

Luke 4:16-30 Picking a Fight

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Date: 09 February 2020

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[0 : 00] Please to Luke chapter 4, Luke chapter 4, and we're going to think about verse 16 down to verse 30 this morning. Luke chapter 4 and verse 16 down to verse 30.

It's another well-known incident in the life of Jesus where he goes to the temple at Nazareth, where he goes to the synagogue and is rejected by the people there.

Luke chapter 4, I'm beginning to read at verse 16. This is the word of God. And he came to Nazareth where he'd been brought up.

And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found a place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind. To set at liberty those who are oppressed. To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

[1 : 20] And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? And he said to them, Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb.

Physician, heal yourself. What we have heard you did at Capernaum. Do here in your hometown as well. And he said, Truly I say to you, No prophet is acceptable in his hometown.

But in truth, I tell you, There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, When the heavens were shut up three years and six months, And a great famine came over all the land.

And Elijah was sent to none of them, But only to Zarephath, In the land of Sidon to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha.

[2 : 28] And none of them were cleansed, But only Naaman the Syrian. When they heard these things, All in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and drove him out of town, And brought him to the brow of the hill in which their town was built, So that they could throw him down the cliff.

But passing through their midst, He went away. Amen. This is a reading of God's inspired and inerrant words.

Stand please in the Old Testament, In the Old Testament to the prophet Isaiah in chapter 61. These are of course the words that Jesus has just quoted, The words that Jesus has just found in that scroll.

But we'll read them together now. Isaiah chapter 61, It's probably somewhere around the middle of your Bible. Isaiah chapter 61, I'm beginning to read at verse 1.

This is the word of God. The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

[3 : 42] He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound. To proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, And the day of vengeance of our God.

To comfort all who mourn. To grant to those who mourn in Zion, To give them a beautiful headdress, Instead of ashes. The oil of gladness, Instead of mourning.

The garment of praise, Instead of a faint spirit, That they may be called oaks of righteousness. The planting of the Lord, That he may be glorified. They shall build up the ancient ruins, They shall rise up the former devastations, They shall repair the ruined cities, The devastations of many

generations.

Strangers shall stand, And tend your flocks. Foreigners shall be your ploughmen, And vine dressers, But you shall be called priests of the Lord. They shall speak of you as the ministers of our God, You shall eat the wealth of nations, And in their glory you shall boast.

Instead of your shame, There shall be a double portion. Instead of dishonour, They shall rejoice in their lot. Therefore in their land, They shall possess a double portion. They shall have everlasting joy.

[5 : 01] For I, the Lord, Love justice. I hate robbery and wrong. I will faithfully give them their recompense, And I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Their offspring shall be known among the nations, And their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them shall acknowledge them, That they are an offspring the Lord has blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord.

My soul shall exalt in my God, For he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself like a priest With a beautiful headdress, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels, For as the earth brings forth it sprouts, And as the garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise, To sprout up before all the nations.

Amen. This is a reading. I will please to Luke chapter 4. Luke chapter 4. And we're going to consider these verses 16 through 30. Verses 16 through 30 of Luke chapter 4.

There was a story in the newspaper a few weeks ago, About a man who on Remembrance Sunday, Decided that it would be a good idea to let off some fireworks.

[6 : 27] There was a two minute silence happening in the town, And he decided that it would be a good idea to set off these fireworks. He said that he was doing it out of honour, He was doing it out of respect, For those men who had fought and died, Those men and women who had sacrificed their lives for the nation.

He said he was doing it out of love for them. Inevitably, of course, it led to a confrontation. The man who set the fireworks off eventually had to be rescued by the police, From a group of ex-service men and women, Who weren't too pleased about his actions.

Whether it was deliberate or not, His actions led to a confrontation. Whether it was intentional or not, His actions led to a confrontation.

And as we come to Luke chapter 4 this morning, As we come to these verses 16 through 30, I think we see Jesus doing something very similar. We see Jesus doing much the same thing.

He goes to this synagogue in his hometown, And whether intentionally or not, And I think it is, The teaching that Jesus brings to them, Leads to a confrontation.

[7 : 36] The teaching that Jesus brings to the synagogue, Leads to a confrontation that ends with them trying to kill him. I want to think about three things this morning, See three things together.

