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Why He Came
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John 10:10

Why He Came

Festo Kivengere Tape #203

Release for Captives
Message: Good News for
John Captives
Isa. 61:1

Jesus said in John 10:10, "I came that they may have life abundantly."

Jesus singled himself out and said, "I came." Prophets have already come, teachers have already come, philosophers had already come, and their philosophies also, but "I, personally, came, and in coming I had a purpose, I did not come beating around the bush. I came and the purpose why I came was that they," Who? "They," who are these They? Where are 'they'? What sort of 'they' are 'they'? Where do you find them? Are they special people?

Why doesn't he say, "I came so that the rich may, or that the poor may, or that the Africans may, or that young people may, or that old people may." He simply graciously says, "That they," and I believe there is a message there. That 'they' includes me and you, bless God for that. You are thoroughly included in that. There are no qualifications in matters of grace because we are all exactly the same, there is no difference, so says scripture.

We are different in age, and status and how much money and education we have and how many gifts we have, but when it comes to be blessed by God we are simply 'they', that they may have permission. To have what? Not to have dollars, 'they' were there before Jesus came. Not to have cattle, cattle were there before Jesus came, and if he claimed to have brought those material things he would have been claiming nothing. Things were there, possessions were there, gifts were there, religions were there.

"I came that they might have life." What sort of life? Because life was there before Jesus came, men were there, he was born of Mary and Joseph, ~~he was~~ in Judea, and there were people there. What sort of life does he claim to have brought? Life abundant.

In St. Luke's Gospel, he tells us the picture, he says, "Not only did I come, I was sent." he came to Nazareth, we read, and Nazareth was where he grew up. He was very well acquainted with the Nazarenes, he grew there as a child, he played with people in Nazareth, Nazareth was his home. He knew the cripples of Nazareth the blind and the poor, the young and the old, the outcasts of society, the lonely ones of Nazareth, he knew them by name because he grew at Nazareth. He came to Nazareth where he knew the people

specifically, not vaguely and in general.

May I say that as he comes to each and everyone in this auditorium he's coming to you because he knows you by name and he knows you specifically. Just as he knew those people in Nazareth, just as he knew this fellow who is speaking to you this evening, way up in the mountains of central Africa, near what used to be Congo, there among millions of Africans Jesus knew me. Don't ask me how, love has its own way of knowing people, and whereas no one would have known me, yet he knew that young African in the mountains of central Africa, walking as a human being at an early age of fifteen, life had not been what it was meant to be. Life was life out of context life without a direction, life going around itself, life empty, tired and yet very proud, and so Jesus knew among millions of Africans, whom he knew by name, he knew me too. So in this auditorium, he knows you too as you sit there.

He is well acquainted with you as he was with the people of Nazareth, as he was acquainted with their problems so is he acquainted with yours too. As he knew those who were crippled so he knows those who are crippled in life. Spiritually and physically too.

So he came to Nazareth and he was going to read in the book. It was a service like this except that it was a Sabbath. So he took the Bible which is God's diagnoses of human problems, and in the book, the Bible, he read the diagnoses of human situation, that's what he read and he said, "My father, the Lord," He was quoting Isaiah, "Has annointed me, in order that I may come to you."

Anointed by the Spirit, the spirit of God, the power, the ability. The one who gives men and women energy to live, and Jesus says, "God poured his Holy Spirit upon me in anointing and he sent me. I came to Nazareth so that here, the people who poor," I don't mean poor in material things. You can possess everything and have nothing. You can have clothes and still feel naked. You can eat and drink and still feel thoroughly hungry. Zach^{ary} was very rich and yet he was so restless that he had to climb a tree seeking for reality. There are men in the world over, like in my country of Africa who have everything that should make life happy and yet are utterly miserable. They miss something that money can never get, which status can never get, which education can never get, which clothes can never get. You were never created in the name of things.

