

Not In This Hometown

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Preacher: Rich Chasse

[0 : 00] When I first started to preach, I was much younger and I was constantly thinking about little ticks or things that I would do when I was preaching that would maybe draw attention away from what I was saying and onto something that I was doing instead.

Like I was concerned that when I was preaching I might start picking my nose. Or I was concerned my zipper was down over the years that has happened.

Some of you may remember those moments and just didn't say anything. Thanks for that. When we were living in Virginia and I just first started to get into ministry, I did something that was not that, among young preachers it was perhaps something that was starting to happen.

I filmed myself. Now this is back when we would film on videotape. Now we say those words today but we don't mean them like we did back then.

Back then it was actual tape. You know, like a cassette that you would plug into a video. Some of you remember those days. Some of you are looking at me like, what are you talking about?

[1 : 31] Videotape. What is videotape? Because you could just pop out your phone right now and boom, take video. But yeah, I videotaped myself.

And because I was concerned if I was doing some things while I was preaching that I wouldn't notice until I watched myself on videotape.

And sure enough, I did. I was doing this thing with my nose. I wasn't picking it. But I would touch the tip of my nose.

I would just preach on and then next thing you know I'm touching my nose again. And it's a good thing you didn't know me back in those days. Quite telling.

But getting up in front of people and talking. I don't know how many of you have that kind of experience. Whether it's teaching a class or speaking of some sort or whatever it might be.

[2 : 28] Some of you have that kind of experience. But it can be nerve rattling to get up in front of a group of people and actually say something. And speak and have a prepared speech or whatever it is.

And for preachers, it's a little bit even more perhaps when you start thinking about what it is that you're doing. And it can have an impact on eternity. And it's like, whoa, I've got this big responsibility.

I've never been. I told you a couple weeks ago about a time that I just went and did it again. I was, before I left my hometown, I actually was invited by the pastor there to speak.

And then I spoke at the church and then I went away to college and was gone for all that time. And then got married and moved to Texas and Virginia. Never in that time was I invited to come back to my hometown to preach again.

And I haven't preached in that church building or anywhere in my hometown since that time. And I read about a young man who had been away from his hometown for some time since he began his ministry.

[3 : 41] And when he returned to his hometown, he was actually invited to speak there. But what he decided to preach about, and the place was packed.

It was full because people remembered him, knew who he was, remembered his name, all of that. But what he decided to preach about was so convicting and it was so challenging.

And it was so upsetting to the people that none of them ever wanted to hear him speak again. Here, let me tell you, let me show you where that story is at.

It's actually about Jesus. And it's in Luke chapter 4, if you want to turn to Luke chapter 4. And we'll see the story as it happens to Jesus.

Now, by the time Jesus makes it back to his hometown, he is a household name in the whole region. People know who he is.

[4 : 40] They've heard about his miracles. They've heard about what he has taught. And it is just the talk of the town that Jesus was back in town. And the synagogue was going to be packed that day with people from his hometown who grew up with him.

Who saw him as a young boy, who perhaps your children played with Jesus when he was a young boy. And I don't know if he was popular or not.

I'm thinking he wasn't so popular because he was perfect in every way. And, you know, how would you live up with that? We don't even know what that looks like. And it's probably a good thing that we don't know that.

But here he is now invited to speak. And we see what's happening here in verses 14 and 15. And, again, the people knew his name.

He was a household name. The miracles, the anticipation of it. But there's a gap here between what Tom covered last week in the temptation of Christ when he's in the wilderness and Satan and Jesus are kind of going at it.

[5 : 51] And now there's a gap in time here. And Luke doesn't really fill that in other than with just a couple of verses to let us know that. And in that gap of time, there's the start that starts with his the beginning of his public ministry.

And then there's the wedding at Cana. This is John chapter two. We find out about he meets with Nicodemus in an upper room there in Jerusalem.

He heals a nobleman's son. He has the confrontation with the woman at the well in Samaria.

So all of these things happen in the interim between the temptation of Christ and what we begin reading in Luke chapter four, verse 14. And Jesus returned in the power of the spirit to Galilee.

And so this is now all of this ministry that has happened first in Jerusalem in that territory. And now in Galilee, he's been around to the towns in Galilee preaching, performing miracles, particularly miracles at Capernaum, a town in Galilee in the northern part of Israel.

[7 : 03] And they're hearing about this back in his hometown and report about him went out through all the surrounding country. So he's famous at this point, just at the beginning of his fame, if you will.

And he taught in their synagogues being glorified by all. And the tense of that being glorified is that it's an ongoing thing. People are just praising him and glorifying him on a continual basis as he is performing this ministry.

And so there's a lot of anticipation. He came to Nazareth where he had been brought up. And then from there, we'll catch the rest of the story. But before we go on with that, I want to kind of clarify a couple of things here.

First of all, Jesus going into the synagogue, the synagogues were not something that was created in the Old Testament law.

