

TOO CLOSE TO HOME

Luke 4:14-30

"I remember when"

Our trips home – people's memories.

They never quite see you as a man of God.

They always seem to remember the childish years.

In an interesting apocryphal account, one woman told Helen, "I remember whe Ralph was in third grade, and used to run around the church doing"

The only problem was, I didn't attend that church in third grade!

I still have flashbacks of one particularly mischievous incident–[the organ loft].

Afterward a dear saintly lady came up to one of my parents and said: "You know, that's the kind that grow up to be preachers!"

They never quite get used to the idea of you as a man of God!

They always remember when

The same problem got in the way of people from Jesus' area being able to receive Him.

He was too close to home!

After the first four chapters present lengthy evidence to demonstrate that Jesus is Messiah, Jesus' ministry is described with special attention given to the distinct responses to it.

RESPONSES TO THE SON OF MAN'S MINISTRY 4:14-9:50

After the temptation by Satan, Jesus, still under the control of the Holy Spirit, begins His teaching ministry in Galilee.

His ministry encounters various responses.

Luke traces that ministry, describing the different responses and the people who demonstrated each of them.

[His description of the responses raises the question:]

Who are the people who receive Christ?

Good people? Good, religious, educated people?

Pagans? Sinful, desperate, poor and dirty people?

[That question becomes a critical issue at the time of Jesus' . . .]

INITIAL PRESENTATION AND REJECTION 4:14-30

A significant confrontation—a symbolic event introducing the rejection which follows Him.

A pattern develops:

Jewish people: whom you would expect to be looking for Him, reject Him.

Pagan Gentiles: whom no one expects to be interested, trust Him and receive the benefits of His coming.

Remember what the Gospel of Luke is about:

Luke is concerned with the suffering church.

They need to be sure of what they're suffering for.

Luke writes to reaffirm their faith and the things they've been told.

Luke explains why the church (the "called out ones") was formed.

He then writes Acts to tell us *how* it was formed.

The answer to the question: “Why?” is found, in seed form, in this incident.

Why did God have to form a new body?

Because *“Jesus came unto His own and His own received Him not. But to as many as received Him, to those who trust in His name, to them He gave power to become the sons of God.”*

This incident sets the pattern for the rest of the book:

He came to His own hometown.

The people tripped over their familiarity with Him.

In spite of the evidence, they couldn't get over the fact that He grew up there

–to them He was always “the carpenter's son.”

So they are going to miss the benefits God wants to give them;

pagans are going to trust Him and receive the benefits instead.

That's the critical issue in this initial encounter:

His initial teaching 4:14-15

Jesus first presents Himself as Messiah in the synagogue in Nazareth.

For the majority in Israel, the synagogue was the center of religious life.

The temple was the official center

–there was only one and all the sacrifices were presented there.

However, for the day-to-day, week-to-week center of their worship experience, the majority focused their attention on the synagogue.

Wherever there were ten Jewish families (men), there must be a synagogue.

So every Jewish town had a synagogue.

The synagogue was the place where they met for teaching

–It was where they went to Sabbath School.

Three parts to their worship service:

1. Worship. Psalms of praise and prayer were offered to God.

2. Reading of the Scriptures. Seven people read while the Targumist translated into Aramaic or Greek for the majority who no longer really understood the ancient Hebrew text.

3. Teaching. No professional ministry nor regular teachers.

The President of the synagogue would invite a distinguished person to speak, and discussion would follow.

Jesus was becoming well-known as a synagogue teacher. **4:14-15**

He had taught all over Galilee and all were speaking highly of Him.

It was logical, then, that when He came back home, they want to hear Him too.

However, when He came home, He hit a problem.

They wanted Him to teach as in other places, so they could be impressed too.

The problem is that they were skeptical because they know His mom and dad.

The evidence again seems clear.

He has been teaching with the power of the Spirit in such a unique way that His reputation spread through the entire region.

His teaching is received as a word from God by everyone.

Matthew and Mark indicate that Jesus preached the same message as John:

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”

The kingdom for which they have been waiting is near.

His listeners were receiving His message as a word from God, and praising Him.

The only thing He has done so far is to teach!

The people are already convinced. **4:32**

His fame was spreading everywhere.

He was glorified (exalted) by everyone.

His initial presentation 4:16-21

When He arrived in Nazareth, He read the scroll in the synagogue.

He read a portion concerning Messiah (Is. 61:1-2) to announce His arrival.

Look at their reaction: *They were all staring at Him.* **4:20** Why?

Because of where He stopped? He split one verse in half!

He mentions the blessing.

He doesn't mention the judgment.

He stops right in the middle of the verse!

Because of His way of reading? Especially the “I”

He reads it as if He were talking about Himself!

The passage itself uses the first person.

Remember what the crowds said about Jesus' teaching:

“No one ever spoke like He does!”

“His teaching was like One Who has authority!”—NOT like their teachers.

At this point, when He was reading, He talked like someone talking about Himself:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on ME! Because He anointed ME to preach the Gospel

. . . He has sent ME.” **18**

Notice also the term He uses to refer to Himself: “He has *anointed* me.”

