**Luke 4:16-30**

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 favor.” **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 marveled 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.

**“Jesus At Home With Us”**

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. The extraordinary always seems to get the focus in life. Our culture thrives on the newest invention to sell, the next superstar rising to the top of the list, or that over-the-top candidate for president. Yet, the extraordinary never can sustain life very long. This is because there are far more days that are ordinary. For that one game won with all the fans cheering, there were many more days filled with doing the same play repeatedly. For celebrating that wedding anniversary of 50 years, there was a lifetime filled with much more patients and enduring love day-by-day. For that child who makes it big in life, there were parents behind the scene with daily encouragement, discipline, and helping hands.

As we continue with the Epiphany season manifesting various signs of glory that Jesus is Lord. The event today is nothing like changing water into wine at Cana. If anything, it is the very opposite with no room for any kind of celebrating at Nazareth. The danger of course is to figure there must have been some problem with those people long ago. It might even make us wonder how they could be so foolish! If we had Jesus preaching that would be a wonder to praise and not put down. Yet, the problem of being from His hometown is that they were all too comfortable. This can be a problem even among the baptized family of God. Those in Corinth were comfortable with their individual gifts, but lost how the same Spirit united them in Christ. To be at home in the Church is to be at home with Jesus still preaching His liberating Word for us today.

Jesus was at home with preaching even in Nazareth. It was his custom to go to the local synagogue for worship on the Sabbath Day. Hearing the Word was the ordinary way of life in God’s house. God’s Son did not look down on the value of this Word. During a particular service, Jesus received the honor to read the Scripture and preach a sermon. Turning in the scroll to Isaiah 61, He declared some of the most promising words about the Savior. This was nothing new to hear, but the suspense that was killing them was waiting for Jesus’ Word. Finally, they heard him say, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” Jesus anointed by the Spirit of His baptism was carrying out the will of God. He was proclaiming the Gospel and He did not forget to share it even at his hometown Nazareth.

The Lord Jesus does not forget to preach His saving word to us. Salvation has gone out to the ends of the earth, but Jesus has made His home in the Church. It means the baptized have received good news to hear all the days of our life. This is a promising refuge for repentant sinners. Those poor in works of righteousness can hear the righteousness Jesus alone gives. Those blind to the way of heaven can look to hearing what God’s Son has to say. Those captive to the devil’s trickery can turn to hear freedom that comes from Jesus. Those oppressed by sin and death can have hearts lifted up to hear the conquering voice of Christ. Jesus has made our Sabbath Day rest in Him so that God’s Word comes in fullness. It is to be at home with the gift of salvation and the good fruit bound to follow for life.

Yet, those in Nazareth were not at home with what Jesus preached. They offered a few complimentary words, but that quickly changed when they weighed out what Jesus said. Their question about him being Joseph’s son was a sign of contempt. They could not get beyond the ordinary life Jesus once had among them. Who did He think he was? Claiming to be the Christ and equal to God was outrageous. Jesus as God knew their hearts and spoke to their rejection. He uncovered the truth how they did not want hear His Word, but were looking for a miracle. They wanted Nazareth to receive a mark of glory similar to Capernaum. Jesus also reminded them about the time of Elijah and Elisha. God did not show grace to the many in Israel, but gave it to a pagan widow in Sidon and another pagan solider a Syrian. Wonder over what Jesus preached turned to wrath against him when he exposed their prideful and jealous hearts.

As we already witness today, our culture was once at home with Christ and His Church only now it has quickly changed its tune. However, the rejection at Nazareth asks us a deeper question that is to hit home with us. How have you been too comfortable with Christ? Do we neglect Him compared to other glorious fixations we seek for life? Do we have selective hearing taking what Jesus’ says only when it works best for me? Is His Word still good news when tragedies upon life darken the way? Are we demanding more from miracles than treasuring what God promises in His Word? Selfishness and distrust is the fuel for rejection until there is no room left to hear what Jesus says. As the book of Hebrews states, “Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it” (Hebrew 2:1).

Thankfully, Jesus is so at home with preaching He passed through the crowd only to go to the cross. Those in Nazareth wanted to kill Him, but it would not go their way. Instead, they received exactly what they wanted all along, a miracle. God’s Son went away from the angry mob unharmed. Yet, his hometown had the mark that later would be glorified at the cross. It hung with a title saying, “Jesus of Nazareth the king of the Jews.” Jesus did hand Himself over to an angry mob incited by the leaders of Israel. He became the captive, while the murder Barabbas was set free. Pilate tried to find a way of escape, but the wrath against Jesus was to great and God’s Will was to punish Him. “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” is all Pilate heard. Yet, the most ordinary death by crucifixion for a criminal now is the way of life by God. Christ’s ultimate preaching has come from His cross producing the miracle of victory against sin, death, or Devil.

The glory today is that Jesus still passes through time and space to come to us. No generation, nation, or movement will ever succeed in silencing Him. He preaches good news to the poor with forgiveness that burns brightly for any by His Name. Today, Jesus is present for us to hear Him by His Word and sacraments. The cross remains the miracle shining with life for sinners and is now a way of life for His saints. As one person notes, “We have our share of celebrations and times of mourning too; but it’s not big events, once-in-a-lifetime experiences or constant innovations that make a congregation alive. Jesus does, present in His means of grace — those same blessed, predictable means of grace, Sunday after Sunday after Sunday.”[[1]](#footnote-1) You see, Jesus is quite content with the ordinary way He serves our ordinary lives. This is His glory that comes to do great things for us. To be at home in the Church is to be at home with Jesus still preaching His liberating Word for us today. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. http://blogs.lcms.org/2016/the-blessed-ordinary [↑](#footnote-ref-1)