

Series: The Gospel of Luke
Text: Luke 4:14-30 part 2
February 22, 2015: Gospel Community Study Guide

This Study Guide is based on a sermon by Dr. Joshua Mack. You will find the link to the sermon here.

<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?sid=22515053132>

Getting Started:

Unbelief. It is all around us.

Sometimes it feels like the hardest part about believing is the fact that so many people don't. Even people most people would think are good people. Even people who have heard about Jesus.

Why do "good" people reject Jesus? That's the question we are going to consider together today.

But maybe as we start, would anyone like to share a story about a time when you shared the gospel with someone, and they rejected Jesus?

Remembering the Message:

This Sunday, we spent some time looking at Luke 4:16-30. It's not too difficult to see the theme of this story. It's written in many of our Bibles in the bold print heading that is on top.

Does anyone have a story heading like that? What does it say?

The key word is rejected. This story talks about Jesus being rejected in Nazareth. And not just rejected really. What do the people of Nazareth do at the end of the story?

Seeing such an extreme reaction, forces us to look at what caused it more carefully. To do that, we looked at several different characteristics of the message Jesus preached that day.

Can anyone remember those four characteristics?

The Big Idea:

People give lots of excuses for rejecting Jesus. If you had asked the people in Nazareth that day why they rejected Jesus, what excuses do you think they might have given?

Jesus basically bypasses their excuses and offers a warning instead. He warns them that if they continue to reject Him, God may take the good news to others instead. And the reality is, this is what God actually did. One of the results of the Jewish people's rejection of Jesus is that God took the gospel to Gentiles like us.

Into the Text:

Read Luke 4:18 and 19 out loud and answer the following questions:

What kind of people does this passage say Jesus was set apart to preach to?

While certainly these categories describe physical conditions, these physical conditions also illustrate spiritual problems. Go through each term one by one, and describe the particular spiritual problem each term represents.

It's impossible for someone to be saved unless they know they need salvation first. Let's look at some other passages that describe the kind of people God came to save. Read the passage out loud and share what you think it means.

Matthew 5:3

Mark 3:17

Luke 15:7

Luke 18:10-14

What do you think a person has to think and feel about himself in order to be saved by Jesus?

Now let's read Luke 4:23-27 and answer the following questions:

What did the people want from Jesus?

Can you think of any reasons Jesus might not have done this for them? (Hint, look at Mark 6:1-6)

What two stories did Jesus remind the people in Nazareth of? What do you think was the point of those two stories? Why would these stories have made the people in Nazareth so upset?

What excuses might the widow and Namaan have given for not believing God's Word? What can we learn from them about the kind of people Jesus came to save?

Thinking Further:

Read the following quote from John MacArthur and discuss how it helps us understand why the people of Nazareth rejected Jesus and why people often do today:

“At this point they are in awe of His communication ability. And they are stirred, believe me, because they heard the truth presented as clearly as it could ever be presented. They understand exactly what He said and, believe me, they understand what He meant by what He said because He spoke so perfectly clear. And you know what the message to them was? Salvation is available for the poor, the prisoners, the blind and the oppressed. And they're the only ones who will be saved. They got the message. If they wanted salvation, they had to confess their spiritual destitution, their spiritual poverty, their spiritual blindness, their spiritual bondage, their spiritual oppression.

They weren't about to do that, are you kidding me? That is the last thing they were about to do. They were righteous. They were noble. They worshiped the true and living God. They went to the synagogue. They gave their tithes. They fasted. They were circumcised and they had their tribal pedigree and they were of the people of Israel and they were traditionalists and they were ceremonialists and they were zealous for the law and they kept the law as blamelessly as they could. They aren't the poor, the prisoners, the blind and the oppressed, that's got to be somebody else, the Gentiles. And so, in self-defense they begin to think...the problem is not us, we just can't buy this message, how do we know He's the Messiah? And they just put up a wall. We don't know that He's the Messiah. And so Jesus reads their minds, that's what He did... And He says to them in verse 23, "No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your home town as well.'" You see what they were doing? "I know what you're thinking," He said. You're saying, "We don't have any proof. The problem is, we don't have any proof. If You want us to believe in You, then, Physician, heal yourself. Don't You come tell us You're the doctor if we...if we don't have some proof."

So, that's what they want. You know, words of salvation were offered to them, forgiveness, good news, release, light, sight, but they had to be willing to admit they were the poor prisoners blind and oppressed. That is absolutely unthinkable...unthinkable. No such confession is ever going to rise out of their hearts, their hard hearts are filled with pride and self-righteousness and religiosity. They would never accept the fact that they were the poor prisoners blind and oppressed. And Jesus knew that because Jesus knew their hearts. He knew that. It was never a question of miracles. It's never a question of miracles ever because miracles don't prove anything about that.

If Jesus did a miracle, does that prove that He could...listen carefully...save sinners? If Jesus did a miracle, is that proof that He can transfer people from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light? If He does a miracle, does that prove that He can save your soul from hell? If He does a miracle, does that prove that He can give you eternal life and take you to heaven? No. It doesn't prove that. You can take all the

miracle workers, all the so-called miracle workers, all the demonic miracle workers from Jannes and Jambres and the Egyptian magicians, all the way down to Simon Magus in the New Testament, you can take all the oracles of Delphi and all the historical supposed black magicians and white magicians and bring them all together, you can take all the white hocus-pocus faith healers and TV evangelists, line them all up, have them do their whole gig of miracles and when they're all done with all their miracles whether they're true or false, they do not prove that Jesus Christ can save someone from hell.

Let me tell you something as you study the New Testament. Never does the Jewish population or the Jewish leaders question Jesus' miracles, never. They never question them. In John 11:47 the Pharisees, the Chief Priests said, "This man is doing miracles." They never questioned that. That was not a question in their minds. This is not an honest question...Please, we would like to believe in You, prove You're Messiah...we would like to believe that You can take the spiritually poor and make them rich, the spiritually bound and make them free, the spiritually blind and make them see, the spiritually oppressed and fearful and deliver them, we'd like to believe that, could You please spin up in the air and do a cartwheel or two in space and come back down? That doesn't prove anything.

They knew He did miracles, they even say it. "Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in Your home town as well." They're not questioning that He did them, they know He did them. They're saying..."Do them here." There was not an honest issue of evidence. They were unsympathetic to His message which was that if you want to have salvation, you've got to see your spiritual bankruptcy, and your spiritual destitution and the true condition of your heart. They were unsympathetic to that, they were too proud, too self-righteous, they were too skeptical because they were in a self-defense mode. They don't want the salvation He offers if the terms are to admit that you are the poor and you're the prisoners and you're the blind and you're the oppressed. He says, "You want Me to do what was over there, but that's not because you really care to have proof, this is your way of self-justification." You're saying, "Well, why should we believe Him, after all, we don't have any proof that He's the Messiah." They had plenty. They could have proven that He was the Messiah in an instant. They chose not to. They chose to throw up a smoke screen in their minds and Jesus read their minds.

To Think About:

What are some of the main encouragements or challenges you have taken from what we have studied together today? Is there any specific word of praise you would like to give to God for what you have learned about Jesus today?

How about questions? Do you have any thing you are still wondering from what we have talked about? What are some of the practical differences what you studied makes on your life? What would you like to share with someone else? Is there any specific

issue that this study has brought up that you want the members of your gospel community to be praying for you about?