

Marks of Discipleship

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading
Giving Time, Talents & Resources
Spiritual Friendships ■ Service In & Beyond the Church

January 17, 2020

Day 1: Luke 4:16-17

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

Jesus begins his Galilean ministry in the synagogue that he went to as a boy and young man. He returns to the town he was raised in to give the outline of his ministry. This is the ministry that He was anointed by the Spirit to perform (Luke 21-22). In this passage we have an idea of what went on in the synagogue in Jesus' time. Prayers were said, scripture was read, someone spoke on the meaning of the passage and a general discussion followed.

Question: When was Sabbath and when do you think the service of prayer was held on the Sabbath?

Challenge: If someone told you to write down our order of service, what would you say?

Scripture: Luke 2

Day 2: Luke 4:18-19

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'

Jesus reads Isaiah 61:1-2 with a reference to 58:6. Jesus wants to draw special attention to the word *release*. In His healings he set people free from either the illness or the demonic possession that was imprisoning them. Where the forces of evil seek to enslave people, Jesus is releasing them. Being set free from oppression and being healed is more than getting better, it is being restored to the community from which you have been excluded.

Question: When and how was Jesus anointed?

Challenge: What do you think it means "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor"?

Scripture: Luke 3

Day 3: Luke 4:20-21

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

Probably the shortest sermon in history - "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing"- but when you are Jesus you can pull it off. In vs. 22-24 the congregation (all men) admires Him as one would admire a favorite son. They do not take Him seriously until Jesus goes on to talk about Elijah and Elisha. Jesus tells the congregants that their familiarity with Him has inhabited them from hearing Him.

Question: What is the shortest verse in the Bible? Jesus also said it.

Challenge: Think about Jesus' words and how you might help fulfill them today.

Scripture: Isaiah 58:1-6, Isaiah 61:1-7

Day 4: Luke 4:25-26

But 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; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon.

The events Jesus describes in vs. 25-28 take place in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. After Solomon's death his kingdom was divided into two parts. The largest (northern one) was called Israel and the southern one was called Judah. Because of the King's transgression the whole land was under a famine. The King set the tone for the people and they followed his example. Although the famine left many widows in Israel God tells Elijah to go to a town outside of Israel and bless only one. This act demonstrated that God's blessing is not given because of our birth but because of our faith.

Question: Why was it the King's fault that there was a famine in the land?

Challenge: What process do we have to keep immoral leaders from running the land? Is it working?

Scripture: I Kings 17:1-24

Day 5: Luke 4:27-28

There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.' When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage.

The healing of Naaman was more insulting to those listening to Jesus than Elijah and the widow. Naaman is healed even though he was ungrateful at first that his dignity was not recognized. Naaman assumed, because he was so impressed with his own importance, that Elisha would come and talk to him. He almost lost the gift God was giving him because of his pride. We can see why it is good to have friends who will help us think straight and not let our pride get in the way of our healing.

Question: Why were they angry?

Challenge: Has your pride gotten in the way of your receiving a blessing from God or someone else?

Scripture: 2 Kings 5

Day 6: Luke 4:29

They 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.

Now Jesus receives the response he thought he might receive. Now the people take him seriously and understand that God's redemption is not based on heritage or social custom but on our faith. In our time we too must hear the message that the Good News is preached to the poor (which means those on the margins of society) and those captive to sin will be freed (not by animal sacrifice but by God). Now is the day of salvation - you do not have to wait for some other time.

Question: Why didn't the people take Jesus seriously at first?

Challenge: Do you believe that now is the day of salvation? Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He came to redeem us from our sin? Will you accept Him as Lord of your life and turn your will over to Him?

Scripture: Luke 5