

Luke 4:16-24

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."^[a]

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

²² All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.

²³ Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself!' And you will tell me, 'Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'"

²⁴ "Truly I tell you," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown.

Always winter and never Christmas?

Do you look forward to the changing of the seasons? In spring I yearn for summer. But by mid-August I've had enough, I can't wait for darker evenings, autumn colours, rain. But then even more, once Christmas is over, I *can't wait* for spring! I can't wait for the spring flowers and lengthening days.

Perhaps you remember The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe, and the White Witch's infernal winter — always winter, but never Christmas! How miserable and hopeless! But then a rumour spreads, and birds start singing, Father Christmas passes by, and the snow starts melting, and hope begins to fill hearts. It had been an eternal winter, but *spring is coming*, because Aslan is coming!

For Israel it had been always winter and never spring. There had been a brief bright summer a thousand years ago, but after 400 years of autumn they had endured a winter of 600 years.

Imagine! Everything had been all wrong for *so long*.

And then one day a man reads Isaiah 61 in a backwater synagogue and announces that this is about him. 'Spring is coming!' he says. 'I am bringing spring with me!'

The people are confused — they were expecting the messiah to be a lion of a man: raising an army, raising his sword, razing Pilate's headquarters, and raising their hopes. But this can't be him?!

They were wrong about the Romans being the enemy. They were wrong about the way he would save them. They were wrong about the sword he would wield, for it was incisive truth he wielded — truth of word and truth of character.

And he did herald spring. The winter was over, the spring was coming. But in a way the spring is still happening. It's spring, but there are still late snows. It is spring, but we hope for so much more.

This Bible Sunday, I encourage you to grab your Bible, drink deeply from the New Testament, taste the expectation, and remind yourself that Christ is not content with things as they are. There is more freedom to be had for the captive, there is more sight to be had for the blind, there is more good news for the poor to be shared. Let us prayerfully yearn for the changing of the season, for the ripening of God's harvest, for the fruition of what Jesus started, when he opened Isaiah 61 in the synagogue in Nazareth, and said: 'That's me, that is!' *Amen.*