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Expose your life to the touch of Calvary

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of Calvary

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Prog #: 1

Theme : "Expose Your Life to the Touch of
Calvary"

Text : Luke 4:16

Time : 17:45 Min

Note: Has R/R tape

I'm going to take a passage from St. Lukes gospel, chapter 4, reading from verse 16. Luke 4:16. 'And He came, Jesus came to Nazareth where He had been brought up, and He went to the synagogue as His custom was on the Sabbath day. And He stood up to read, and there was given to Him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has annointed me to preach good news to the poor."' I'm especially stressing that word "Good news to the poor," because this is exactly what this place stands for. "He has sent me to proclaim release to the captive, and recovering of sight to the blind, set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And He closed the book, and handed the book back to the attendant, and every eye was fixed upon Him.

"The Lord," He says, "has annointed me especially. And annointing is by, or with His Holy Spirit, and particularly for one purpose, annointed for the problems of His people." Not annointed for Himself for there was never an annointing for a particular person only. Those who were annointed were always annointed for the purpose of serving others. And the Lord Jesus puts Himself right in the center, and then He gives us the picture of the world as He sees it. He says, "I have been specially annointed to proclaim good news to the poor." Or if you like, "to the afflicted ones." Isn't that a very present situation? The poor in our communities. Not necessarily those who was poor in

material possessions, but the poor to whom life is empty. Men and women who have had repeated failures, lives which have been completely emptied because of moral failures and defeats. And Jesus says, "I have particularly been anointed to preach good news to these shattered people." And so He continues with His list. Not only the poor, but He goes a little bit more. He speaks about liberty to the captives. Not only just physical captives, the spiritual captives. Men and women who have been completely captured by repeated habits, that even if they try to release themselves, they simply don't have the ability to do so. Captives of their own nature. Captives of fear. Captives of jealousy. Captives of these terrible things which have paralysed our lives. And He says, "I come as release for them."

Good news not only makes the poor rich in living, but it speaks liberty to those who are absolute captive, and Africa needs that message. And you and I need that message, my dear brethren, for only as we walk in that liberty, for then He said, "I came to recover the sight to those who are blind." Men and women who have been blinded by sin so that now they don't know the directions to which their lives are going. And having lost their spiritual sight, they simply go round and round in circles. To use a very simple illustration; blind man without a direction is like a boy, or girl playing with a spinning top. You see, this game has got a piece of wood with a big head, and a very thin bottom, and the bottom cannot stand and carry the head. The head is too big, the bottom is too small, and in order for this piece of wood to stand you have to spin it at speed.

You know, we are, we have become blind spiritually, and we

lose the balance of living, and we keep adding to the top, the head. We increase our possessions, we increase our intellectual capacity, we increase our social activities, and we go on increasing the speed hoping that spinning faster means living. The problem with the spinning top is it never gets anywhere, there is no direction. It is its own center, and it is not living, only spinning round. Now, the world is full of spinners, oh, everywhere, and we in Africa are catching up to the speed. In some other parts of the world they are getting a bit tired of the speed, but we are only beginning.

It's very exciting to go on full speed, but it is very tiresome without direction. And so Jesus said, "This tiresome kind of living, this living without any direction whatsoever, it's not life. It's simply emptiness going round." He said, "I came to give sight to the blind." To the blind Jesus is the good news of sight. To the poor Jesus is the good news of satisfaction. To the oppressed, Jesus is the good news of liberty. And then finally, "I came, not only to give sight to the blind, but I came to speak the message of freedom to those who are oppressed. The bruised ones. The wounded ones." Oh, the wounds of humanity, the wounds of words, the wound which men hide underneath their phasards. It's a tremendous experience when men catch that message. But you realise, my brethren, that this is not a message in words, Jesus is that message. Calvary is that place where He actually stepped into this mess. He put Himself right into it. He there was poor, naked actually. There He was weak, oppressed deep down, and He was wounded, and in everyway He was even folded,

and in going through that experience on Calvary, He took all our experiences and He put on His mighty shoulders of love, and He went through with it. So, He doesn't proclaim cheap liberty, (Tape is cutting out here in a strange way) His proclaim . . . is in sweat and blood. That is why to reach the deepest need in human heart, let me tell you one example and I quit. When this comes in experience, when a man is caught in the reality of this, you can put that man anywhere you like. May I give you one tip? It has been the tip that excites me. Do you know why christianity can go on and go on and go on without stopping? You simply have to look where it was born. A faith born outside the city, in sweat and blood, in the midst of a mob, can stand any weather.

Jesus is good news for Africa. Just recently in my country, a week ago, as a Bishop I came to do a very difficult duty. In my own town men were condemned to death. There were three of them, among others who were guilty before the government. And as a minister I came to speak a word of good news to them before they died, ten minutes before they were shot, a very difficult job, and particularly if you are human. Three of us came. Crowds of people, as silent as death. And as we came we were praying that the good shepherd must have been there before. And as we came in front with soldiers, these prisoners were standing, and they belonged to my church, and as I came round they turned round to look at us, and the joy in their eyes they looked just like heaven. And yet I hadn't known how much their commitment was, that's why I came, actually. I believe in ten minutes a man can be born again, I had no despair about that. We stood in front of

them, able to shake hands, we were surrounded with guns, in front a firing squad. Now I want to tell you why Jesus is good news. We didn't say one word. One of them begun, clear, loud and clear, he gave his testimony. He said, "When I was arrested I came to Jesus Christ, He came into my heart and He forgave my sins, and I am going straight to heaven. And tell my wife about it." He had hardly finished, another one started. He had hardly finished, the third one begun, a young man of twenty. He said, "I was a backslider. But since my arrest Jesus has restored me back into fellowship. Tell my parents that I am going to Jesus saved." I can't tell you what happened, and if you are a minister of the gospel and God allows you to see that, I couldn't help it, I couldn't help the excitement, immediately I turned to the soldiers and I begun to preach to them the good news. I wanted to share with the men what had happened to their prisoners. This had nothing to do with the government, that had nothing to do with criminality. It was that Jesus is good news to all men anywhere.

I wish I had a tape recorder here and you could hear the voices of those three men. One pastor who was close enough to see them standing before the firing squad and waving to the crowd, when he got in the bus going home, he said, he was so excited, "I have seen for the first time men going straight into heaven." In these situations, my brethren, please remember Jesus is at the center, and when Jesus is at the center in any situation that situation can become alive. May God bless you as we come close to the center in our ministry. Now, let us bow in a word

of prayer and dedication. Renewing our vision at His feet.
Opening our hearts to His love. Catching a fresh vision of
Himself. Let us expose our lives to the touch from Calvary.
(Singing)