There's nothing in the Old Testament about the creation of synagogues. That was a function that that was an outcome of the Babylonian captivity where Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed.

[8 : 16] And so the people in the towns, wherever the Jews had been scattered, we formed what we would consider today local churches. But church hadn't been born yet. So they had local synagogues where they gathered to remember, to be taught their form of religion, their Jewish traditions, their Jewish faith, their Jewish religion.

And so this is what Jesus was doing. He was going into the synagogues in these towns and preaching and teaching from the Old Testament and all along the way performing miracles as he begins to be more and more known for the miracles.

And so he's going into the synagogues and he's doing this. And as we get into this story, I want to cover a subject that's on your notes first.

And this is something that we touch on from time to time, that if you've been here for any length of time, you know that I'm not a big fan of this thing called religion. And this story that we come across today is another reason why religion, in my mind, is not a good thing.

And before we get into the story, I want to remind you of these things so that as we read it, you'll see, aha, this is what Rich is talking about.

[9 : 39] So the problem with being religious that you have on your notes there, religious people may accept Jesus on a superficial basis or a superficial level.

But there's a but there's a but there. And this goes contrary to what a lot of us think about religious people. Oftentimes we'll see people who seem very religious.

They attend church. They dress a certain way. They look a certain way. They talk a certain way. They talk in spiritual, religious terms.

Sometimes they may point their fingers at people who aren't doing it the way that they want to do it and make judgments about them. And, oh, these people are super spiritual.

No, they're super religious. But they may not be very spiritual. They may accept Jesus on a superficial basis. But here's where it goes wrong when it comes to religion.

[10 : 40] First, they do not want to submit to Jesus as their master. The word Lord, that's basically what it means. One of the synonyms for the word Lord is the word master.

And so they don't want to be considered the servant or the slave of the one true master. Now, they may sound like that.

They may say those kinds of things. But in reality, the Jesus that they have in their mind is not the Jesus of the scriptures. And so that's where the trouble can come into.

And we'll see that today. Secondly, that you don't want to accept him as he claimed to be. And that is as both Lord and Christ. And again, all the definitions that come with Lord, Master, Christ or Messiah, meaning king.

He's the king of Israel. And again, the idea of serving that Christ as he claimed to be. They don't want to do that. They want to serve the Christ, the Jesus of their invention out of their own religion that they've created in their mind.

[11 : 57] It's an idol. It's not the Jesus of the scriptures. Again, we will see that today. Thirdly, they do not want to admit their sinful, desperate condition.

Here's something about religious people. They think of themselves as better than. You know, I'm doing pretty well. I can struggle with this too.

Every one of us has a struggle with our own ways of religion. I'm better than. We look at the news and we see these people. We look in the streets and we see people who are living in a different way, who are involved in sin, who are involved in perhaps illicit things.

And or who are down and on the street, living in the street without food. Their clothing looks terrible. The way they live their life is not something we would ever choose to do.

And we cast kind of a judgmental eye and we say, I'm doing okay with God compared to. And we compare ourselves to other people.

[13 : 03] Even other people who, you know, aren't so down and look like that. But other people who are just not as religious as I am. And we think, I think God probably loves me more.

God thinks more of me because look at how I live my life versus how these other people choose to live their life. And we get in trouble with that.

And that's one of the things that we'll see. We'll see these in this story today. So let's get into the story. He came to Nazareth where he had been brought up.

And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day and he stood up to read. Now, we don't know some of the circumstances of what happened today or happened in this story.

But one of the customs in the synagogue, the way that the synagogue operated was different than the way that we do church. Okay. For instance, the elders of the church would sit right front and center.

[14 : 06] Just them, not their families. Okay. So the leaders of the church would sit up front. And then behind them, there would be two groups, two segregated groups of people, men on one side, women on the other.

And so we might view that as kind of an Amish tradition. We see some of that in our world today. But that's how they did it back then. So the elders would sit up front.

And then they would have basically three readings. If you grew up in certain church traditions, you might remember there would be different readings. Someone would come up and they would read a portion of the gospel or a portion of the Old Testament and so on.

And they had that kind of tradition, although they didn't have the gospel back then. But they would read from the first five books of the Old Testament would come one reading. Another reading would come from the prophets in the Old Testament.

And so Jesus was, as a guest and as a teacher, and certainly as someone who had the kind of fame that he had in that moment, would have been invited to come and to share a reading on that day.

[15 : 20] Now, it was more than just a reading in their world. They would stand up and as they were reading, there would be basically a chest. And inside that chest would be different scrolls that would represent different parts of the Old Testament.

And he was handed a scroll that contained the book of Isaiah. And we don't know if he was assigned the portion that he read or if it's something that he chose himself.

We don't know that. But, of course, the Lord orchestrates all of this to the point where he reads a particular passage of Scripture that becomes very pertinent to what's happening in his life and in his ministry in this moment.

