

## Listening To Jesus Conference

### Session 4 - A Disrupting Visit from Jesus

**Aim\*:** To become a truly prophetic people who hear and obey our extraordinary Lord.\*

Jesus lived according to Kingdom culture and that often clashed with his native culture. We are called to courageously walk in Kingdom culture where it is contrary to our native culture.

In our first session we reminded ourselves that, like Mary, we must listen to Jesus and not just busy ourselves with many distractions like Martha. Likewise discipling others centres on teaching them to listen to, and obey, Jesus. And our mission is to bring people to Jesus so they can find rest for their souls in Him.

We have been looking at Luke 4:14-30 - Jesus visiting his home synagogue after His baptism. We thought about this story from Joseph's point of view and then from the point of view of one of the angry congregation members.

*What is Jesus saying to you?*

**Does anyone want to share anything about your encounter with this story so far?**

**Has this story made you think differently about how you listen to Jesus?**

*Imagine you are Jesus in this story*

This week I want you to think about the story as if you were Jesus.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom.

Everyone has come early today to try and get a seat. Look around you. Here are all your friends and family, that you have grown up with and know intimately. As the familiar service gets underway the Holy Spirit starts to speak to you. "These dear people, your friends and family; they do not know the voice of God. They know He used to speak to the prophets, but they have no expectation that God would want to speak to them. They set out years ago to worship me by way of this synagogue service, but for most of them, most of the time, it has become more of a religious duty. It serves well in maintaining the social aspect of the community which I am very glad about. But I have called you to break out of the safety of the congregation and take the Good News of the Kingdom out into the hurting world. So plant the seed of My word into their hearts. And be prepared for a bumpy ride." Your attention comes back as you are asked to read.

*They love the reading*

He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

"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, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

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. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

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.

Whilst everyone is smiling and congratulating Joseph on having such a fine son, the Spirit speaks to you again. "They have dismissed the reading as a lovely familiar scripture and have no idea that God is actually announcing its fulfilment. You need to shake them up a bit. Get them to realise you are speaking for Me. Warn them not to dismiss your words simply because you are their friend. Remind them about Elijah and Elisha." So just as the Rabbi is about to start the prayers, you interrupt:

*You deliberately provoke the congregation*

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.' Truly I tell you," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. 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. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. 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."

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

You see the anger in people's faces and shoot up an arrow prayer, "I don't think they liked that! Instead of making them stop and listen, they are all murmuring and glaring at me." The Spirit answers, "Yes. This happy community need a good shaking to get them to stop thinking about their services and to start thinking about the Kingdom. Many of them have got so much invested in the synagogue that they have not stopped to even consider that I might want to change things. But some will reflect on what has happened today and will seek you out to hear more. But we aren't done yet. I'm going to stir up such an angry outcry that they will not forget this day, and next week's service will be completely taken up with heart-searching about what happened today."

*They drive You away*

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

As you walk away you talk to the Father.

**What conversation do you think might have taken place between Jesus and the Father?**

- Father, did I mess that up? Was that what you wanted to happen?

- They have rejected me. What next? – "Over to you, Holy Spirit..."
- Should I go back and try to explain or reason with them?
- Give me the courage to press on. Give them the sight to see the truth.
- They don't know what they are doing. They are rejecting God truth for the lies of their culture.
- Their tradition hardened their hearts.

*Why did Jesus provoke them?*

We need to ask "Why did Jesus deliberately provoke his congregation?" Remember that these were the people He knew and loved the best. We need to look closely at what he read to understand why Jesus provoked them.

"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, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

**What is the difference between this announcement and the normal synagogue service?**

- The power and presence of Jesus was not in the normal services.
- The service was to benefit the congregation.
- The poor, the prisoners, the blind and the oppressed were not in the synagogue.
- Jesus was sent to those who didn't go to church.

**Why do you think Jesus provoked them?**

- They had always had the synagogue services. They never even imagined they should do anything else.
- They had so much invested in the synagogue and the services they were resistant to change.
- They needed to discover, by their angry response, that they were more concerned about their own agenda than what God might want for them.

**How many times do you think you have read this story in your whole life?**

- **How many of those times have you smiled and said, "That's nice!"**
- **Have you ever thought that Jesus might want to disrupt your life like He did for this synagogue?**

**Have you ever experienced an event that has seriously disrupted your normal church service?**

- Ebola, Covid 19, a storm damaging the building, bulldozers demolishing your church...
- **Did you stop to consider if Jesus had visited you in that event?**
- **What might Jesus be wanting to do or say to you?**

During the next week will you set time aside to pray through all we have been talking about?

- Ask Jesus what He wants to say to you
- What does His announcement in v18 mean for how you conduct your life and ministry?
- What disrupting events have you experienced?
- Is there something Jesus wants to disrupt in your life?

- Is there something Jesus wants to disrupt in your church?
- What are you doing about it?

**Next time...Can we share with each other what we think Jesus is saying to us?**