ways to meet Jesus
God's mighty rescuer if we can if we choose to resist him and live in his world in defiance of him then we're setting ourselves on a collision course hurtling towards his great day of justice but if you come to him just as you are however weak you are however wounded you are however helpless you know you are then he is gentle and meek and he will receive you and he will restore you so what a moment heaven is opened the spirit anoints him the father speaks is Jesus a saviour you can have confidence in you bet you bet he is and we'll see that Luke is going to pull these threads through into the next scene that this is the son and he is equipped by the spirit you will see that in chapter 4 as we look at that but before that
Luke wants us to see from another angle that this one Jesus has the credentials to deserve your every hope it's this family tree and we will look at it under our third heading there on the sheets humanity 2.0 we get to verse 31 of the family tree and I mean we're not going to go through we don't actually know anything about a lot of these names but we get to verse 31 and we read that he was the son of Meliah the son of Mena the son of Matatha the son of Nathan the son of David the son of Jesse and we go ah he was born in the royal line of God's chosen kings and that's crucial because God promised that his promises would get fulfilled through a king in David's line and in chapter 1 of Luke he prints for us Zechariah's song John the Baptist's song that he sung in

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celebration when John the Baptist was born where he says God has raised up salvation for us in the house of his servant David as he said through his holy prophets long ago so this is the one in the line of David now Matthew has a family tree for Jesus he starts his gospel with it the New Testament starts with it and Luke has his family tree here for Jesus and I was struck this week by how there's two differences that really struck me in the family trees the first one is that Matthew stops his family tree at Abraham that's as far back as he goes but Luke
[19:01] I mean Matthew does that to signal something to us he's saying this is the saviour for God's Old Testament people the children of Abraham but Luke doesn't stop with Abraham Luke goes further back to Noah to Enoch to Enosh verse 38 the son of Seth the son of Adam the son of God he goes back to Adam to show us you don't have to be Jewish you don't have to be ethnically a child of Abraham for this one to save you this is the new humanity through through this new Adam the second striking difference with the family tree in Matthew is that Luke puts his family tree in reverse order and he seems to do that to build up so that right next to what we'll see in the next scene of Jesus going out into the wilderness we get that he's the son of Adam the son of God and I don't know about you but I'm not expecting in the family tree him to say that Adam is the son of God Adam is a creature

Adam made a mess of it and here we're reminded he's a son of God he was made by God in God's likeness in his image to rule God's creation on God's behalf and we were made to bear that likeness as well so when we use the phrase I'm only human which sometimes we use it's appropriate as a phrase if we're talking about our weakness our creaturely weaknesses and limits we're only human but if we use it to describe moral failure you know I hurt somebody I let them down but I'm only human we are underplaying what it means to be human to be human is to be made by God in his image to be like God and Adam was meant to do that but Adam royally messed up he was made for glory and he fell short because Satan came and tempted him in the garden of Eden and he caved in and sin entered the world and death through sin and basically everything that is wrong in our whole world and in our whole lives stems from the consequences of that catastrophe it was a disaster and by nature we are on Adam's team all of us we're like him ever since the first human what we've needed for humanity is a reboot a restart a son who really could be a pleasing God's son to make things right again a new team and we don't know much about those names as I said of the family tree but what we could say about them is that it has been a string of disappointments lots of them were kings and they blew it but Luke wants us to trace Jesus' lineage right back so that our hearts leap with the sense of oh right he's right in the line of promise he's a new son of Adam he's a new son of God he could be the reboot he could be humanity 2.0 wonderful so how's it gonna go he's in the red corner and in the blue corner lurking against him is the undefeated champion of the world Satan no human being has ever managed to defeat him and that brings us to our second point today the spirit filled God pleasing son has arrived that's what we've seen but will he pass the tests that Adam and Israel failed let's pick things up in verse 1 of chapter 4
Jesus full of the Holy Spirit left the Jordan and was led by the spirit into the wilderness where for 40 days he was tempted by the devil he ate nothing during those days and at the end of them he was hungry so Jesus here has got a chance to be tested in the way that Adam was tested and failed the test and there was another son led into the wilderness to be tested when God saved his Old Testament people Israel he brought them out of Egypt into the wilderness he called them his son and then they failed the test in the wilderness they rejected God they stopped trusting him well here is Jesus 40 days have elapsed obeying God trusting God's goodness has left Jesus suffering physically in hunger and the devil moves towards him in verse 3 and the entire future of humanity hangs on how this conversation goes and all our hope stands on this one man's obedience so the first temptation is with Jesus' appetite verse 3 the devil said to him if you are the son of God tell this stone to become bread this is striking because what brought
Israel down in the wilderness was hunger they wanted food it was food that tempted Adam and Eve as well but look at verse 4 Jesus answered it is written man shall not live on bread alone so Jesus quotes God's word from Deuteronomy back to the devil he's a living demonstration of when I was a young Christian was encouraged to memorize some bible verses Psalm 119 verses 9 and 11 how can a young man keep his way pure by living according to your word I've hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you well here is Jesus living out that verse fulfilling it and the verse in Deuteronomy goes on man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the

