

LUKE'S JESUS: THE SERMON AT NAZARETH

4:16-30 Jesus came to Nazara where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written,

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me: he has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them: *This text is being fulfilled today, even while you are listening.* And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that fell from his lips.

They said: This is Joseph's son, surely? But he replied: *No doubt you will quote me the saying: Physician, heal yourself! and tell me : We have heard all that happened in Capernaum: do the same in your own country.* And he went on: *I tell you solemnly, no prophet is ever accepted in his own country.*

There were many widows in Israel, I can assure you, in Elijah's day, when heaven remained shut for three years and six months, and a great famine raged through the land. But Elijah was not sent to any of them: he was sent to a widow of Zarephath, a Sidonian town. And in the prophet Elisha's time there were many lepers in Israel, but none of these was cured - only Naaman, the Syrian.

When they heard this everyone in the synagogue was enraged. They sprang to their feet and hustled him out of the town, and they took him to the top of the hill their town was built on, intending to throw him off the cliff; but he passed straight through the crowd, and walked away.

The following passages may help you to think about Luke's special picture of Jesus.

7:36 - 50 One of the Pharisees invited him to a meal. When he arrived at the Pharisee's house and took his place at table, suddenly a woman came in who had a bad name in the town. She had heard that he was dining with the Pharisee, and had brought with her an alabaster jar of ointment. She waited behind him at his feet, weeping, and her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them away with her hair; then she covered his feet with kisses and anointed them with the ointment.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself: If this man were a prophet, he would know who this woman is, and what sort of a woman it is who is touching him, and what a bad name she has. Then Jesus took him up and said to him: *Simon, I have something to say to you.* He replied: Say on, Master. *There was once a creditor who had two men in his debt. One owed him five hundred denarii, the other fifty. They were unable to pay, so he let them both off. Which of them will love him more?* Simon answered, The one who was let off more, I suppose. Jesus said: *You are right.*

Then he turned to the woman, and said to Simon: *You see this woman? I came into your house, and you poured no water over my feet; but she has poured out her tears over my feet and wiped them away with her hair. You gave me no kiss: but she has been covering my feet*

with kisses ever since I came in. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. For this reason, I tell you that her sins, her many sins, have been forgiven her, because she has shown such great love. It is someone who is forgiven little who shows little love. Then he said to her: *Your sins are forgiven.* Those who were with him at table began to say to themselves: *Who is this man, that even forgives sins?* But he said to the woman: *Your faith has saved you; go in peace.*

9:23 - 26 Then speaking to all, he said: *If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself, and take up his cross every day, and follow me. Anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will save it. What benefit is it to anyone to win the whole world, and forfeit or lose his very self? For if anyone is ashamed of me and my words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when he comes in his own glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels.*

14:25-27 Great crowds accompanied him on his way, and he turned and spoke to them: *Anyone who comes to me without hating father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes, and his own life too, cannot be my disciple. No-one who does not carry his cross and come after me can be my disciple.*

24:13-35 Now that very same day, two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking and discussing all that had happened. As they argued, Jesus himself drew near and began to walk with them, but their eyes were held from knowing him. He said to them. *What is all this talk that you exchange with one another as you walk along?* They stopped momentarily, full of gloom, and one of them, named Cleopas, said to him: *Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who has not learned what happened there these last few days? What is that?* He asked them. They said to him, "All that happened to Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the eyes of God and all the people; how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. We were hoping that he would be the one to deliver Israel. And besides all that, it is three days since this happened. Some women from our group have astounded us; they went to the tomb early this morning and, failing to find his body, came back with the report that they had even seen a vision of angels who told them that he was alive. Then some of us also went to the tomb and found it to be just as the women had said, but him they did not see. Jesus said to them: *How foolish you are, and slow of wit to believe in all that the prophets have said! Was not the Messiah bound to suffer all this before entering into his glory?* Then he began with Moses and all the prophets, and interpreted for them what pertained to himself in every part of Scripture.

They had drawn near to the village to which they were going, and Jesus made to go on further; but they urged him strongly: *Stay with us, because it is almost evening, and the day is far spent.*

So he went into the village to stay with them. Now when he had reclined at table with them, he took bread and uttered a blessing: he broke it and offered it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they knew him. But he had passed from their sight. They said to each other, *Were not our hearts on fire within us, as he was speaking with us on the road, and opened to us the Scriptures?* Even at that late hour they rose up and went to Jerusalem. They found that the Eleven and their companions had gathered together and were saying: *It is really true; the Lord has been raised, and has appeared to Simon.* Then they explained what had happened on the road, and how he became known to them at the breaking of the bread.