

Summer in Galilee

Part 3-Luke 4:16-30 *Rejected at Nazareth*

6/8-9/2019

The Puritans used to say that God had only one Son, and He made Him a preacher
He did preach a great deal, in fact, it was His primary ministry on earth

PP *“Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.”*

Mark 1:38

We are privileged to hear one of His early sermons in a synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth
“And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as was His custom, He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and He stood up to read.” Luke 4:16

Nazareth was 14 miles west of the very southern tip of the Sea of Galilee, in the northern region of Israel, and it had a bad reputation, possibly from the moral quality of its inhabitants
It was where Jesus grew up, ***“And as was His custom, He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and He stood up to read.” 4:16***

He regularly worshiped at the synagogue, not because He’d feel guilty if he didn’t go, but because He had an overflowing desire to worship along with His people

If it was Sabbath day, it was church day for Jesus, so into the synagogue He went

On this particular Sabbath, the ruler invited this growingly popular teacher to preach
Synagogues all over Israel stayed on the same rhythm of going through the Mosaic Law each year, 54 sections, and the books of the prophets were read the same way

It was tradition that a minimum of 3 verses would be read and then explained and applied
Jesus ***‘stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to Him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written’ 4:17***

The scrolls were made of long sheets of papyrus fastened at either end to rollers

Hebrew reads from right to left, unrolling with the left hand, while rolling it up with the right

But He broke tradition by reading not three verses, but less than even two, for that was enough

When He finished, ***“He rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down.***

And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them: ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’ 4:20-21

This passage from Isaiah was one of the most familiar passage of scripture to the Jews as it clearly promised Israel hope in the coming of the Messiah Who would deliver them
Jesus applies this prophecy of Isaiah to Himself...*The Messianic age has begun*, He said, *with Me*
‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me’ 4:18

The act of anointing dates far back, for the Egyptians anointed high officials, the Hittites anointed their kings and Israel anointed priests and kings

To be anointed was to be given authority to lead the king’s people, and act as His representative
The Greek word ***‘anointed’*** actually is the root word for Christ, the anointed of God, the Messiah
Jesus clearly explains in that synagogue that He is the One chosen by God to be the King and Savior to His people, representing Him with full authority, as He delivers His people

And notice who He was sent to: ***“He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed” 4:18***

And notice that the means in which He will help them is to ***‘proclaim good news’***, to preach
Jesus declares Himself the Messiah, come to help the poor, and He is proclaiming this good news through preaching the prisoner, the blind, the oppressed

The Jewish people hated their Roman captors, so this was music to their ears
 The taxes they had to pay to Rome was exceedingly burdensome and drove many to poverty, so
 this is exceedingly good news
 Except Jesus, nor Isaiah, were really talking about material poverty, legal prisoners, national
 oppression, or physical blindness

The last two decades have seen a social justice movement that tends to distort this great sermon
 The poor are seen as the vulnerable, the impoverished, those in jail, those physically suffering
 To be clear, all forms of poverty, blindness, oppression and captivity are abhorrent to Jesus Who
 came to help the downtrodden, hurting and poor

It is equally true that the gospel speaks to this, and that the church must rise up and be salt and
 light in this world, standing against evil and darkness, laboring for those in need
 But to deeper depths this sermon aims, to the root and problem of all social injustice...a world
 broken by sin

His gospel is good news for those who realize the poverty of their sinful moral condition

His gospel is good news for those caught up in bondage to their flesh

His gospel is good news for those who are stumbling around in the darkness of this world

His gospel is good news for those who are caught in the grip of the devil, the prince of the air

His gospel is the message of grace, that it was the *'year of the Lord's favor'* meaning God is
 giving them the opportunity for true freedom and help because of His grace

He is preaching to those who have hit the bottom, out of options with no other place to turn and
 whose hearts are ready to believe in Him, the Son of God for saving

Paul wrote: **PP** *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"* 1 Timothy 2:15

The greatest sermon ever preached began with, **PP** *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is
 the kingdom of heaven."* Matthew 5:3

Are the worshipers of that synagogue in that little town *'poor in spirit'*?

So far, they *"all spoke well of Him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from
 His mouth."* 4:22

You could hear a pin drop during that message, for they were amazed, they didn't know that this
 hometown kid all grown up could that well, with this confidence and grace

Their hearts were singing as the Living Word of God preached the Written Word of God

Who would not love this sermon, especially one of grace, the favor of God to struggling people!

So what on earth happened during this sermon, that you could go from verse 22, *'And all spoke
 well of Him'* to verse 28, *'all in the synagogue were filled with wrath.'*

What made them so angry that they would actually try and kill this man whom they knew?

PP 1-They wouldn't believe because of His familiarity

"And they said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?'" Luke 4:22

The more they talked and discussed, the more they realized the audacity of someone that they
 know claiming to be the fulfillment of this Messianic prophecy

There was no confusion, no ambiguity in them that Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah

3 years later, when He was nailed to the cross, *"And the people stood by, watching, but the
 rulers scoffed at Him, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He is the
 Christ of God, His Chosen One!'"* Luke 23:35

We know you, you are Joseph's son, and by the way, weren't there rumors that he got your mom pregnant before they even married?

