

Empty Encounters

July 31, 2016

I. Introduction

Luke 4:14-15 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

A. Effective ministry is done in the power of the Spirit.

Luke 4:16-17 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, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

Luke 4:18-19 “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, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

- Evangelism has immediate effectiveness.
- Evangelism has long-term effectiveness.

B. In a time marked by bad news, Jesus came to give hope to the outcast and needy.

- In a world full of limits, Jesus came to bring liberty.
- In a place of darkness, Jesus came to give sight.
- In situations of oppression, Jesus came to bring freedom.
- In a season of despair and uncertainty, Jesus came to bring God's favor.

Luke 4:20-21 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. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

II. The Danger of Familiarity

Luke 4:22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked.

- Familiarity leads to harmful assumptions
- We may miss out on what God is doing when we assume we know it all.

Mark 6:1-3 Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. “Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

- The certainty of our assumptions may lead us to question the authority of our God.

III. The Danger of Disappointment

Luke 4:23 Jesus said to them, “Surely you will quote this proverb to me: ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ And you will tell me, ‘Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.’”

- When God's will doesn't line up with our will, we must be mindful about how we deal with disappointment.

Luke 4:24-27 “Truly I tell you,” he continued, “no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.”

Matthew 13:54-57 Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?” they asked. “Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren’t all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home.”

- If we do not deal with disappointment, it will grow into offense.

Luke 4:28-30 All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

Hebrews 12:14-15 Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

Hebrews 12:14-15 (MSG) Work at getting along with each other and with God. Otherwise you'll never get so much as a glimpse of God. Make sure no one gets left out of God's generosity. Keep a sharp eye out for weeds of bitter discontent. A thistle or two gone to seed can ruin a whole garden in no time.

- When we focus on offenses, we drive the work of Jesus out of our lives.

IV. The Danger of Disbelief

Matthew 13:58 And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

- When we fail to believe, we fail to receive.
- Faith is worshipful trust not wishful thinking.

Mark 6:5-6 He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Matthew 8:10 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.

- The state of our faith gets the attention of God.