Firstly, we want to think about the deliberate confrontation, How it is that Jesus deliberately confronts them with the truth of who he is. Secondly then, We want to see a deliberate provocation, How Jesus uses these two examples from the Old Testament, To show the people in his synagogue, In the synagogue, That God is actually interested in the nation, That God is interested in the Gentiles, As well as the Jews.

And then thirdly, We want to see and think about this deliberate assassination, That it doesn't come to pass, But ultimately their plan, Is to kill him. Is to assassinate him.

So firstly then, We think about this deliberate confrontation, This deliberate confrontation, And we see that in verses 16 through 22, Verses 16 through 22 of Luke chapter 4.

So remember where we are in Luke's gospel, We need to get the big picture. Remember where we left off last week, Jesus has been tempted by the devil, He's resisted every temptation that the devil has brought his way.

[8 : 52] And we finish by noting that Jesus was lauded, Jesus was respected by all, And that he taught in their synagogues, Verse 15, He taught in their synagogues, Being glorified by all.

And as we come to verse 16 this morning then, I think we can perhaps misunderstand, And think that verse 16, Follows hot on the heels of verse 15, That Jesus teaches in their synagogues, Being lauded by all, Verse 15, And then immediately he goes to his hometown, In verse 16.

There's probably about a period of a year, Where Jesus has been doing a sort of, Itinerant ministry if you like, Where he's been going round these different synagogues, Preaching. And I think we see

that in verse 23, That's my biblical warrant for saying that if you like, Verse 23, What does Jesus say to the people?

And he said to them, Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, Physician, heal yourself, What we have heard you did at Capernaum, Do here in your hometown as well. Now it stands to reason, doesn't it, That if people have heard about the things that he's done at Capernaum, If people have heard about the miracles that he's worked at Capernaum, That a period of time has elapsed, That there's time for that word to get back to them.

A certain amount of time, Admittedly I won't say that it guarantees a year, But a certain amount of time has elapsed, Between verse 15, And what we see then, In verse 16.

[10:27] We see what happens as we come to verse 16, Jesus comes to Nazareth, This is the big homecoming gig, If you like, This is the place where he'd been brought up, This is the place Nazareth, Where everyone would have knew him, The place Nazareth, Where everyone would have remembered him, As a little boy, The place Nazareth, Where they would know who his family were, The place Nazareth perhaps, Where they might have loved him, And notice what Luke records for us, He came to Nazareth, Where he'd been brought up, And as was his custom, He went to the synagogue, This was Jesus' established way of life, This was Jesus' established pattern, And when the synagogue time came around, He simply went, He didn't think about it, He didn't think, Well, What have we got on today?

He didn't think, Who's coming for lunch? He didn't think about anything like that, He simply, When time came, He went to the synagogue, He went to worship God, It was simply, What he did, If this is the pattern of our saviour, Whom we claim to follow, If this is the pattern of our saviour, Who remember, Was sinless and perfect, If this is the pattern of our saviour, Who had perfect communion, And fellowship with God, Then how much more, Does it need to be our pattern? How much more, Do we need to make, Coming to church, Meeting with the people of God, Our regular way, Of life? How often, Is the temptation, To look for an excuse, Not to go somewhere, You get up this morning, You look out the window, You see the wind and the rain, You think, Sure, We'll stick John MacArthur online, How many times, Do we look for an excuse, Not to meet with the people of God, This was the custom, And pattern of our saviour, And it should be the pattern, Custom, Of those who follow him, That we enjoy meeting with God, That we enjoy meeting with God's people, So he's come, He stands up to read verse 16, And the scroll, Of the prophet Isaiah, Was handed to him, And he unrolls the scroll,

And this is why I think here, The action of Jesus is deliberate, The action of Jesus is, Very much, Intentional, Isn't it? Because what does Luke record for, Is the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, Verse 17, Was given to him, He unrolled the scroll, And found the place, Where it was written, This is a deliberate act, This is Jesus being, Intentional, It's not that the, The scroll was given to him, And that's kind of the place, Where it's open, The scroll is given to him, And Jesus finds this place, He goes looking, For this if you like, The attendant gives him the scroll, And Jesus finds what he's looking for, He very deliberately finds the place, In Isaiah speaking, Of the coming Messiah, I know I've shared this with you before, But I preached, A few weeks ago, For the first time, At an induction service, It was the induction of Alex Stewart, Into Lenox Town Free Church, And it's one of those occasions, You have to choose a passage, That's kind of, Appropriate to the occasion, You know, It didn't seem right, To preach on, The Levite and his concubine, From judges that we'd, Preached the previous Sunday, So I preached on Ezekiel 37, The valley of dry bones, You need to be careful, What you choose, You need to pick a, A theme, You need to pick a passage, That's fitting, For the occasion, You had to be careful, And Jesus is careful, Here, He finds, Exactly what he's looking for, He finds exactly, The place in the scroll, And he reads out this passage, From Isaiah, The Spirit of the Lord, Is upon me, Well we know that, Don't we, That's what Luke's gospel, Has told us so far, Luke chapter 3, Assures us that, The Spirit of the Lord, Is upon Jesus, But what difference, Does it make, What difference, Does it make,

