

Our Mission:

To share Christ with the world
and grow disciples for Jesus



Loving God and Loving Neighbor as Ourselves

Background:

For Luke this is the platform behind Jesus' ministry. Remember, Luke is asking the basic question, 'Who is your Lord; Caesar or Christ?' As we read this text it is obvious that Jesus' Kingdom looks vastly different from Caesars. This is why Jesus gets in trouble with the people of his hometown. Caesar would offer 'bread and circuses' to keep the people satisfied. In contrast, Jesus asks them to minister to those who are most in need. And while it never became a reality, the Year of the Lord's Favor was understood by all as the year of the Biblical Jubilee, when all debts would be forgiven. Do we not pray; 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors?'

Theology Connection:

I invite you to take note of all the times Luke's Gospel speaks of a reversal of fortunes. Some have spoken of this as 'God's preferential option on behalf of the poor.' Throughout Luke's Gospel it would seem that those who should be in the know are clueless and those on the outside looking in are the first to adopt this message. It is a reminder that God's activity in the world is not limited by the theology or the structure of the church.

Application:

In a few days we will have a transition of power as the 46th President will be inaugurated outside the Capitol. It might be an interesting exercise to compare and contrast his words with Jesus'. Luther understood that for good order God created governments, but should we be wary of any political entity suggesting that it speaks for God? How does our faith shape our civic responsibilities?

The Text: Luke 4: 14-30

¹⁴ Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. ¹⁵ He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

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. He stood up to read,

¹⁷ and 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 proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 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 He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

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.

²³ Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself!' And you will tell me, 'Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'"

²⁴ "Truly I tell you," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown." 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."

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

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 off the cliff.

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

ADULT

Jesus goes back to his hometown and delivers a sermon in his home synagogue. Unfortunately, he doesn't give people what they want to hear, and they get quite upset. It is natural to want everyone to like us, but is it possible? Is it harder to speak the hard truths amongst those who know us or to those who are strangers? How do you think Jesus' sermon would go over in the church today?

YOUTH

Please read Luke 4:14-30

Where do you see yourself in today's text? Are you more like the people in Jerusalem or the people in Nazareth? Can we be both? I can have split personalities when it comes to the Word of God; I can be both glad and angry or confused at the same time... Have you ever wanted to stay in bed on a cold Sunday morning, and find excuses to avoid hearing the Word? Have you also been a faithful listener? Would you stand in a crowd outside the Water Gate in Jerusalem and listen to the Word of God for six hours? How about just driving to church in a climate-controlled sanctuary and listen for an hour? I think it is ok to be both.

Let us pray:

Dear God, thank you for your Grace, which saves us every time. Thank you for your sacrifice so we could be saved and beloved children of God. In your name, we pray, amen. sin. We cannot save ourselves, so we need someone to pay the price to set us free. And that is what Jesus did for us!

Pray:

Dear God, Thank You for sending Your son to be our savior! We love You!

Amen!

CHILDREN'S

Read and Summarize:

Jesus went to Nazareth and stood up in the synagogue and opened His scroll to teach the people. Jesus said, "The spirit of the Lord is with me and He has given me the job to tell the good news to the poor. He sent me to tell the prisoners that they can be free, the blind that they can see again, and the oppressed that they can be free to tell everyone that it's the time when God is with us." When Jesus was done talking, He sat down and told the people that the Old Testament scriptures would be complete because of Jesus. For many years, everyone was waiting for God to send someone to save them, and that person was Jesus! All of the people were amazed at Jesus' words, but when Jesus compared Himself to the men of God, the people in the church got angry! They took Jesus to a hill and tried to throw Him off, but Jesus got away from them.

1. What town did Jesus visit?
2. What was special about this town?

Isn't it sad that the people of Nazareth didn't believe that Jesus was God's Son? Jesus came to set us free from our sin. We cannot save ourselves, so we need someone to pay the price to set us free. And that is what Jesus did for us!

Pray:

Dear God,

Thank You for sending Your son to be our savior! We love You!

Amen!