Things are things and things can never make a human being complete. He can use them, he can eat food, he can put on clothes, but these things can never complete a human life. There is something else, an element in life which when you meet it you meet everything in life, and it is this which is causing trouble, the world is poor and because of poverty men are grabbing at everything they can possess. Because of this poverty we grope in darkness seeking for reality. Oh, the misery. We put out feelers, where can I find that which can fill me, I am empty. You meet this at the university, people reading book after book after book, and yet still groping for reality. You find this among young people, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, etc, full of life and yet life is so completely meaningless, so they are stuffing themselves with drugs and things which are completely useless, hoping that by doing this somehow, somewhere they will find something that will make them happy and complete. Don't blame them. Don't keep on saying they are bad, "they're bad people," they are not, they are simply seeking for something that will fill their emptiness.

They are looking for reality to put inside them, to make their personalities what they think they should be, and so they grab on anything. Not only young people, old people do exactly the same. When it comes to that there is no difference about age. We all think we all grope, we all beat about the bush and in the end we sit back in despair. So, Jesus came for the poor in spiritual life, at Nazareth.

Poor is not a quality you find only in India, Africa, or China and not anywhere else, not one country in the world can say that this word cannot be applied to them.

"I was annointed," Says Jesus Christ, "and the spirit of God came upon me because he annointed me to preach good news to the poor." Yet if I am seeking and I don't find, I am a miserable man. If I am groping for reality and reality seems to evade me then I am a miserable man. No wonder many people commit suicide.

A young university student in my city of Kampala, wrote a note at night having decided to end his life. He was a third year medical student, before he ended his life he wrote a note and he left it in his room in the dormitory where he was living with others. No one knew anyone about it, he was a man full of use, a very brilliant

student of medicine, looking forward to a bright future, Uganda was in need of him, yet this man wrote a note and he said, "I have ended my life because it was too empty for me to carry."

If somebody had found that which could fill the emptiness of that young man's life, if a messenger had come and told him that there was another way by which this empty feeling can be completely satisfied, oh what a message, good news to the poor.

Jesus said, "I came, I entered Nazareth, I entered the life, take your life to me Nazareth, I came annointed specially for you that I may come as good news for your purposes. I may fill the vacuum which makes you feel miserable. I will fill your emptiness which makes you grope around the place looking for reality. I came, praise God that he came, thank God that when he came he came annointed by the Father. For God so loved you that he annointed his son purposely to meet your need. And the misery that you hear of in the world it is because of it, because of the misery in the world of Africa, tribes fighting amongst themselves, classes despising one another, races fighting amongst themselves. Segregation, apartheid, oppressive governments, what is the cause? Emptiness.

When I am empty then I simply resent you. I think you are the cause of my emptiness, parents hate thier children, children hate thier parents, young people hate each other, Africans hate Africans, Europeans fight amongst themselves, simply because we are scared of one another. This emptiness has made us so unpredictable no one will trust anybody for a long time at least.

Good news is Jesus Christ, he is the only one who when he comes he comes bang into the midst. Others may stand there and teach you, others may stand there and preach to you, Jesus never did that, he came right into the middle, he stood where you and I are standing in human life today. He spoke a real word because he was the word. If it was weeping he wept with them, if it was encouraging he encouraged them by his presence, his very presence is forgiveness, for Jesus Christ is good news for the poor, for Jesus Christ is the one who meets the needs and then the next one under the group, not only the poor, not only the seekers, the gropers of darkness, something more because he says here in this bible, "He has sent me not only to the poor but to proclaim release to the captive." If there is anything that has happened to humanity, we human beings have become captives.

Release
Captivity

Captives not of other people, but we have become captives of ourselves and that is the worst prisoner. When you become a prisoner of yourself you become the most miserable prisoner ever. What do I mean by that? Am I despising myself? Never. Jesus never teaches anyone to despise themselves, when you despise yourself it is a sign that you are not in fellowship with Jesus Christ. In fellowship with Jesus Christ you actually respect yourself. Having been accepted in Jesus Christ then you can accept yourself. Without being accepted in Jesus Christ you can never accept yourself.

Once in a while you will despise yourself. When you have committed things you have done you will look at yourself and hate yourself. It^{is} only when Jesus accepts us in his love that we can look at ourself and say, "my what a wonder." "My what a miracle I am, now that I belong to Jesus Christ, that now my heart is clean because of his love, now the burden which was breaking has been lifted I can begin to walk. Now the world is no longer a threat. It is my father's world. Now my life is no longer eating me I am possessing it."

