

Luke 4:16-30 (NIV), Jesus' Mission

¹⁴ Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. ¹⁵ He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. ¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Notes:

- Again, Luke makes the point that Jesus is beginning his ministry in the power of the Spirit. Galilee was a predominantly gentile area.
- Jesus is citing Isaiah 61:1-2 which also echoes the year of Jubilee from Lev. 25:10
- The full context (vv. 22-30) shows two reactions:
 - v. 22 "all spoke well of him and were amazed..."
 - v. 28 "all the people were furious when they heard this."
 - The ones visited by the prophets Elijah and Elisha were not Jews but Gentiles.
- Care should be taken not to overspiritualize Jesus' mission and make it only about spiritual needs to the neglect of physical ones; and also to underspiritualize emphasizing societal change and neglecting the spiritual change.

Questions

1. Why is it significant Luke points out this is in Galilee, a known area with many gentiles?
2. In what ways is Jesus challenging the religious status quo and in what ways is he also affirming it?
3. How does Jesus' ministry speak to both real physical needs and to spiritual ones?
4. From what you know of the gospels, and Luke in particular, how does Jesus demonstrate this is what his ministry was about?
5. The reaction to Jesus is both positive and negative. What do you think people would rightly agree with Jesus about and what do you think people would be upset with Jesus about?
6. How might Jesus' words be challenging to you?