

**Anglican Church Noosa**  
**February 2, 2025**  
**Contentious Jesus | Luke 4:14-30 | Fulfilment**  
**Rev'd Lynda Johnson**

---

Contentious Jesus!

What does that even mean?

Those of us who have been long term attenders at Church, who have known and loved Jesus for a long time,  
and those who have only recently come to faith, might find this a little confronting.  
That we're saying, Jesus is contentious.

Contentious means - likely to cause an argument.

Interesting, isn't it?

What do you think?

Over the course of this series we are looking at less than 2 chapters of the Gospel of Luke.  
And in each passage, Jesus has interesting encounters. Hostility, rebuke, rejection,  
challenge.

It certainly does seem that Jesus causes issues.

Over the next 5 weeks, we'll be looking at this incredible start to Jesus' ministry in the  
Gospel of Luke, healings, calling of the 12 disciples, eating and mixing with sinners, and  
challenging old assumptions.

It's a very full two chapters.

It would be great to have your Bible open, because I want to take you back to the very  
beginning of this Gospel.

In the Pew Bibles, it's on p. 1024.

Luke chapter 1, verse 1. Have a listen to this -

*"Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."*

It's important to know who Luke was. He's no slouch academically - he's a doctor!

He openly admits here that he's thorough, and orderly.

He's studied the history, he's talked with eye witnesses, and he's thought through how he writes, why he's writing, and what he wants to achieve.

He also wrote the book of the Acts of the Apostles, and we know, from that, that he was present with Paul on part of his second and third missionary journeys, and also was with Paul on his journey to Rome.

With all this information, we can be very confident and assured that what Luke is writing down, is verified, trustworthy and accurate.

And I think that's very important.

This Gospel has credibility and authenticity.

Let me give you a little context of where we are in the Jesus life story, as Luke tells it.

Luke ch.1 has the history of John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin.

So Luke starts with the details of John's parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth, finding out they were pregnant, in their old age, then we have Mary being told she's going to have a baby. Mary visits Elizabeth, and the two mothers-to-be have a great conversation, along with plenty of praise to God.

John is born, and in one verse, which was a great leap 30 years into the future, modern film directors would be very happy, we find out that John grew up and lived in the desert until his public adult ministry began.

But then, back in context, Luke tells us about the birth of Jesus. The trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem for Joseph and Mary, the shepherds, the angels, the birth, and Mary treasuring it all in her heart.

Think back a few weeks to Christmas, and then the Sunday after, when Chris preached on Joseph and Mary bringing Jesus to the temple to be consecrated and Simeon and Anna, pronounced their blessings over Jesus.

Then we have 12 year old Jesus being lost by his parents and being found in the Temple. And in one verse - Jesus grows up.

John comes out of the wilderness, proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah, the cousins meet up and John baptises Jesus.

Then Luke, with all his attention to detail, gives us his genealogy of Jesus.

And that's Luke chapters 1, 2 and 3.

But this series starts half way through chapter 4, so we need some specific context to fully understand what Jesus is doing here.

You see after Jesus is baptised by John, we have him being led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan for 40 days and 40 nights.

This was his great preparation for ministry.

And at the end of that 6 weeks of testing, that is where we pick up the story, with Jesus coming back to Galilee, the region where he grew up.

He was full of the power of the Spirit, he journeyed around, visiting towns, teaching in synagogues, and he was becoming well known throughout the whole countryside.

And eventually, he comes to his hometown, Nazareth.

And on the Sabbath, and he went to synagogue.

He was given the scroll of Isaiah, and he chose to read chapter 61.

The Spirit of the Lord is on me.

Now, he had a lot of chapters to choose from so why did he choose that one?

Well, in the later chapters of Isaiah we begin to hear about a particular individual chosen to be God's Servant and anointed by God's Spirit, the One God has chosen to do the work that he intended the people of Israel to do. But Isaiah says that in the future God's work will be achieved through this Anointed One.

This is like a royal proclamation announcing what God would be sending his Servant to do. And according to Isaiah, God's Servant would be sent to bring good news ..... and to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour.

And on that day, Jesus used this reading to identify himself as the anointed Servant of God. In v. 21 "Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus was clearly claiming to be the Servant.

Did you notice the three references to "me" in verse 18? "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me ... He has sent me ..."

The Spirit was upon Jesus. The Spirit had anointed Jesus. The Spirit had sent Jesus.