Have you got ability to possess your life yet? Are you still a victim of the circumstances of your life. Jesus Christ came so that those who were captives may experience release. Christians are released people, people who can walk.

The other day a young man in my country, a graduate, who had become a ~~drinking-ef--vs~~ victim of overdrinking so that he became alcoholic, he was almost completely gone. He tried and tried and he couldn't succeed. He had become a captive of that habit. The habit was on top, he was underneath. Instead of being the master, he was mastered. Instead of being the controller he became the controlled. Instead of becoming the one who is in command he became the one who was commanded by his own desires and the case was almost hopeless.

Is there someone who feels hopeless today. I want to call your attention to the fact that there is no hopelessness with Jesus Christ. There is no gone case with Jesus Christ. That young man, one day, and he was a very gifted man a graduate and a politician, but a victim of that, but that one day, he listened and the Holy spirit brought the word of life and he introduced this young man to Jesus Christ, my, what a change, what a change. Recently he wrote

me letter and he was in Amsterdam in Europe, and this is the note he wrote, this is the note, I can never forget it, "Dear Festo, I can hardly believe I'm the same man. I am in Amsterdam alone in a hotel I've had my meal across the street and I'm back in my room and I've read a passage of scripture and I'm sweetly going to bed. I can't believe it. It could never have happened before."

That evening he looked at himself and accepted himself and the fact that he was a miracle. Tonight, this evening some of you can become miracles of grace. Miracles and you look around and wonder how on earth it happened. It happened because Jesus was annointed to release the captives. If there are some captives here young or old I want you to join me tonight. You can really walk home completely released, free. I've seen people who were released from hatred, not only liquor, liquor can be external but there are deep things which grab us and hold us tightly and we have no authority no power to set ourselves free. He came that the captives of humanity may experience release. How wonderful. The other day I saw two Africans, they were really jumping and rejoicing, these two men had hated each other and hatred can freeze you and paralyze you as a disease. *hate*

Hatred, resentment, bitterness, greed, can actually act on humanity much worse than polio. Much more paralysis. Human beings become paralyzed human beings, corroded, twisted, warped.

These two Africans who had hated each other because they had belonged to two different tribes again through this wonderful good news of Jesus Christ in his presence, as thier eyes were opened they discovered they had actually become paralyzed human beings, thwarted human beings because of thier sin of hatred, and I shall never the sight, and as the Holy Spirit opened thier eyes to see the miracle that Jesus not only lived but died for them. That wonderful power entered entered into thier lives and they opened them up and they became liberated human beings and one jumped and went to the other put his arms around him, and both stood there melting in tears of love and release and afterwards they shook hands and they began to sing, and you could see the look written on thier faces.

More, not only release, recovering of eyesight for the blind, what does the world see? Do we see what we should see? Haven't we

become blind? Don't we see as Isaiah says, 'We see the sweet we call it bitter. We see the right we call it wrong and we see the wrong and we call it right.'

We see things completely wrongly, sin has completely twisted our sight. Values have gone wrong. That's why Adam and Eve instead of seeing God as a source of relief and power and satisfaction they turned away from God and they looked at things things, things.

In Africa we have got our things, and you in America have got your things, no wonder young people in America are beginning to rebel against things, of course they forget that when you rebel against things, ^{unless} you find a person you will go and find other things.

It's a vicious circle and relief comes when instead of things you experience a person and when you experience a person then things remain things and you begin to live. Captives but blind and Jesus said, "I came that the blind may recover their sight." Oh, the blindness of humanity, oh, the lack of sight for us all, and Jesus came purposely so that you and I may see.

One day when I had completely lost bearing, I couldn't see the direction, I thought it was pleasure and pleasure simply let me down. I thought I was just enjoying myself and that also left me hanging in the air, until Jesus the son of God, opened my eyes again thru the preaching and thru the words of scripture and through the inward voice which you are hearing tonight, then he turned that heart and he showed me where I had completely missed that direction, and in turning my eyes he opened them and I saw two things.

I saw that my life had actually missed the mark and I was moving in the wrong direction. Actually I had no direction, I was moving round and round in meaningless circles. Then he opened my eyes and said, "I am the way," isn't that a wonderful sentence?