[14:54] To his ministry, Well, The prophet continues, The Spirit of the Lord, Is upon me, Because he has anointed me, To proclaim good news, To the poor, He has sent me, To proclaim liberty, To the captives, And recovering of sight, To the blind, To set at liberty, Those who are oppressed, To proclaim, The year, Of the Lord's favour, That's what difference, It makes, This is what Jesus, Has been commissioned, To do, This is what Jesus, Has been set aside, To do, This is what the coming, Messiah, Was about, Proclaiming the Lord's love, Proclaiming the year, Of the Lord's favour, Proclaiming, Liberty to the captives, Proclaiming, Proclaiming recovery, Of sight, To those

who were blind, And Jesus, Very deliberately, Rolls up the scroll, And hands it back, To the attendant, And sits down, Now, We need to, To understand that, This was a sign,

That Jesus was ready, To preach, If you like, It's a sign, That the sermon, Was about to begin, You stood up, To read the word of God, And you sat down, When it was time to preach, And I'm sure at that point, You could have heard a pin drop, In that synagogue, At Nazareth, The sense of expectation, Would have been, Palpable, The whole nation, Had been in expectation, We see that, From John the Baptist, Some were wondering, Well is John the Christ, Could John, Be the one sent, By the Lord, Could John, Be the Messiah, The whole nation, Had been waiting, For the Messiah's arrival, And now here, Jesus is reading, From Isaiah 61, Here is Jesus, Proclaiming, What the Messiah would do, Talking from God's word, About what the Messiah, Would do, And Jesus simply says, Verse 21, Today this scripture, Has been fulfilled, In your hearing, Now imagine, Imagine for a moment, If I said that today, Imagine for a moment, If I stood here, And said I'm the Messiah, I am God's, Chosen one, What would happen, I hope that what would happen, Is that most of you, Would probably get up, And walk out, Some of you would be, Tempted to laugh, And say good one, Tell us another joke, Sure, But notice the reaction, Of the people here, Jesus reads, From Isaiah 61, He says, I am the Messiah, I am God's, Chosen king, And what happens, Verse 22, All spoke well of him, All marveled, At the gracious words, That were coming, From his mouth, They had been looking, For the Messiah, They had been waiting, For the Messiah, They had been waiting, For God's chosen king, We are going to find out, In a moment, The Messiah, They had been waiting for, The king, That they had been waiting for, Was a wrong king, They had been expecting, The wrong type of Messiah, But they had been waiting, Nonetheless, And when Jesus, Comes with these works, When Jesus comes, With these words, The people think, Well, Could this be, Could Jesus, Actually be the Messiah, Could Jesus actually be, God's chosen king, If that's where we left, That it would be great, But notice what they say, At the end of the section, They spoke well of him, They marveled at the gracious words, That are coming from his mouth, And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

We know him, We know who he is, We know his mother, We know his father, We presume, We know his brothers, We know his sisters, How are such gracious things, Coming out of his mouth, How are such good things, Coming from him?

[19:15] How does he say, Such things as this? Jesus is the one, This morning, Who has been sent, To proclaim liberty, To the captives, The one who has been sent, To proclaim liberty, To those held, In the thrall, Of sin, And death, Jesus is the one, Who has been sent, To heal the blind, To open the eyes, Of those, Who can't see properly, Who can't see the world, Around them, Or can't see themselves, Properly, Jesus is the one, Who has been sent, So that we might know God, We might like to think, We have life together, We might like to think, Things are going okay, But if we don't know Christ, If we don't have Christ, Then we're oppressed by sin,

