



STORIES OF LIFE!

The Gospel of Luke

An Unpopular Story

Luke 4:14-30

Message #12 of 50 – S787

Sermon given on April 15, 2018



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

An Unpopular Story

Luke 4:14-30

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 4**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- As a young man, I wasn't what would be called 'popular'
- I had a few friends, but I didn't move in the circles that would have made me popular
- A lot of people care about how popular they are
- They typically try not do or say anything that is unpopular
- You will rarely catch them being politically incorrect
- This morning we are going to look at an event in the story of the life and ministry that affected His popularity
- Let's pray and then look at those things
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **An Unpopular Story**
- If Jesus was a politician, He wouldn't have gotten very far
- He regularly said and did things that were politically incorrect
- This confused both His followers and those who opposed Him
- It was as if He didn't care about His popularity
- **Luke 4:14-15**
- Luke makes it look like this happened right after the temptation in the wilderness
- Actually, almost a year has past
- Some of what happened during that year is recorded in John 1-5
- Jesus' popularity has been growing – that wasn't His goal
- In addition to teaching, He has done miracles, cast out demons, had conversations with Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, and the Samaritan woman
- Everyone is talking about Him - Finally, He goes home
- **Luke 4:16**

- He was born in Bethlehem but was raised in Nazareth, about 70 miles from Bethlehem
- He grew up there, learned the trade of His adopted father Joseph, the carpenter
- We have very few details about the life of Christ before He started His ministry
- One of the details is here – it was His custom to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath
- Sabbath = Saturday, day of worship for the Jews
- Jesus, God the Son, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, went to the equivalent of church every week – Why?
- The Bible tells us that Jesus wasn't born with infinite wisdom and knowledge – He learned **Luke 2:40**

And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

- At the age of twelve He was amazing the religious guys in Jerusalem with His understanding
 - Nazareth was a backwater town in northern Galilee with a bad reputation
 - High quality Bible teachers were not lining to teach at Nazareth
 - Probably had to settle for Bob the shepherd, Burt the cheesemaker, and Bill the farmer taking turns when they could
 - Imagine Jesus sitting there listening to Burt doing his best but falling far short of expressing the truth of God's Word as well as Jesus understood it
 - So, why did Jesus go to synagogue every Sabbath?
 - Because every week people gathered to worship His Father – just like us, they would pray, sing, read from the Scriptures, and listen to a sermon
 - And as imperfectly as they probably did that, God was being worshipped – that was exactly where He should have been
 - The Spirit would later inspire the writer of **Hebrews 10:24-25**
- And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**
- I regularly hear people saying you don't need to go to church every week

- It appears that Jesus, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit disagree
- Every Sunday morning the people of God gather to worship Him
- What could possibly be more important than that!
- Oh Pastor, I can worship God anywhere – true, and you should
- But I am guessing that Jesus did that far better than you ever will, and still He went to synagogue every Sabbath
- God shows up in powerful ways when God’s people gather to worship Him
- So, back to our text – Jesus ‘stood up to read’
- Probably invited to do so by the synagogue leader
- **Luke 4:17-21**
- Turn to **Isaiah 61**
- Jesus reads what was commonly known as a prediction about the Messiah
- And then applied that Scripture to Himself – proclaiming that He is the Messiah
- As we read, this, notice where Jesus stops reading
- **Isaiah 61:1-2a**
- Jesus said in verse ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled’
- Didn’t read ‘and the day of vengeance of our God’
- He didn’t come the first time to bring God’s judgment, but to bring salvation
- A day is coming – the day of the vengeance of our God
- Today it is still ‘the acceptable year of the Lord’ – God is waiting as an immense act of grace, putting up with the sin of the world
- Turn back to **Luke 4**
- God is eternal, but His patience is not
- A day is coming, maybe soon – thief in the night **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

- And then, the judgment comes
- Verse 18 gives us five groups of people the gospel reaches – each of them deserves a sermon all by themselves

- But notice that each of the five describes someone in great need
- As you explore these five, you should be able to find yourself
- For me, I was spiritually blind to the reality of God and the truth of His Word
- In His grace Jesus healed me of my blindness and now I see
- We are surrounded by people who would be offended if you suggested they might be in one of those groups
- The gospel is not for them, at least not yet
- The gospel cannot save someone who does not believe they need to be saved
- Pray that God would help them to see their need
- It appears that Jesus' sermon was one sentence long - don't get any ideas
- **Luke 4:22**
- Remember, they knew Jesus – lived there for most of thirty years
- In the synagogue every Sabbath
- He was the nicest, most generous, joyful, honest, respectful, forgiving, gracious, and merciful human they had ever met
- But in the power of the Holy Spirit, he is speaking in ways they have never heard from Him or from anyone
- The politically correct thing for Jesus to do there is stop – but there is more
- **Luke 4:23**
- We heard about your miracles in Capernaum – do one here, so we can believe
- ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ = work a miracle
- He is not done yet – time to reveal their hearts to them
- **Luke 4:24-27**
- Both examples are of prophets who were used by God to do miracles for non-Jews, because the Jews refused to believe the prophets when they spoke for God
- There they were in the synagogue, acting like they were God worshippers, but God knew their heart – they didn't really believe
- Jesus could have picked other examples, but He deliberately chose two that included Gentiles to reveal the utter darkness of their hearts

- Gentiles are non-Jews – If you are not a Jew, you are a Gentile
- The Jews view of Gentiles had devolved to the point that they believed that God created them to keep the fires of hell burning hot
- What they do next proves the darkness of their hearts
- **Luke 4:28-30**
- They go from welcoming Jesus into the synagogue to trying to kill Him
- Jesus always told the truth
- But not everyone likes the truth **Augustine**
They love truth when it enlightens them but hate truth when it accuses them.
- Doesn't that describe our culture right now
- If you say something that someone doesn't like, you can be accused of hate-speech
- It's sad, but some of the most hateful people out there are the ones accusing others of hate-speech
- Turn to **Revelation 3**
- Jesus didn't come to win a popularity contest
- He didn't come to make us feel good about ourselves
- He didn't come to collect a bunch of followers
- He came to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.
- And as Paul said, He came to save sinners
- The self-righteous will always object to the light of Jesus' words
- Jesus' story was unpopular – not with everyone – but most
- It is no different for us today – the story of Jesus in our lives may not make us popular – but the light of truth that is in your story needs to come out
- Tell your story and you will be popular with Jesus even if you aren't popular with anyone else
- I think the synagogue that Jesus grew up in was much like the church of Laodicea – And I believe like much of the modern church also
- **Revelation 3:14-21**
- Even to the lukewarm church, Jesus gave the opportunity to change

- It began by looking honestly at their spiritual state
- And as we prepare our hearts for Communion, we should pause and examine our heart
- The people in the synagogue with Jesus acted like they were there for God, but He knew their heart – He knows our heart too
- Open your heart and let the Holy Spirit examine you
- **Pray!**