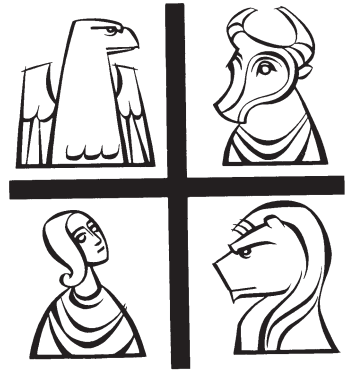


Reading Luke in Lent

Gospel of Luke 4:14-30



Jesus Begins His Ministry

14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.

He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

18 ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,

to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’

20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down.

And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

21 And he began to say to them,

‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’

22 And all spoke well of him and marvelled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth.

And they said,

‘Is not this Joseph’s son?’

23 And he said to them,

‘Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb,

‘Physician, heal yourself.’

What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.’

24 And he said,

‘Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.

25 But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah,

when the heavens were shut up three years and six months,

and a great famine came over all the land,

26 and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath,

in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.

27 And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha,

and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.’

28 When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath.

29 And they rose up and drove him out of the town

and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built,

so that they could throw him down the cliff.

30 But passing through their midst, he went away.

Reflection

The next 5 chapters in Luke are an account of Jesus' ministry in Galilee. He begins reading in the synagogue in Nazareth. The text is from Isaiah but Jesus is referring to himself and his mission — in Luke Jesus sets out the purpose of his mission from the beginning. In his Baptism the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he will proclaim the good news in word and deed (as shown in this and the next section). Jesus announces a year of favour (a jubilee) when liberty is given to those in debt and sin.

In his home town Jesus makes explicit that the text is happening now and this unsettles them. He refers to Elijah and Elisha, not only to suggest that he is a prophet like them but to show that liberty is offered beyond Israel.

- What in this reading do you recognise as being fulfilled today?
- Where is liberty still needed?

Prayer

Lord God,
whose compassion embraces all peoples,
whose law is wisdom, freedom, and joy for the poor,
fulfil in our midst your promise of favour,
that we may receive the gospel of salvation with faith
and, anointed by the Spirit, freely proclaim it.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.
Amen.

Gospel of Luke 4:31-44

Jesus Heals a Man with an Unclean Demon

- ³¹ And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee.
And he was teaching them on the Sabbath,
³² and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority.
³³ And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon,
and he cried out with a loud voice,
³⁴ 'Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?
I know who you are—the Holy One of God.'
³⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying,
'Be silent and come out of him!'
And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst,
he came out of him, having done him no harm.
³⁶ And they were all amazed and said to one another,
'What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits,
and they come out!'
³⁷ And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

Jesus Heals Many

³⁸ And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house.
Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf.
³⁹ And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her,
and immediately she rose and began to serve them.
⁴⁰ Now when the sun was setting,
all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him,
and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them.
⁴¹ And demons also came out of many, crying,
'You are the Son of God!'
But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak,
because they knew that he was the Christ.

Jesus Preaches in Synagogues

⁴² And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place.
And the people sought him and came to him,
and would have kept him from leaving them,
⁴³ but he said to them,
'I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well;
for I was sent for this purpose.'
⁴⁴ And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

Reflection

In the previous passage Jesus proclaimed the kingdom in words here it is proclaimed through his actions. As often in Luke there is a parallel between the synagogue in Nazareth and Capernaum. Here they receive Jesus's word and actions and recognize that his teaching has authority. At the end instead of rejecting him they do not want him to leave. Whatever people's reaction Jesus' mission leads him onwards.

In Capernaum Jesus is shown have power over demons as well as healing those who are ill. Peter's mother-in-law has a high fever which Jesus cures. The next verse may seem odd but the original hearers would have made the connection between 'rose' and resurrection, and anyone who shares in the life of Jesus is called to a life of service.

- Luke makes a close connection between words and deeds, between Jesus' preaching and his healing. How are we called to serve after listening to Gods word?

Prayer

Out of your power and compassion, O God,
you sent your Son into our afflicted world
to proclaim the day of salvation.

Heal the brokenhearted,
bind up our wounds.
Bring us health of body and spirit
and raise us to new life in your service.

We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.
Amen.

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