If what Jesus says is true, then **his** work is **God's** work. His ministry will be the fulfilment of what God had announced through the prophet Isaiah.

This passage is often called the Nazareth Manifesto.

It is a great proclamation of Jesus' identity and his mission.

And as we read through the rest of Luke's Gospel, we see this manifesto being lived out.

Jesus did bring good news, he did proclaim liberty, he did give the blind their sight, he did release captives.

Right in the next chapter, he healed a paralysed man, he forgave sins, and he healed many others.

But on that day, when he'd finished reading, and he made his great proclamation that this Scripture is fulfilled in their hearing, how did they respond?

Well, initially they all spoke well of him and were amazed at his gracious words, it says in v.22.

And they were especially amazed, because they'd known him from when he was a kid. Isn't this Joseph's son, they asked?

He was living the 'local boy made good' scenario.

But of course, this isn't who Jesus is. He isn't just the local boy made good.

And Luke has made it clear from the very beginning - The angels told the shepherds, to you in David's town a Saviour is born.

Simeon tells Mary, 'this child is destined for the falling and rising of many.'

At his baptism by John, God's voice rings out - 'You are my Son!'

Luke has made it incredibly clear already that, no, this isn't just Jesus the carpenter's son. This isn't even Jesus, a great teacher.

No, this is Jesus, the son of God.

And he goes on to tell them that he's not going to be their local boy made good. No he's saying to them, that they won't accept him, because his message won't be very palatable. And he starts right away by reminding them of some of their own biblical history.

And he does it as a warning, telling them who **God really is**, and not affirming who they **think** God is.

God is concerned for the whole world, and not just them as Jews.

He reminds them of how Elijah was treated by his own people.

Elijah started out in Israel, proclaiming God's word to the people and especially to Ahab the king, but it soon wasn't safe for Elijah to stay in Israel.

Ahab and his evil wife Jezebel were out to kill him. And so God sent him to a place called Zarephath in Sidon, outside the borders of Israel. And while he was there God provided not just for Elijah, but also for this Gentile widow and her son as well, during a three year drought.

And Jesus then goes on to talk about Elisha, Elijah's successor. There were many lepers in Israel, but Elisha healed one leper, and that was a foreigner, Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, and he did it at a time when Syria and Israel were in battle.

So what do the people of Nazareth do, when Jesus publicly reminds them of this part of their history they don't really want to think about?

Well, their amazement turned to fury, and they wanted to kill their local boy.

They didn't want to hear that God's concern was for the whole world, that God's anointed one was going to bring good news to the gentiles.

How dare he suggest that God would prefer a Sidonian woman to the people of Israel?  
Who does he think he is?

And that of course, is the big question as Jesus begins his public ministry.

### **Who is he?**

This is a pretty daring way for Jesus to start his ministry.

But the people of Nazareth don't want to ponder **that** big question.  
No, instead, they rise up like a mob and drive him out of town to the top of a cliff where they think they can throw him off.

But he walks right through them and moves on.

Jesus has fulfilled not only Isaiah 61, but he's also fulfilled what Simeon said over him in chapter 2 - that God's salvation would be for all nations, for the Gentiles, as well as for Israel.

I guess every culture thinks of itself as inherently better than all the others, but Jesus reminds them and us that God cares for all his creation. Every person and tribe and nation is precious in God's sight, and God wants them to be his.

If God could send Elijah and Elisha, the greatest of the OT prophets, to people outside Israel, then he could certainly send his Messiah to those people as well.

And we see Jesus going to other nations throughout his ministry - to the Samaritans again and again, to the SyroPhoenician woman, and we see his concern for the whole world when he sends his apostles out to declare the good news.

This radical new thing that God is doing in Christ has begun. This contentious Jesus is bold, is full of the Spirit, is loving, and is bringing the wonderful good news to all.

As a follower of this Jesus, this contentious Jesus, how are you fulfilling his call to us? How are you fulfilling his call to you?

To go to those who are not on the inside. To go to those who don't yet know him.

2025 is our Year of Hope.

It's the year where we each, individually, are being challenged to grow in how we reach those who aren't here.

To grow in how we have conversations with people. To grow in invitation.

The beginning of Jesus' ministry brought great hope to the world, when he said,

'The Spirit of the Lord is on me;  
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 to the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'  
He now calls us to proclaim his good news.

May we do that faithfully, and bring hope to many. Amen.