

Jesus Rejected

Luke 4:22-30

1. Introduction.

- a. There's only two kinds of people in the world – followers and rejecters.
- b. Review.
 - i. In vss. 15-21, Luke records the first event of Jesus' public ministry in Galilee.
 1. Luke skips about a year of Jesus' life after coming out of the wilderness temptations.
 2. Jesus returns to His hometown of Nazareth and enters the synagogue as a formally trained rabbi.
 3. He begins teaching from Isaiah 61, which is a passage teaching on the coming work of the Messiah.
 4. Jesus then indicates this passage has been fulfilled in Him (v.21).
 - ii. This was a very dramatic scene, as the Jews were anticipating their great Messianic leader. They wanted release from the oppression of Rome. However, Jesus has come to offer release from the oppression of sin, and spiritual bondage.
 - iii. We left off last time with Jesus' words of fulfillment. He has a strong self-understanding that He is the true Messiah.

2. The People's Response (22).

- a. It's important to remember this is where Jesus grew up. These people would have seen Him as boy in the synagogue every Sabbath. Yet at this point, his reputation evidently precedes Him (15).
- b. As they listen to Him preach, they become amazed and wonder (θαυμάζω) at His words.
 - i. In some sense, the term means they approve of his words.

- ii. They may be confused and perplexed, but they like what they're hearing.
 - c. The phrase, "gracious words" speaks of his winsomeness. There was something gripping and compelling about His teaching. He spoke very differently than other rabbis. Therefore, at a human level, there was something about Jesus' manner that made the people want to hear more.
 - d. They become especially perplexed as they listen to Him speak. They're amazed at His presence and teaching, and yet, they still know that He's merely "the son of Joseph." This is an issue for them.
 - i. Luke is establishing a contrast at this point.
 - ii. This is a passage that immediately follows a section that has been communicating Jesus as the divine Son of God. It was also a section where everyone immediately believed at the announcement of Jesus as the Christ.
 - iii. Yet in this section, the people only understand Jesus to be the Son of Joseph. As such, Luke reveals their unbelief at the announcement of Jesus as the Messiah.
3. Jesus' Response (23-27).
- a. Jesus understands their statement as one of unbelief, so He responds in a manner that intentionally provokes them. He doesn't presume their question, regarding His identity, is genuine. Rather, He presumes it is self-righteous unbelief.
 - b. The proverb (23).
 - i. It's important to see no one states this proverb out loud. Rather, Jesus reads their hearts and knows that this is what they are thinking.
 - ii. Jesus rhetorically uses the proverb to provoke them, and bring to the surface what He knows is in their hearts.
 - iii. The meaning of the proverb is a call for proof. This is a day in which medical practices were not very advanced, so a patient would first want the physician to demonstrate the remedy on their own body.
 - iv. In other words, Jesus knows they want Him to prove His claim that He is the Messiah. They want Him to do this by performing the same miracles they heard He did in Capernaum. Jews often demand a sign (c.f., 1Cor. 1:22).

- v. The point to understand is that His preaching is insufficient for them.
- c. Jesus concedes to their unbelief (24).
- d. Jesus gives two Old Testament illustrations of Israel's rejection.
- i. Elijah and Zaraphath (25-26).
 1. In 1Kings 17-18, Jesus illustrates the faith of a gentile woman in the midst of a famine, who believed without first needing a sign.
 2. She believed the word of the prophet and was saved, while many in Israel perished.
 - ii. Elisha and Naaman (27).
 1. In 1Kings 5:1-14, Jesus illustrates with the faith of a gentile terrorist, who believed a foolish message.
 2. He was saved from leprosy, while many in Israel perished from the same disease.
 - iii. Jesus is communicating two truths with these two stories.
 1. The first is that the salvation of God is going to spread beyond Israel to the Gentile. This was inherently predicted with these Old Testament illustrations.
 2. The second is that salvation would only come by faith.
- e. Jesus Rejected (28-30).
- i. The Jews, seething in a self-righteous understanding of the Scriptures, seek to execute Jesus.
 - ii. This was a lynch law under Mosaic Law. False prophets were to be put to death. In the most flagrant cases, however, it was to be an immediate execution.
 - iii. Jesus passes through their midst. We don't know the logistics of this, or how He did this, but the point to understand is that it was not yet His time to be put to death by the Jews. It will happen several more times before the end of the Gospel.

- iv. They seek to kill him, not because of his miracles, but His message. He is preaching salvation to the Gentile, but as a result of judgment to the Jew. This is overt blasphemy to Jewish ears.
- v. They don't rightly understand grace.

4. Conclusion.

- a. So why do people reject Jesus Christ? They don't see themselves in v.18.
- b. Every person has a choice – they can either accept or reject Jesus Christ. In any case, they both involve faith. They both involve an appeal to what they understand to be ultimate truth.
- c. Jesus has come for one kind of person—the spiritually destitute. This is the only one to whom grace is extended. And they must receive the promise of salvation by faith alone.

Small Group Questions:

1. What stood out in this sermon?
2. What is Jesus' purpose in stating the parable of the physician to the Jews in the synagogue? What was His goal, and with what kind of person does He do this?
3. What was Jesus' purpose in giving the two Old Testament illustrations of Elijah and Elisha? (Hint: two reasons).
4. Luke sets up a contrast with two kinds of people in this passage (14-30). Who are they, and what kind of person has Jesus come to save? What are the implications of this for you, and those you may know? How does it frame the way we must present the Gospel?
5. If you've been a Christian for a while, what are ways you've perhaps lost a fresh sense of God's grace, and now presume upon God? What can you do to rekindle a worshipful understanding of God's grace in your life?