

*18“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” 20Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. Luke 4:18-20*

We looked last week at how Jesus read this passage from Isaiah in His hometown synagogue. He was announcing the beginning His public ministry. Nazareth, Jesus home town, was a small Jewish village of 400 to 500 people This meant Jesus and his family were well known in the community, so He was familiar with those in the synagogue that day.

*Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. After reading from the prophet Jesus sat down and said, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”* This all tells us of Jesus dialog but he might have expounded (elaborated) the text of this Scripture. We do know *the people were speaking well of Him, and admiring the gracious words which were coming from His lips.* As we read Jesus words at at other times they seem harsh. When talking of the scribes and Pharisees He said, *Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Matt 23:33* But He was also able to speak with much wisdom and grace. As He did awhen He was twelve with the teachers in the temple, *Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. Luke 2:47*

He taught the multitudes they marveled at his teaching. *The crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law. Matt 7:28,29* He was also able to speak *gracious words.* Jesus spoke with grace, with words *that brought joy, pleasure, loveliness: grace of speech.* And much comfort, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.* Here Jesus words were *gracious*, this important to note because in a short time the crowd was going to turn on Him. Much like Stephen in Acts before the crowd turned and stoned him. Proverbs states, *A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. Prov 15:10* Sometimes anger is stirred up as a result of what is in another’s heart. Our words may be full of grace but malace and hatred of God is in the hearts of our listeners. We are not to blame. Paul wrote,

*Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, but if there is any good word for edification according to the need of the moment, say that, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Eph 4:29*

This instruction is so important because we all have experienced what happens when *unwholesome words come out of our mouth.* James wrote, *the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. James 3:6* On this occasion *the people were speaking well of Him, and admiring the gracious words which were coming from His lips.* But He didn’t trust Himself to them for He knew just how quickly men can turn.

*many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name. 24But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. 25He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person. John 2:23-25*

*They were saying, “Is this not Joseph’s son?”* They had responded positively, *speaking well of Him,* for He spoke *with authority* but He was a local. They began to doubt Him.

*23And He said to them, “No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me: ‘Physician, heal yourself! All the miracles that we heard were done in Capernaum, do here in*

*your hometown as well.’” 24But He said, “Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown. Luke 4:23-24*

Luke doesn't tell us about this but Jesus must have performed some signs in Capernaum (forty miles from Nazareth, a 9 or 10 hour walk)

*And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 15“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: Matt 4:13-15*

They want Him to perform signs and Miracles. Much like the devil did with Jesus in the wilderness, *If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread. Luke 4:3* Their familiarity with Jesus bred contempt, *come on, show us a trick, prove that you are someone special, do something here for us.* Barnes comments on this passage,

*Whatsoever we have heard done - Whatsoever we have heard that thou hast done. It would seem, from this, that Christ had before this performed miracles in Capernaum, though the evangelist has not recorded them. In Capernaum - Capernaum was on the northwest corner of the Sea of Tiberias, and was not far from Nazareth. It is not improbable that some of those who then heard him might have been present and witnessed some of his miracles at Capernaum. Barnes Notes*

Distrust and jealousy seems to have entered these Jew's hearts, *they were offended at Him.* Jesus declares to them a proverb, *no prophet is accepted in his own country.* He used this phrase at other times in the gospels. In Mark's gospel expands on this statement, *A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.* This may describe the occurrence that Luke wrote about.

*1Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. 2And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, “Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! 3Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? (Jesus brothers and sisters) And are not His sisters here with us?” So they were offended at Him. 4But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” 5Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. 6And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching. Mark 6:1-6*

Jesus wasn't honored in His hometown, among His own family. There was a lack of faith and as a result, *He could do no mighty work there.* Their lack of faith limited Christ's ability *do mighty works.* The writer of Hebrews states, *Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.* Jesus told these Jews He was familiar with, *Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.* They wanted to hear but they couldn't press past their own understanding of who Jesus was, *their own offence at Him.* Here was the Messiah Israel had waited to see but *His own people did not accept Him.* Those closest to him rejected Him at first, His own family. We need to be aware that our own family might not be able to handle us if we let Jesus transform our lives. We are as Paul told the Corinthians, *To those who are perishing, we are a dreadful smell of death and doom.* We have to deal with this rejection of Christ in our own hearts at times and find special grace to deal with our-

rejection of Christ. Of the nature of man's rejection of the Son of God, John wrote,

*10He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him, and yet the world did not know Him. 11He came to His own, and His own people did not accept Him. 12But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, 13who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God. John 1:10-13*

This passage we are looking at may have a deeper meaning than what was happening in Nazareth that day. Jesus gave them two illustrations of the prophet Elijah and God working outside of Israel. Jesus ministry was to the Jews but as soon as the church was born in Acts, God began working with the Gentiles. Luke, who was writing this Gospel and later Acts was fully aware of that and many have understood the prophetic nature or what Jesus said.

*Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. 25But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; 26but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian. Luke 4:24-27*

The Jews themselves may have sensed the challenge to their beliefs in what Jesus said. Their spirits moved from doubt to wrath. They were His neighbors and friends and they were, *filled with wrath* and ready to throw Him down over the cliff.

*28So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. 30Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way. Luke 4:28-30*

Jesus understood the sinful nature of man. It didn't matter if it was Jewish flesh or Gentile flesh the truth is that *all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*. John wrote, *No one needed to tell him (Jesus) about human nature, for He knew what was in each person's heart. John 2:25* Even though God knew the weakened and fallen state of man he provided redemption in His Son. Jesus came to His own and they were ready to throw Him off a cliff. His plan was always include Gentiles in His redemptive plan, as Elijah demonstrated. Jesus came and died to save sinners, *all have sinned. God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Rom 5:8* Only believe and all things are possible.

*3For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Rom 8:3,4*

*14But thank God! He has made us his captives and continues to lead us along in Christ's triumphal procession. Now he uses us to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere, like a sweet perfume. 15Our lives are a Christ-like fragrance rising up to God. But this fragrance is perceived differently by those who are being saved and by those who are perishing. 16To those who are perishing, we are a dreadful smell of death and doom. But to those who are being saved, we are a life-giving perfume. And who is adequate for such a task as this? 2 Cor 2:14-16*