If we don't know Christ, Then we're blinded, By sin, If we don't know Christ, We're held in the power, And the grip, Of sin, And death, If we don't know Christ, Then we don't know the love of God, So that's the deliberate confrontation, Then Jesus handed the scroll, Picks this particular passage, And says, Well look, This is me, Today this scripture, Has been fulfilled, In your hearing, Secondly then, We want to see, The deliberate provocation, The deliberate provocation, That happens, And we see that in verses 23, Through 27, Verses 23, Through 27, The deliberate provocation, So Jesus has confronted them, With this claim, Said look,

Isaiah 61, That's me, I am the Messiah, I am God's chosen king, But now, As we come to verse 23, He begins to teach them, About what, Being the Messiah would mean, What being the Messiah, Would look like, What it would mean, To be, The Christ, They say, Verse 22, Isn't this Joseph's boy, That's what's behind, The response we see, Of Jesus in verse 24, You know he says, Verse 24, No prophet is without, Honor in his hometown, No prophet is acceptable, In his hometown, Because for them, That's all Jesus, Will ever be, They can't get past, That wee boy, That they thought they knew, They can't get past, The fact that they think, Jesus is Joseph's son, They're wrong, Of course, But for them, That's all he'll ever be, They can't see him, For the prophet that he is, They can't see him, For the Messiah that he is, Despite the signs, Despite the wonders, Despite the things, That he's done at Capernaum, He's still Joseph's boy,

We're obsessed, With this kind of thing, In the free church, Aren't we, When I go to a conference, The question that I'm, I'm kind of always, Confronted with in Scotland, Is oh, You're married to, Doreen Boyd's, Grand's daughter, Aren't you, If I go to a conference, In Northern Ireland, The

question I'm always, Confronted with is, Oh you're Gareth Burke's, Son-in-law, Aren't you, You know, It's about your people, It's about who, You know, It's about who, You're related to, And that's what they say here, To Jesus, Well he's just, Joseph's boy, But Jesus is saying, Well actually no, I'm more than that, I'm a prophet, I'm more than that, I'm the Messiah, And he says to them, Verse 23, Well doubtless you're going to quote this proverb to me, Doubtless this is what you want to see, Physician, Heal yourself, What we have heard you did at Capernaum, Do here in your hometown as well, Now what's going on here,

And it's a bit of a confrontational attitude, That Jesus adopts, I mean they, They seem relatively pleased with him so far, They seem relatively, Kind of comfortable with him so far, So why is Jesus so, Sort of gnarced at this point, Remember of course, That Jesus knows man, He didn't entrust himself to men, Because he knew men, And he knows, That these people are only here for the show, He knows that these people are only here, Because they've heard, About the wonderful things that he did at Capernaum, They're only there, Because they want to see something spectacular, They're only there, For the miracles, And then they can lay claim to Jesus as their own, Well Jesus, He's from Nazareth you know, We always knew there was something special about him, We always knew there was something different about him, We always knew he'd be a great healer, We always knew he'd be a great miracle worker, Ever since he was a wee boy, We had that assurance, That Jesus didn't do any great work there,

[24 : 28] Wouldn't do any great miracles on demand, Because he knew that the people's hearts, Wouldn't be changed regardless, Of what he did, He knew that it would never be, Enough, To shake the tag of being Joseph's boy, Similar idea I think, What we see in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Isn't it?

Remember the rich man, He's spending his days in eternal punishment, And what is it he says, Well send Lazarus back, Send Lazarus back to warn my brother, Send Lazarus back to warn my family, That they'll believe, If someone rises from the dead, And God says, Well no they won't, They have the prophets, They have the warnings, They won't believe, Even if one rises from the dead, To tell them, Experience on its own, Will never be enough, To bring someone, To Christ, Seeing the mighty works, That God and Christ do, Will never be enough, To bring someone to Christ, Maybe that's where you are this morning, You think, Well if only Jesus would prove himself, If only Jesus would show himself, Then I'd believe, If only Jesus would do, Some mighty work, Some great work of healing, Then I'd believe,

Then I'd believe, But you wouldn't, You'd find some other way, Of explaining it, Maybe it was the medicine, Maybe it was, A wrong diagnosis, Whatever it is, You'd find another way, You need to hear, And believe the gospel, To hear and believe, About the life, Death, And resurrection, Of Jesus Christ, Then and only then, Do the works make sense, Then and only then, Do we see the purpose, Of the works themselves, But he goes on, To provoke the people, Even further, Doesn't he, In verse 25, He said, I'm not going to do, Any great work there, But continues, With his teaching, Look, There were lots of widows, In the days, In Israel, In the days of Elijah, When that 42 month, Famine came, When times were hard, There were lots of widows, In Israel, Yet Elijah, Wasn't sent to any of them, Rather he was sent,

