

WEEKLY REFLECTION

When Jesus stands up to read from the scroll of Isaiah in Luke 4:17, He reads about the acts of the Anointed One in Isaiah 61. The Anointed One is filled by the Holy Spirit and sent out by God, and he is here to proclaim good news for the poor (v.18a). Not only that, but He also brings liberty and release to the captives, the blind, and the oppressed. (v.18b) As Jesus ends this, all eyes in the synagogue are fixed on Him—"today", He says, "this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (v.21b)

What's particularly interesting about this passage is how the crowd goes from amazement in verse 22 to attempted murder in verse 29. What happened in-between? In verse 23, Jesus anticipates the people's desire for Him to perform miraculous signs and wonders similar to what happened at Capernaum, perhaps in an attempt to prove that He is who He claims to be. But like John the Baptist before Him, who admonished his listeners by commanding them to "bear fruits in keeping with repentance" (3:8a), Jesus points out that the message He bears will not be received by those who are hearing Him. Their spiritual pride is in the way, and they cannot see past their own ideas of who Jesus is. Similarly, they have their own ideas of what it means to receive salvation and they believe that, as God's chosen people, they have already received it.

While we may marvel at the quick turnaround of the crowds from Jesus' hometown, at the way that Jesus was spoken well of and marveled at (v.22a) but driven out of town so they could try and throw Him down a cliff shortly after (v.29), we have to ask ourselves if we've done the same thing. Have we accepted Jesus only when He matches our expectations of Him, and rejected Him when He's offended us? What strands between Him and our humble surrender towards Him?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

What is the most serious injury that you've ever received? What's the story behind it? How / Did it impact your senses, e.g. movement, vision, hearing, taste, smell etc.?

What do you think it might be like to be a part of the crowd from Jesus' hometown, spiritually prideful and blind, unable to receive the good news of the gospel?

QUESTION TWO:

Consider the acts that the Anointed One is tasked with performing in Isaiah 61 (which Jesus quotes in Luke 4:18-19):

- Proclaiming good news to the poor
- Proclaiming liberty to the captives
- (Proclaiming the) recovering of sight to the blind
- The setting at liberty of those who are oppressed
- Proclaiming the year of the Lord's favor

What are some of the ways that the crowds from Jesus' hometown might have interpreted these acts? How might Jesus' interpretation be different from theirs?

What are some of the ways that we might interpret these acts, and how might Jesus' interpretation be different from ours?

QUESTION THREE:

What is your response to Jesus? Are there any preconceptions, spiritual pride, temptations, personal agenda, or baggage that is holding you back from responding wholeheartedly to Him? If so, how might you surrender these things to Him, and how can your group walk with you in the process of doing so?