



READ LUKE 4:14-30

Jesus returned to Nazareth, his hometown. He read to the people from Isaiah about God sending him to proclaim good news to the poor, to announce freedom to the prisoners and sight to the blind. He told the people that the scripture has been fulfilled in their hearing.

For a while the people were intent, watching and listening, but then they began to grumble. They asked each other, “Isn’t this guy just a kid from the village?” They didn’t like what they were hearing, and they got more and more angry, until they threw him out. They were ready to throw him off a cliff, but Jesus slipped out and went on his way.

REMEMBER: Luke 4:21

Today the scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

MORE TO CONSIDER

Consider this quote from anti-nazi theologian Martin Niemoller: “First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out – because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak for me.”

Then consider this reworking of that idea by poet and activist Rose Marie Berger: sojo.net/media/riff-martin-niemoller-and-matthew-25

What is the difference? Is one really about “me” while the other version is about others? How? Is it difficult to look at the radical love of Jesus outside the lens of our own personal benefit and future? Is that the mirror that Jesus holds up in this story? How can we learn to gaze into that mirror with vulnerability, compassion, even action, instead of anger? Have we come a long way? Is there still a long way left to go?

NEXT WEEK: Luke 5:1-11

! SURPRISE

DAY 1: How do you feel when you’re challenged to think about difficult topics or challenging issues? Do we try to avoid those situations? Why? Can you think of any time that we as a community have been asked to sort out a truly difficult or painful idea? What happened? Did it go any better for us than it did for the people of Nazareth?

! SURPRISE

DAY 2: Is Jesus a controversial rabbi? In what way? Is proclaiming hope for all people radical? Why? Why is that message met with such opposition?

➡ PROGRESS

DAY 3: Does Jesus’ message still stir us up, so many years later? Do we hear it the way the people in Nazareth did? Does it incite frustration and anger? Does it hold up a mirror to your life and make you see things you’d rather deny? Or have we tamed and domesticated Jesus so that his words no longer sound like a challenge? Why?

? WONDER

DAY 4: Why does Jesus challenge people to think about challenging issues? Is that Jesus’ purpose? Does Jesus come to save us (from what?), or teach us, or love us, or something else? Do you think the heart of God is revealed through Jesus? If so, what can we learn about God here?

! SURPRISE

DAY 5: Are there any ways in which the Prince of Peace community is too comfortable or too complacent to see the systems of oppression that we participate in? Do you think we’re ever blind to the suffering around us? How can we know for sure? How can we see what we’re not seeing? Can this story help us? Or do these conversations make us so defensive that we want to “kill the messenger,” just like the people of Nazareth?

👥 RELATIONSHIP

DAY 6: What does it mean when Jesus says the scripture has been fulfilled in their hearing? Does Jesus come to bring hope and wholeness all by himself? Or does Jesus expect that the scripture he reads will actually be fulfilled by those who hear it? What are the implications of that? If God is revealed in Jesus, can Jesus (and therefore God) be revealed in us? If we’re honest about ourselves, our lives, our communities, our country ... is that what’s happening? Are we really being the hands of Jesus?

👥 RELATIONSHIP

DAY 7: Is it true that we can’t experience wholeness if others aren’t experiencing wholeness? Why? Is understanding and believing this necessary before we can truly become the hands, feet and hear of Jesus in the world?