**Luke 4:17-19 17And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: 18“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to *the* poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to *the* captives And recovery of sight to the blind, *To* set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”**

July 4th weekend, a time to celebrate the independence of our nation; a day marking our throwing off the rule of the British Empire 244 years ago. But, people have needed true freedom much longer than 244 years. John 8:31-32 says - *Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* True freedom, freedom that lasts when the money runs out, when the house burns down, when the friends leave, when the family fails, when all this world has to offer comes to naught, is only to be found in Jesus Christ. When we abide in Him, we know the Truth and we are free indeed, but notice we must abide in His word.

In the book of Luke, we see Jesus given the book of Isaiah. Verse 1 of our scripture says - *And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written.* Isaiah 61 is the place He found. Written 700 years before Jesus was born, we find that He’s the fulfillment. Luke 4:21 tells us that - *And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”* The people have been waiting for the promised Messiah and Jesus leaves no doubt that He is that Messiah. We can be confident that, when we abide in Him, we will know the Truth and the Truth will set us free.

Verse 18 starts - *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor.* Who are the poor who receive the Gospel? The poor in spirit. Matthew 5:3 says *Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Why would they be poor in spirit? Because they lack the Gospel. What is the Gospel? That Jesus is the Savior of the world. When we believe this, we become His disciples. When we abide as His disciples, we know the Truth and the Truth will set us free. See how it all fits together. Without this Truth, we are poor in spirit and slaves to sin.

*He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted.* In Matthew 5:4 we read - *Blessed*are*those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.* There is no mourning like when we realize that we are separated from the love of God. In Luke 13:28, after Jesus has told us to strive to enter by the narrow gate, He describes those who never received the Gospel because they chose not to receive it. They chose the wide way and Jesus will say - depart. *There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.* Those who accept Jesus will not be brokenhearted, but will enter His rest. They shall be comforted. They may have sadness on earth, but will never know the mourning of eternal separation.

*To proclaim liberty to the captives.* In John 8:34-36 it says, *Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.* When we believe in Jesus, He makes us free. We’re no longer captives. But we must first receive the Gospel when we are poor in spirit, brokenhearted about our separation.

*And recovery of sight to the blind.* No doubt Jesus healed the blind physically. But He lifted the veil of blindness on all who believe spiritually. In Acts 9:18, we read of Paul - *Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.* Then in verse 20, we see the results of Paul’s spiritual awakening - *Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.* Paul was blind, and now he sees. Our spiritual eyes must be opened to the Truth of our brokenhearted need for the gospel to free our poor and captive spirits. Luke 24:45 says *And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures*. Paul had read the scriptures, but he had no true understanding without Jesus. He was blind. Without Jesus, we too are stumbling in the darkness and in need of the Light, poor in spirit, brokenhearted, slaves to sin.

*To set at liberty those who are oppressed.* Matthew 11:28 says *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* The yoke of sin is heavy. The yoke of Jesus is light. No one is unyoked… make no mistake, we are either yoked to sin that is oppressive or we are yoked to Jesus and no longer oppressed. But no one is unyoked… Matthew 12:30 *He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.* There are no unaffiliated players in life.

Verse 19 *To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.* To proclaim the year of Freedom, the Year of Jubilee talked about in Leviticus 25 – for Jews, this was a time when those enslaved were set free and debts were forgiven. Until the moment Jesus appeared, there was no Salvation by the Blood. He offered the eternally perfect sacrifice and made every day a day of Jubilee. No longer do we have to wait. Freedom is available now. We no longer need to be poor slaves, blinded captives, but we are now free sons and daughters of the King.

Today, let’s celebrate our only true freedom – Freedom doesn’t come from a piece of paper. Freedom isn’t gifted by a government. Freedom isn’t found in worldly possessions. True freedom is only found in the Truth of Jesus. This is freedom that will embrace us here on earth and usher us into the golden light of Glory. John 14:6 - *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.* If you’ve not accepted Jesus as your Savior, make this your year of Jubilee; make this your day of freedom; make this your moment when you find your way to the Father through Jesus His Son. Come now and accept Him and make this day your spiritual Independence Day!