They would bring that out later when refusing to believe Him, *"We were not born of sexual immorality..."* (John 8:41), but you were weren't you?

The truth is that Mary was pregnant because God divinely caused it to be, not Joseph
Yet for this congregation, familiarity would breed contempt

PP 2-They wouldn't believe because of their expectations

I told you earlier that it was Jewish custom to read no less than 3 verses in the synagogue, and that Jesus broke that custom, and He did so at a very critical part of Isaiah 61
Jesus ended His reading with *'to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor'* but Isaiah had continued with, **PP** *'and the day of the vengeance of our God'* (Isaiah 61:2)

And they wanted that Messiah to bring the wrath of God against their captors with Him, yet Jesus told them, it is not the time for God's judgment, but God's favor and grace

Why are talking about the favor and grace of God, and left out His vengeance on our enemies?

We expect our Messiah to bless us and punish our enemies, especially their Roman captors

How about you...me?

Do we inwardly long for God to punish those who offend us, who have hurt us?

What is our attitude toward our political foes, or those whose actions have tarnished our reputations, our attitude toward the one transitioning to an opposite gender?

What heart attitude flow out of you toward those pushing an abortion agenda?

"The day of vengeance of our God" will come for those who will not repent, who perpetrate such evil and yes we stand against all evil in the power of the gospel

Yet this is still *'the year of the Lord's favor'*, when salvation can be found by all and any sinner

Forgetting that, having wrong expectations of what God will do now, can breed disappointment

PP 3-They wouldn't believe because of their hard hearts

"And He said to them, 'Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself.' What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.'" Luke 4:23

A friend told me of a cure you could gain by actually eating the leaves of the poison ivy plant
She said she one day gathered a salad bowl of the leaves, drizzled some dressing on it, and ate it, and never contracted the dreadful rash again

I didn't believe her, and I continue to refuse to try that supposed remedy

The crowd is muttering and thinking to each other and themselves, if you are going to claim to be our Messiah, then prove it with miracles

Paul would later say, **PP** *"Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom"* 1 Corinthians 1:22

This faithless demand would be expressed again years later during His crucifixion

PP *"And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at Him, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save himself, if He is the Christ of God, His Chosen One!'"* Luke 23:35

The people in that synagogue weren't demanding miracles so they could overcome unbelief, they were demanding them because they wouldn't believe

The skeptic philosopher Bertrand Russell once gave what he would say to God if he ended up meeting God at the final judgment: *'Not enough evidence Lord. Not enough evidence!'*

Chuck Swindoll writes, **PP** *“When people came to Jesus looking for a reason to reject Him, He gave them all they hoped to find.”*

PP 4-They wouldn't believe because of their self-righteousness

“But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” Luke 4:25-27

The people in this congregation were a religious group, attending church regularly, saying their prayers, observing the law, belonging to Israel

All of these factors blinded them to their own spiritual poverty, captivity to sin, blindness and oppression to the devil

So Jesus gave two examples from the Old Testament, one of poor widow outside of Israel, living during a severe drought and her flour and oil was down to one final meal

The prophet Elijah met her, asked her to make him a cake of bread, and despite having only enough for a final meal for her and her son, she acted in faith and fed him first

God supernaturally supplied her, a pagan, with oil and flour the rest of the drought

Another was a leper from Syria, an enemy of Israel, who came to the prophet Elisha asking to be healed of the disease

Elisha told him to dip in the Jordan 7 times, and while he at first refused, with the encouragement of a servant, he obeyed and God healed him, an outsider of Israel

In both cases, they were foreigners to Israel, and in both cases, they believed without seeing Jesus is saying to them, and to all Israel in that service, you are in danger of losing the chance to be saved because you will not believe, and I will go to the Gentiles who will

They got the message and it was too much for them, as they exploded in anger, leading Him to the limestone cliffs of Nazareth to throw Him over the edge and stone Him

He miraculously slipped from their midst and as far as we know, He never visited them again

Mark would tell us what Jesus thought of this: **PP** *“And He marveled because of their unbelief. And He went about among the villages teaching.”* Mark 6:6

Are you poor in spirit, do you feel, know that you are, like Adam and Eve, naked and ashamed before the searing holiness of God?

That you are helpless in your sin, with no way of delivering yourself?

Do you believe, trust, that God loves you and made a way for you to be saved from your sins by sending His Son Jesus, the Messiah, to sacrifice His life for you on the cross?

Do you know that Christ has secured your salvation and offers it to you, but you must believe? Or has familiarity with that message blinded you?

Have your own expectations of what Jesus should do, demands, made you unwilling to believe?

Do you refuse to believe, even though your heart has cried out to believe?

Do you refuse to believe because you cannot believe you are really that much in need of saving?

Friends, you may be in your synagogue or church every week, and suddenly the Lord will visit,

and He will proclaim the good news that you are poor, blind, captive and oppressed
And He will whisper into your soul that He can save you and you will have a choice
You can either fall at His feet and confess your sins and give your life to Him in faith
Or you will drive Him to the cliffs to silence His convicting voice
My plea is that you will believe on Jesus the anointed One, come to save your soul for eternity

Let's pray