That's the term for Messiah!

—“He has ‘*Messiah*-ed me.” “He has ‘*Christ*-ed’ me.”

“He has made me ‘the anointed One’—the Messiah; the Christ.

In order to eliminate any possibility of doubt, He clarifies His point. **21**

“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled—right here in front of you!”

He makes a clear claim to establish the kingdom:

Notice the elements fulfilled “Today:” **18-19**

The good news is proclaimed to the poor.

Those who have been in captivity are released.

The blind are enabled to see.

The oppressed are set free.

The acceptable year of the Lord has come.

He does NOT say that the day of His vengeance has come yet!

The message is clear: HE is the anointed One.

The time has come! Today!

But, the good news is for: the poor, the captives, the blind, and the downtrodden!

This is NOT good news for the insiders!

They must surrender their place to the King!

They don't want to give up their privileges to *anyone*!

As in Elijah and Elisha's day, only the underprivileged—the outsiders—are interested!

His initial warning 4:22-27

They don't know what to think!

All are speaking well of Him.

All are amazed by His words; but what about His family background?!!

This can't be right! We know where He comes from!

Their problem concerning His family 4:22-24

They're amazed at His "words of grace"—the issue of who will receive God's favor.

(Compare Acts 14:3)

The people of Nazareth are unable to overcome their familiarity with Jesus' family to accept His message and ministry on its own merit. 22

Jesus warns them concerning the danger of rejection. 23-24

The proverb indicates that someone claiming to be a doctor ought to prove it by healing.

Certainly He should be able to heal the person most important to him: Himself!

[Doctors ought to be healthy!]

So, Jesus, if He is Messiah, should confirm it by doing what a Messiah does: miracles!

They apparently heard rumors of some in Capernaum, now they want to see for themselves. They're trying to bait Him into putting on a show for them.

Actually the problem isn't lack of evidence.

The problem is within them.

For those who want to know the truth, this wouldn't be a problem.

Later, some of these questions are answered—Luke has already answered them! The problem isn't the lack of answers!

They have to deal with the problem of their lack of acceptance.

They aren't seriously seeking evidence.

They are rejecting His Word and asking for enough proof to convince them.

His response 4:25-27

Jesus reminds them that people have often reacted in unbelief to God's spokesmen (especially "GOD's people").

In spite of His convincing message, God's people, who should have welcomed His arrival, reject Him.

In contrast, His message will be received by "pagans" seeking God.

He contrasts their rejection with the reception of God's grace by pagan Gentiles of previous generations.

The same pattern is about to repeat itself here!

Example from Elijah's day 25-26

At the time of the famine, none of "God's people" received relief from Elijah.

The only person to receive help was a PAGAN woman, because she trusted in Elijah and His God.

Example from Elisha's day 27

Similarly, in Elisha's days.

No one received the benefits of his ministry from among "God's people."

The only one to benefit was a PAGAN leper.

Lesson to be learned:

All Jesus did was *remind* them of these two incidents.

They made their own application.

They were *furious*!

By implication: Christ warns them that the same thing might occur again!

Israel might reject the truth.

PAGANS might receive God's grace.

Is there a lesson in these examples for US to learn too?

Salvation is for *sinners*!

It's not for the good old religious boys!

Their initial rejection 4:28-30

Jesus' listeners become angry and try to kill Him when they hear this severe warning.

God delivers Him, because it isn't time yet.

What angers them isn't His claim to be Messiah;
nor the announcement of the kingdom.

They sat quietly, questioning through that!

**What angers them is His warning that THEY might miss the blessing,
and PAGANS might receive it instead!**

Luke throws a silent dart at them here!

If He isn't Messiah, and His statement patently false, why should it bother them?!!

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS:

Whom did Christ come to save?

The religious, good, educated people reject Him.

They think of themselves as self-sufficient.

Pagan, sinful people recognize their necessity and receive salvation.

Luke 5:32; John 1:11-12; Rom. 11:30-32; 1 Tim. 1:15-16

Jesus didn't come to save the righteous; He came to save sinners.

Are you a pretty good person?

How good is good enough?

Can you make it on your own?
 If you can, there is no help out there for you!
 You'd better walk a really strict line! You have to make it alone!
 Are you a sinner?
 Then I have good news for you!
 Christ came to save sinners!

LESSONS FOR US TODAY? *Three observations:*

1. No room for pride!

It's people who are *undeserving* who receive life!
 It's the "2nd class citizens" from the world's perspective.
 There's no basis for pride here.
 If we're in Christ, it's because we're sinners!

2. We should be seeking sinners.

Living in a vacuum isn't God's way.
 Barricading ourselves off (fortress mentality) won't attract sinners.
 We need to take this good news to the sinning pagans that live near us!

3. There's hope for US today!

If you're here as a sinner, . . .
 . . . you know that you have failed God, and will never make it,
 . . . THEN, I have good news:
 Christ came to save people who are sinners, and who have no hope but to
 trust in Him!
 He came to save pagan Gentiles—with a need—people like us!