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mouth of God in other words Jesus is saying though I hunger now my life comes from God's word and so I choose obedience but it's sobering isn't it to see here an example of how Satan loves to entice us to sin through our appetite have you ever reached out to satisfy an appetite of yours even when you knew it was something off limits for you and you knew it was off limits but you gave in and Satan got a win well where we might look back on those failings in our lives we can picture [25:37] Jesus here stepping in on our behalf he's saying let me do it for you and he passes the test so Satan tries a new plot verse 5 the devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world and he said to him I will give you all their authority and splendor it's been given to me and I can give it to anyone I want to if you worship me it will all be yours I take it this was the devil's to offer he's called in the Bible the god of this age and the prince of this world one day Jesus would surely know it will all it's been promised to him that the father would give that to him but what's Satan offering him here he's offering him all of that without the cross all the glory without the cross the crown without the cross and it strikes me that you or I might think the world has some very enticing things on offer if we were to give up on God if we were to walk away from God and just live for the world there are some things that maybe we could get that would be very attractive to us well how do they compare with what Jesus has offered here do you want the nations

Jesus and all their riches I'll give everything to you right now and you won't have to suffer you won't need to fulfill any of those Old Testament promises that you've been reading since you were a child that God the father's will is that you'll be forsaken by him one day and you'll be pierced you'll be despised and rejected you'll have to bear other people's sins you don't have to do that and if Jesus gives in we're lost forever but we read verse 8 Jesus answered it is written worship the Lord your God and serve him only then for the third test Satan tries his misusing the Bible trick verse 9 the devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple if you are the son of God he said throw yourself down from here for it is written he will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully they will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone now this is sophisticated because this is a quote from Psalm 91 which is a psalm about Jesus where God is promising
Jesus that he will do these things for him but the trap here is why don't you test that out and see if God is good for his word see if he really will look after you maybe Satan might tempt us in our lives to test God like that that we might start to think to ourselves I'll say to God first give me this to prove to me that you are good to me that you will be good to me and then I'll trust you that kind of temptation well Jesus stands there again on our behalf and he says verse 12 Jesus answered it is said do not put the Lord your God to the test and so the devil leaves him because he's lost in the words of there's a kid song where it just says again and again about these temptations Satan didn't win Jesus didn't sin and we can all say get in there get in because he invites us to be on his team what's gone wrong for every human being who's ever lived when we are tempted we mess it up we cave in we stuff up and Jesus resists depending on the spirit full of the scriptures three times it is written it is written it is said cut me and I bleed the Bible and what it means for us is here is a savior we can be absolutely sure can wash us clean who can change us from the inside out by his spirit who can give us a future that's guaranteed with God and we know he will never disappoint you because he never even disappointed
God just as that family tree in chapter three is a list of people who've messed up a list of disappointments we could add every one of our names to that list and we can say finally here is a son who could stand and if you've never come to him before you can do that today you can just ask him to save you you can put your trust in him and he assures us today he will receive you gently and he will gladly say come and share in my victory and for those of us who've done that before let's rejoice afresh today in our hearts that he passed the test of the wilderness and he's invited us onto his team it's such good news for us to share isn't it around us in the world people are so upset by evil in our world news in our city in their lives and we have news of a saviour who has defeated evil evil is a defeated enemy it's on borrowed time and we might be thinking well that's all good for the future but what about now in my life and what's going on well whatever's going on in our lives this week let's just finish by looking back again thinking back to Jesus baptism and think of what we can say to ourselves now because we're united with this Jesus so at his baptism heaven was opened and for us thanks to him in Christ wherever we are heaven is open for us now we can access

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God in prayer the barrier has gone at Jesus baptism the father makes that declaration you are my son whom I love with you I'm well pleased and now for you and for me every day you might be conscious of the ways that you fall short conscious of the ways you're failing in relationships in work whatever it might be but God has set his love on you and he's clothed you in Jesus righteousness so he says I'm really pleased with you he's for you and we saw the spirit descend on Jesus and now for any of us in Christ whatever we're called to in life and however hard that might seem God promises he will equip us by his spirit to do all the good works he's prepared for us let's have a moment of quiet to reflect on what God's been saying to us and then I'll lead us in a prayer heavenly father we thank you that we can call you father thanks to your grace and we thank you that you are a promise keeper in sending
[33:12] Jesus Lord Jesus we marvel at how magnificent you are a mighty savior that you were strong enough to stand firm so hungry and living by your father's word and we marvel at your grace to have mercy on us that we might share in that win holy spirit we ask that you will continue to write these truths on our hearts and through them you will equip us to live lives that reflect who we are now as beloved children of the living God that we might live lives for your praise and glory amen to them to them to them to them to them

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