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Luke 4:14-30

Weekly Bible Study Schedule

Tuesday, January 26, 7:00 AM in HHR #5

(breakfast provided)

Tuesday, January 26, 8:30 PM in Office #225

(Sen. Wayne Wallingford's office)

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non-denominational**

The story begins with Jesus' return to Galilee. Jesus had been gone for months. He was baptized by John in the Jordan, filled with the Spirit, and then tempted by Satan in the Judean Wilderness. He returned to the province of Galilee in the power of the Spirit where his fame quickly spread.

14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

The Jewish historian Josephus, who was once the governor of Galilee, wrote that there were 204 villages in the province, all of which had at least 15,000 in population. If his numbers are correct, Galilee had a population of more than 3 million people, greater than the population of Chicago, Illinois. Jesus grew up in a place where people and ideas intersected. Galileans were well known for their courage, independence and openness to change.

15 He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

Jesus went from village to village, teaching at each of the local synagogues. Synagogues were like churches where people worshipped and learned. Only once in a while did they go to the big temple in Jerusalem to offer sacrifices and for festivals and other rituals.

Synagogue services were typically divided into three parts:

- Prayer
- Scripture reading
- Teaching

16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.

On the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. Each Sabbath day the people of God were in worship.

It was the synagogue where he grew up and everyone knew him well. The president of the synagogue asked him to read the Scripture and teach.

17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

What is really instructive about this particular Old Testament Scripture quotation from **Isaiah 61:1-2** is that Jesus ends the quotation in the middle of a sentence. Isaiah went on to say that, in addition to proclaiming the year of God's favor: the Year of Jubilee, the fiftieth year, when the land was to rest and all the debtors were to go free. They didn't keep this command. The prophet Isaiah looked forward to that time of ultimate Jubilee, when Messiah Himself would come. Jesus, in looking at this says, 'that day has come.'

Isaiah continues the sentence by saying, "...and the day of vengeance of our God." In other words, Isaiah sees the day of the Messiah as a day of grace and a day of judgment. Jesus intentionally omits the sentence to emphasize the fact that **His first coming was a coming of grace and grace alone.** The day of vengeance, of judgment, is reserved for His second coming. Now was the time of grace.

20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, 21 and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus didn't spout the usual rabbinical religion. Jesus turned all that around, and then He finished quoting the Scripture.

22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.

Jesus sat down and started his teaching with an astonishing statement: *"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."* Note two reasons for His words: first was a

prediction about the coming of the Messiah. Jesus announced that he fulfilled the prophecy, and therefore that he was the Messiah; second was all about good news of God's grace.

23 Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'" 24 "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown.

The people had heard about miracles Jesus performed in another town of Galilee called Capernaum. They wanted him to do a few miracles for them. Jesus recognized a change in their thinking. Perhaps they were asking: 'if Jesus was the Messiah sent to heal the sick, help the oppressed and give good news to the poor what about himself?' A similar statement said against Him at the cross; 'if you are God save yourself...'

25 I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. 26 Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. 27 And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed--only Naaman the Syrian."

1 Kings 17 tells about the Old Testament prophet Elijah. There was a terrible famine. A widow from the village of Zarephath and her son were down to their last meal when Elijah performed a miracle that kept them fed until the famine finished.

2 Kings 5 tells of a different Old Testament prophet named Elisha. The military commander of the army of Aram was diagnosed with leprosy. Elisha arranged a miracle that cured Naaman from the dread disease.

Jesus picked two examples where non-Jews received miracles from God. And, while the non-Jews were fed and healed, lots of Jews went hungry from the famine or suffered from never-to-be-cured leprosy.

28 All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this.

It didn't take long for synagogue people to catch Jesus' meaning. He was telling them not to expect any special treatment just because they grew up with him. They needed to trust God just like everyone else, and if they didn't - the miracles would go to others, like the Gentiles.

29 They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the

cliff. 30 But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

On the southwest corner of Nazareth, this brow overlooks the valley of Armageddon, looking toward the west—a very steep drop; to fall off that precipice would certainly bring death.

Don't be surprised if people react against God's message by turning against you and attacking you. And don't be surprised if the attacks come from those who are closest to you.

Sometimes, we can get stuck on somebody else's anger. Jesus walks away from those who tried to get under His skin. You can't control what negativity comes your way, but you can control how you respond to it. Jesus walks away and continues His ministry.

Conclusion

Some of us have known him or at least known about him all of our lives. He is so familiar to us that we risk treating him with contempt. We may not listen to him or take him seriously.

How sad to miss out on Jesus. What could be worse than failing to hear his good news? What could be worse than losing him from our lives?

If you would like to become a follower of Jesus here is an understandable way to begin.

- **Admit:** Admit to God that you are a sinner.
- **Believe:** Believe in Jesus Christ as God's Son and receive Jesus' gift of forgiveness from sin.
- **Confess:** Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to others.