When you have discovered that Jesus is your way then you begin to live. Then live is no longer just an empty repetition, it becomes a life with meaning, and Jesus Christ came and entered at the depth of humanity and Jesus Christ shared the platform with the blind, and he came among the poor, the blind, the oppressed and among the captive, and he made them all his brother. You are all his brothers and sisters. You belong to him now, he left no distance at all, he became man, born of Mary, lived in Judea, ate and drank as we do, suffered as we suffer, wept as we weep, and in the end all the way he went to

Calvary and on that remarkable experience, he took humanity into his hands and as he was bleeding he healed the bleeding hearts, and as he was wounded he healed the wounds of your heart, and as he was blind-folded before he was crucified he removed your blindness, and as he was crushed with a heavy load of sin he lifted the heavy heart in his hands.

Tonight he's yours for the asking. Tonight you belong to him because he knows you with burdens, blindness, the oppression, the misery, the loneliness of your experiences and the sins that you are repeatedly doing, and your life tonight can change. Have you been a Christian who has never known that? A Christian by name, a finger in the church, a reader of the Bible, and yet you have never known the release which Jesus can give. You've never entered into the liberty he gives to the captives. Are you still a victim? Why should you be victimised when Jesus was victimised for you on the ~~ere~~ cross? Why should you be crushed with a burden when the Son of God lifted the burden of humanity including you upon his shoulders?

If you don't receive him it is just because you are refusing to believe. "That they may have free life." Life with sight, life set free and released, they may have it free from me.

Tonight, before we leave here, I am going to close this talk with a gracious New Testament invitation. Jesus is your invitation, not a preacher, I can never be your invitation, Jesus died and in dying in love he is your invitation card. Whenever we preach Jesus Christ we are inviting everybody to come freely and experience the mighty release, the sight to see, the forgiveness of sins, the lifting of a burden, the direction in life. Tonight you may take life absolutely free. Life which can cope with the kind of life you are living. Is life crushing you? Are you managing or are you being managed? Can you cope with the kind of life in your town? If you are a teenager, are you coping with your teenage group? If you are a young man, Are you coping with your youth? If you are a businessman are you coping with business? Have you got ability to live or is life playing a game on top of you?

If you are a married couple are you coping with your marriage? Or is it becoming such a problem that you don't know where to look you don't know where to turn?

Tonight I'm inviting you, because Jesus has sent me all the way

from Africa to share with you tonight, the kind of life you are living, where you are in the city tonight, I am inviting the lonely, the wounded ones, the tired ones, the oppressed ones, the guilty ones, those who are ashamed of themselves, inviting you because Jesus came, he came and stood where you are, Jesus took his place right by your side, you are no longer alone in the forest of life, there is your brother there.

You are no longer walking alone shattered and victimised, he is by your side and he is saying to you, "Tonight if you accept me, I am going to be the one who enables you to live in this city of Osborn, and in the States, wherever you are. He is enabling men everywhere all over Africa, over Europe, India, everywhere, men and women, those who are opening their lives, he is giving them ability to live where they are and they are becoming alive.

One day he came to me that way. I was shattered and tired, in fact, when Jesus came into my heart I was coming from a drinking party, an agnostic, thoroughly empty full of myself, despising religion, calling it all sorts of funny names, calling Christianity an imported religion from Europe, bitter. Jesus loved that bitter young man. He knew I was suffering from myself. He knew how empty I was, he understood. My dear friends, Tonight, he understands, others don't but he does, therefore, I want to invite you to come to the understanding saviour and I want you to mean business.

If you are tired you just come as tired ones because he says, "Come unto me all those who have burdens and are shattered and I will give you rest tonight."

"Come to me those who are blind and I will give you sight."

"Come those of you who are oppressed and captives and I will give you release."

You will go home and enjoy forgiveness and you'll say, "Thank you my Lord Jesus, I came tired I am refreshed, I came blind now I see, I came guilty now I'm forgiven."

So I came to Jesus tired, angry, bitter and he received me, and he liberated me and forgave me, and life became alive again, life became fresh again. At the age of nineteen I have never missed it till now. I am over fifty now and yet I feel much younger, simply because he lifted the burdens of life and he made a ruined man live again. Come to Jesus will you?

Tired? Come.