

SERMON REFLECTIONS:

1. What was meaningful to you in Sunday's sermon? (Beginnings: Luke 3:21-22 & 4:1-13)

CONVERSATION GUIDE:

This week's sermon title, "A Promise Fulfilled," draws our attention to the word "promise."

1. What comes to mind when you think of the word "promise"?
2. Do you think of "promise" as a noun or a verb?
3. What promises do you recall that have been important in your life? How were they fulfilled?

In Luke 4:14-30, Jesus returns to Nazareth, his "home town." As you read, look for passages related to promise, prophets, and popularity.

READ Luke 4:14-21

DISCUSS

Verses 14 and 15 set the scene for Jesus's ministry in Galilee and Nazareth. Jesus did not go directly to Nazareth from his baptism and temptation in the desert. Nearly a year had passed since John the Baptist introduced him as the Messiah. During this time, he called disciples, cleansed the temple in Jerusalem, and healed the nobleman's son from a distance. He taught in village synagogues, and his fame spread throughout Galilee. Knowing of his popularity, it's likely the people in Nazareth were eager to see him and hear what he would do for them.

On the Sabbath in the synagogue, Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah, **"¹⁸The 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."**

1. What is meaningful about Jesus reading this prophecy?
2. What is the promise in Luke 4:18-21? What is the fulfillment? What verse speaks directly to the fulfillment of the promise?
3. What do you see in these verses that describes the works of Jesus?

It's significant that Jesus stopped reading mid-sentence and rolled up the scroll after he read, *"To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."* This ending point has been described as a 2,000 year-old comma because it omits Isaiah's conclusion to the sentence, "and the day of vengeance of our God," (Isaiah 61:1-2) a reference to the Messiah's second coming and the time of judgment. Here in Nazareth, the focus is on the first coming--the time to reveal God and to provide a way of salvation.

READ Luke 4:22-30

DISCUSS

1. How did the people in Nazareth respond to Jesus after he said, *"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing"*? Do you think they fully understood the meaning?
2. How did Jesus reply to the people? Why do you think he replied the way he did?

Jesus tested his listeners' enthusiasm and received their wrath when he said they were expecting him to do the things in Nazareth that he did in nearby Capernaum and that he came to bring blessings to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The mood changed quickly. Furious, they rushed at him, attempting to throw him off a cliff. However, Jesus miraculously walked right through the crowd and went safely on his way. This was not the miracle the people in Nazareth expected.

3. Why did the crowd become so angry?
4. What do the statements, "Physician, heal yourself" and "No prophet is accepted in his hometown" mean to you?

APPLY

1. What do you see in the promise from the prophet Isaiah and its fulfillment that challenges, enlightens, or encourages your Christian life today?
2. The desire to be popular is often a hindrance to Christian ministry. How is this manifested in our current culture? What are ways for Christians to deal with this tendency?
3. The people in Nazareth listening to Jesus didn't like what they heard. How do you respond to preaching/teaching that you don't like? What guidelines would help to deal with unwelcome words in a thoughtful way?

Luke 4:14-30 (NKJV)

¹⁴Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. ¹⁵And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. ¹⁶So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

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. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

²¹And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

²²So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, “Is this not Joseph’s son?”

²³He said to them, “You will surely say this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum do also here in Your country.’” ²⁴Then He 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.”

²⁸ So 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 on His way.

References:

Adventuring Through the Bible, Ray Stedman; *New Geneva Study Bible*; David Guzik: Study Guide for Luke 4.
https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide_Luk/Luk_4.cfm?a=977018; Bob Duffenbach: On Prophets and Popularity (Luke 4:14-30)
<https://bible.org/seriespage/prophets-and-popularity-luke-414-30>