



# *The Journey*

## *Lesson #3*


### *Grace Knows No Boundaries*

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## Luke 4:14-28


**14** Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region. **15** He taught regularly in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. **16** When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. **17** The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written: **18** "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, **19** and that the time of the LORD's favor has come." **20** He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. **21** Then he began to speak to them. "The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!"





## Luke 4:14-28

I tell you the truth, no prophet is accepted in his own hometown. 25 "Certainly there were many needy widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the heavens were closed for three and a half years, and a severe famine devastated the land. 26 Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them. He was sent instead to a foreigner—a widow of Zarephath in the land of Sidon. 27 And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, but the only one healed was Naaman, a Syrian." 28 When they heard this, the people in the synagogue were furious. 29 Jumping up, they mobbed him and forced him to the edge of the hill on which the town was built. They intended to push him over the cliff, 30 but he passed right through the crowd and went on his way.





# Could Jesus Sin?

- Jesus has just finished his wilderness trial where after fasting for 40 days he was tempted by the Devil.
- Tempted? Really?
- There is a great debate about whether Jesus was actually tempted or not – what say you?





# Could Jesus Sin?

- **Viewpoint #1 - When one has unlimited power to resist that one cannot be tempted.**
- **Viewpoint #2 – if one cannot yield then one cannot be tempted.**
- **Viewpoint #3 – this is all intellectual gymnastics that would not even be mentioned if we really had our eyes on the harvest.**






# Latin Lingo

- **Non Posse Peccare**
  - Not possible to sin. (Jesus)
- **Posse Non Peccare**
  - Possible not to sin. (the Christian)
- **Non Posse Non Peccare**
  - Not possible to not sin. (the natural man)





# The Setting

- **After his wilderness clash with Satan, Jesus returns to Galilee and starts to preach.**
  - **People noticed a difference in the carpenter's son – it became evident he was Spirit-filled and people were stirred by his teaching.**
  - **He taught regularly in the synagogues and was a recognized rabbi.**
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# The Setting

- He was being praised by everyone and one day he shows up in his hometown of Nazareth and teaches in the synagogue.
- Luke 4:18-19 “The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, 19 and that the time of the LORD's favor has come.”







# New Territory

- What he did next had never been done before – he rolled up the scroll, sat down and declares “you’ve just witnessed prophecy being fulfilled”.
- The fact that he sat down was customary – Rabbis stood to read and sat to teach.
- But his message was not customary and he was about to become offensive.





# New Territory

- The crowd takes a step back and starts to question who this nice young rabbi thinks he is.
- After all, some in the crowd grew up with him and they did not see him as anything special before. (as a matter of fact there were lots of rumors about who his father really was)
- Matt 13:57-58 Then Jesus told them, "A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his own family." 58 And so he did only a few miracles there because of their unbelief.





# Maybe the Kingdom is B I G.

- And then he lays the bombshell on them – yes, you are Jews, God’s chosen people, but you are not anymore loved or cared for than anyone other people.
- He cites the stories of Elijah and the widow at Zarephath and of Elisha and Naaman.
- Yes, God loves the Jew, but you are not as special as you might think.





# Israel as God's Chosen People

- When God chose Abraham to form a people through whom He could work, there was no such thing as a Jew.
- Abraham was a Gentile when God called him.
- The Jews were chosen as a nation to provide the Word and the Messiah, not as some privileged spiritual class for all time.





# A Violent Reaction

- The crowd reacts so violently that they try to force him off of a cliff.
- He stops the attack, but think about what transpired in the story.
- When we lose a position that we think is ours alone we get offended, defensive, and often aggressive.





# A Violent Reaction

- The Jewish advantage was questioned and the people did not like it.
- We are told not to talk about religion and politics for this very reason – they can both be explosive topics. (because they matter)
- When one thinks they have cornered the market on how to be right with God they are on dangerous ground.





# Jesus is THE way.

- Don't misunderstand me – Jesus is THE way, THE truth, and THE life, but when we go beyond that and start to add in our own flavors we err.
- For Jesus to point out that a Gentile woman was fed when Jewish women were starving posed a problem for the Jew – why?
- When lots of Jews died of leprosy, but a Gentile named Naaman was healed that too posed the same problem.





# Grace Knows No Boundaries

- The Jew felt entitled by birth and for anyone to suggest that God might be just as gracious to non-Jews was a threat to their spiritual security.
- Are Christians today much different? – We sometimes look down our noses at other styles of Christianity and they look down on us.
- There is overwhelming evidence that God accepts, loves, and blesses lots of Christians who are not exactly like us.







# Grace Knows No Boundaries

- And sometimes the arguments are very nuanced in that we agree they can be saved and not worship like us, but we don't think they can be blessed unless they do things our way.
- We, and many other Christians like us, take great pride in being 'right' and doing things the 'right' way.
- All those other Christians are 'nominal' Christians and not quite as spiritual as we are.





# Grace Knows No Boundaries

- **What would we think if God healed Christians who didn't anoint with oil?**
- **What if revival broke out in Joel Osteen's church?**
- **Surely God does not bless believers who stay in the main line churches where the bible is not preached.**





# Grace Knows No Boundaries

- We sometimes draw a false security from doing what we think are the 'right' things.
- Worse yet, we are prone to seeing ourselves as more spiritual than others who do not express their worship the way we do.
- Really? Just who do we think we are?





# Grace Knows No Boundaries

- What would we do with a religion that believed in Jesus for salvation, but didn't call themselves Christians?
- What if God started healing unbelievers while Christians died of the same diseases?
- What if God started blessing Hindus and withdrew His blessing from us?





## Grace Knows No Boundaries

- Would we think God is full of mercy and grace or would we feel cheated and threatened?
- Would we be happy for the healing of the unbelievers or would think God is being unfair?
- Would we be glad God is blessing Hindus or would we be bitter thinking their blessing should be ours?





# The Nazareth Principle

- The people in Jesus' hometown could not bring themselves to trust this guy who was so common to them.
- They were looking for the Messiah, but not someone they knew.
- They heard him preach and they knew of his reputation, but to them Jesus couldn't possibly be the Messiah because he was one of them.





# The Nazareth Principle


- We all tend to under-value the expertise of those close to us.
- If you want to be an expert in something it will have to be some place 25 miles away.
- If you achieve great things don't expect those closest to you to think of you as great.





# The Nazareth Principle

**Not a problem to be solved, but  
a tension to manage.**







# Questions

