

The truth is...



SERMON NOTES FEBRUARY 2, 2025

Scripture: Luke 4:21-30

LUKE 4:21-30 (NRSV)

²¹Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.' ²²All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?' ²³He said to them, 'Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, "Doctor, cure yourself!" And you will say, "Do here also in your home town the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum." ' ²⁴And he said, 'Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's home town. ²⁵But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up for three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁶yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.' ²⁸When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

"God's grace can be offensive when the truth which Jesus brings exposes our selfishness, our judging, and our resistance to God's mercy and compassion for all people...yet our only hope is grace!"

I. "BE IT EVER SO HUMBLE...!"

- A. Jesus is still "back home" in Nazareth...in the synagogue worshipping, praying, reading the Scriptures, and is now expounding upon them.
- B. His first words of ministry in Luke's Gospel, "Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing," have prompted reactions of awe, wonder and amazement!
- C. Jesus perceptively anticipates his people's expectation that he will do even greater things in his home town, than they have heard that he has done in Capernaum (a primarily gentile city), and quotes two proverbs expressing "Israel's blindness" to God's activity in their midst!
- D. Jesus then tells them the "truth" of their blindness, and even resentment, of God's favor towards all people, by reminding them of Israel's history in not being receptive to God's message through the prophets...especially the familiar stories of Elijah, and Elisha.
- E. Israel, including Jesus' hometown, should have understood and embraced Jesus' message, but they are **offended by God's grace to all those of whom they do not approve!**
- F. The praise of those in the synagogue so soon is turned to rage, and they rise up against Jesus and are prepared to "stone" him by casting him off the brow of the city.

II. "YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN!"

- A. There is a **dark side to Epiphany** when the light of Jesus Christ exposes our resistance to God's mercy and grace...telling us what we really do not want to hear!
- B. *"Jesus does not go elsewhere because he is rejected; he is rejected because he goes elsewhere!"*
(Fred Craddock)