To a Gentile widow, From Zarephath, There were plenty of lepers, In the days of Elisha, There were plenty of people, Suffering from skin disease, In the nation of Israel, That God, Could have chosen to heal, But he didn't, Instead only Naaman the Syrian, Was cleansed, Now what's going on here, What's Jesus doing here, By reminding, By picking these two, Incidents out, Of the nation of Israel's history, Well quite simply, He's declaring, That he won't be the type of Messiah, They want him to be, They have in mind, A nationalist hero, They have in mind, One who would throw off, The hated Romans, One who would free, The Israelites, One who would rise up, And free the nation, Once again, Jesus reminds them, It's always been God's plan,

It's always been God's practice, To save the Gentiles, As well as the Jews, It's always been God's plan, To save the high, And the lowly, To save the king, Or the widow, This wasn't going to be, A merely, Nationalistic thing, This wasn't going to be, Restricted, To just the nation, Of Israel, But Jesus would be, The king of the nations, As well, We can be tempted, To reject Jesus, Because he isn't the type of Messiah, That we want them to be, We want Jesus to be, The gift machine Messiah, Who gives us health, And wealth, We want Jesus, To be the grandfather Messiah, Who doesn't make any demands, Of us, But simply, Loves us unconditionally, We want them to be, The woodstock Messiah, Who's into, To peace and love man, Whatever that may mean, We want them

to be,

[29 : 00] The judging Messiah, Who hammers anyone, Who doesn't get it right, But what we like to think, Of Jesus, What we like to think, Of the Messiah, Has no bearing, On who Jesus actually is, Our guide, When we come to think, Of the Messiah, Must be the Messiah, That we find, In the pages of scripture, The Messiah, Who came to bring, God's love, To the nations, The Messiah, Who came, To proclaim liberty, To those who are held, In captivity, The Messiah, As he's revealed to us, By God, So Jesus provokes, The people then, Essentially by reminding them, That God, Has always had a special place, God has always had, This saving interest, In the Gentiles, Thirdly, Finally, And quickly then, We see this deliberate, Assassination,

This deliberate assassination, In verses 28, Through 30, And notice how quickly, The mood changes here, Verse 22, What are we told, After Jesus declares, That today, This scripture has been fulfilled, In your hearing, Verse 22, All the people marvel, All the people speak well, Of him, But now that they found out, That he won't be the Messiah, They want, Now that they found out, That he won't be this, Nationalistic hero, Now that they found out, The Gentiles are included, In this plan of salvation, What happens?

And they heard these things, Verse 28, All in the synagogue, Were filled with wrath, They rose up, Drove him out of their town, Took him to the top of the hill, On which they planned to kill him, In the space of eight verses, We've gone from all marveling at him, To wanting to kill him, But don't you just love their impotence?

The whole synagogue is filled with wrath, The people of the town, Are ready to lynch him, And what happens? Verse 30, Jesus just simply walks away, Passing through their midst, He went away, His hour had not yet come, Jesus is fully in control, Of what's happening to him, He knows that they can't lay a hand on him, They would succeed in killing him, But only when his time had come, They would succeed in killing him, In a few years time, But only when he would die, As the sacrifice for the sins of the world, Your sin this morning can be forgiven, But only, As you come to Christ, He will confront you with truths about yourself,

He will confront you with truths about himself, He might provoke you, With some of the things that he says, Some of the things that he says, Might provoke the world around us, But ultimately, He will save you from your sin, If you trust in his death in your place, There's two choices this morning, And that's all there is, There's two groups of people this morning, And that's all there is, Either we join with the crowd here, Ready to push Jesus off the top of that hill, So enraged by what he said, So enraged by what he taught, That we join with that crowd, Ready to kill him, Or we rejoice in the fact, That Jesus died so that my sin could be paid for, That Jesus died so that we might know forgiveness and freedom this morning, That Jesus died to show us,

[33 : 15] The love of God this morning, That's two choices there are, And that's all there is, We're in one crowd, Or we're in the other, Make sure you're in the right crowd this morning, And make sure you know which crowd you're part of, Amen.

Amen.