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Luke 4:21-30

Last week you heard, “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. 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. 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.

Comment

This is a troubling passage for me,. It’s troubling for me because my model of faith is about dialogue and conversation promoting peace rather than rocking the boat. Jesus, seemingly steps into an otherwise peaceful situation and picks a fight. Everyone is speaking well of him it says in v22, everyone is pleased that one of their own is making a mark on the world....until he stirs the waters. Surely he must have felt the atmosphere begin to turn? But far from taking a step back and adopting a more conciliatory tone, he ramps it up.

Our lectionary text begins in an awkward place with the words of Jesus sermon based upon the text from the Isaiah scroll (Luke

4:18-19). It’s a one sentence sermon which offers incredible hope to people who were poor, captive, blind and oppressed. No wonder this was received well. It may even have been that the comment about ‘Joseph’s son’ actually revealed an impression that surely whatever great things this new preacher was bringing they would be distributed first amongst his own people, in the town where he was raised. They wouldn’t be the first community seeking to benefit from the fame or notoriety of a local daughter or son. It might also explain their eagerness for him to perform some of the wonders he had done in other places.

The thing is, as Jesus unpacks the content of his vocation for them, and elaborates on his brief sermon, the implications weren’t too popular. Jesus wasn’t about to let local populism, or unspoken but quietly understood sectarianism, blow him off track. And so the biblical examples he draws to their attention concern God’s care for foreigners instead of locals.

People are offended then by the outworking of the sermon and its connection to the mission of this new preacher and miracle-worker. Elijah was sent to end the hunger of the foreign widow and to heal the disease of the foreign soldier (who was a general who led the enemy army). The implications are therefore clear, the goodness of God is extended to the foreign one who is hungry and the stranger who is ill.

It raised the possibility that the Spirit of the Lord in Isaiah had anointed this Jesus with a message of good news for the poor, the hungry, the captive and the blind but that the poor, the hungry, the captive and the blind were foreign too.

Which might have been OK if he had been willing to offer a preferential position to his old neighbors in Nazareth. But that’s not the way of Jesus and so they are scandalized enough to eject him from their company, like the scapegoat in Lev 16.

You see, being brought up in Nazareth, he would have been expected to know who was ‘in’ and

who was ‘out’. Who you are ‘for’ and who you are ‘against’. Who is ‘inside’ the circle and definitely who must remain forever ‘outside’. At first it looks to everyone like he has affirmed the cherished values of the town, and he is the famous extension of us.

But Jesus won’t massage egos. Jesus is a threat to the easy peace of the community, comfortable in its sectarianism, so long as no-one talks about it. So he talks about it, and in talking reveals the hearts of those present.

And their hearts are towards violence and they know that peace will only be returned through the violent ejection of the disturber of peace, so that the ‘innocence’ of the citizens of Nazareth can once again go unchallenged. So they try to kill him because what use is the love of God towards us if our God doesn’t also hate our enemies.

Jesus escapes...just. But the sudden escalation in the anger of the crowd faced with the truth of its own intolerance is a warning that Jesus might not be so fortunate the next time. And there will be a next time, when the enthusiastic embrace of the crowd on Palm Sunday will turn murderous by Friday.

So back to what was originally troubling about this passage. Is Jesus initiating violence, or is he merely naming the violence that is already there, albeit artfully concealed?



13 Spiritual Disciplines of Christianity

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Prayer | Serve others |
| Meditation | Confess |
| Study of Scripture | Seek Counsel |
| Simplicity of life | Thanksgiving |
| Surrendered life | Worship |
| Solitude/Quiet | Give/Support too |
- FAST**

Reasons to Fast

- *Difficult decision to make
- *Experiencing major life change
- *Seeking to draw closer to God and hear God’s voice and know God’s will for your life
- *Repenting from sin
- *Seeking to break out of something/ deliverance

*Seeking protection of God

Judaism

Three daily prayers

Observe religious holidays: Passover,

Yom Kippur, Purim, Hanukkah

Sabbath regulations

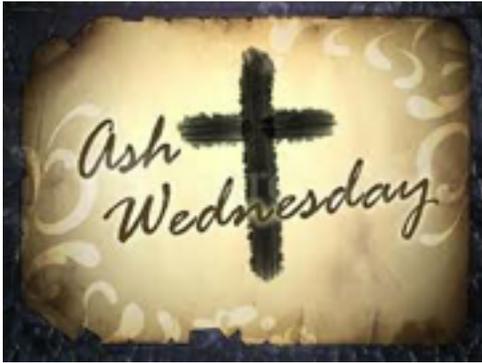
Dietary restrictions (kashrut)

Five Pillars of Islam

1. Shahada - profession of faith
2. Salat - five daily prayers
3. Zakat - charity to poor
4. Sawm - Fast during Ramadan
5. Hajj - Pilgrimage to Mecca
-Dietary & attire

EVERYWHERE IS
WITHIN WALKING
DISTANCE IF YOU
HAVE THE TIME.

-Church Sign



March 6, 2019

Getting some ideas together and
would like to share soon - just
something to be thinking about.