We'll get to that. So he stands up to read, and then you're going to see in the text where he sits down. Okay? This is their position of teaching, which is different from our culture today.

We have preachers who stand up in the pulpit. They didn't have pulpits. But when it was time to read, they stood up. And when it was time to teach, to entertain questions back and forth, that was a part of what they did.

[16 : 36] And they would also then comment or teach on the passage and what it meant, what the passage meant for the people in that congregation, in that synagogue.

And that's what we'll see in the text today. It's why I have a chair up here. People are like, well, why do you have a chair? Well, it's Matthew chapter 5, Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus sat down to teach. I don't actually use it very much. It's more of a, I don't know, just a principle of the matter for me. But anyway, let's go on in the text.

So he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. And he unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written.

Now this is where he's going to be reading from Isaiah chapter 61. Isaiah chapter 61 is a, well, it's a book, it's a prophetic book.

[17 : 32] And this is a prophecy about the Messiah. Isaiah, interesting text of scripture that has an impact not only on how we see Jesus in his public ministry for these three years.

He's on the planet before he's crucified, buried, risen from the dead and ascended. But it also speaks to when he comes again. And if you remember any of the times that we've talked about, we've taught through different prophetic statements.

We've taught that the Old Testament prophets saw the first and second coming of Jesus as one event. So when you read Isaiah 61, it's going to look like, ooh, the first and second coming, it's all just one coming.

They didn't see the church. Paul explains the church in the New Testament as this mystery. This mystery, this thing that was not revealed in the Old Testament that is now plain to see in the New Testament.

The church which no Old Testament prophet, no Old Testament passage of scripture even ever hinted at this idea of the church. You're not going to go to the Old Testament anywhere and find any hint, any clue, any statement of any kind having to do with the church.

[18 : 52] It was completely hidden until the time of Jesus and after the cross. And I'm going to begin this church. Nothing's going to be able to stop it.

And so today we're living in this church age that the Old Testament is completely silent about. And that's why you see passages like what we're going to see in Isaiah. And Jesus is quoting from Isaiah here in Luke chapter 4.

So here's the text. Luke chapter 4 verse 18. This comes right out of Isaiah chapter 61 verse 1. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

I want to pause. I'm going to keep reading, but I'm going to come back and pause. Okay. And he has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives. Freedom for the captives. Okay. Recovery of sight to the blind.

Okay. And to set at liberty those who are oppressed. And immediately what we do in our context today is we look at these passages.

[20 : 01] He's anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. And we automatically assume what? That he's talking about people who are down and out. Who don't even have a few bucks in their wallet.

Don't have enough food to eat. Maybe they're living on the street. Maybe they're trying to make ends meet and they're not doing so well. He's coming to proclaim good news to the poor.

That's not what this is about. Now, the idea of captives being set free and sight to the blind and poor, good news, all of that.

There's two things going on here. There's the spiritual truth, which is what Jesus is talking about. And then there's the physical manifestation, the physical coming of that in the kingdom.

In his kingdom, in his coming kingdom, when Jesus comes again and sets up his kingdom on earth, there will be no more poor. Right?

[21 : 08] There will be no blind people. There will be no captives. Everyone will have been set free. But for now, what Jesus is talking about, and I don't know, how many of us put ourselves in the shoes of these people that he's talking about?

Are you guys poor? Are you captives? Are you blind? And the answer to that question is, without Christ, you are all of those things.

The word poor that is used here is the same word that Jesus uses in Matthew chapter 5, verse 3.

Blessed are the poor, bankrupt in spirit. And that's what this is a reference to.

But for so many people who are wanting to look at passages like this and want to turn it into a social gospel, will think that our primary responsibility is to feed people, is to provide for their means, to provide healing, to go to the prisoners, and all of those kinds of things.

[22 : 20] And yes, that is a part of what we do. But can I say, is it terrible of me to say that those are secondary callings? That our main calling is what Jesus is talking about here.

This message of good news to the people who are poor in spirit, who need Jesus Christ. More than they need a morsel of food.

Now, do we let them starve? Of course not. That's why we're going to do Tuesday morning. We're going to pass out food to people in need. But more importantly than when we give them food, we want to give them the message of the gospel.

People need to hear the gospel. That's what this is a reference to. After all, what are we? And Martin Luther said this, and this is attributed to a number of different people, but I'm just a beggar telling other beggars where I found bread.

I'm just someone who was lost and blind and poor and captive to my own sin.

[23 : 40] Telling you where I have found freedom and liberty and food and healing for my sight.

And it's Jesus. And again, this is what Jesus is referring to, not only here, but in Matthew 5. All of these different places where we see Jesus talking like this.

It is a spiritual poorness, bankruptness of spirit, a spiritual hunger, a spiritual blindness, a spiritual captivity to our own sin.

And that is so much more important than being set free from a prison cell. Or being physically blind.

Much rather to be physically blind than spiritually blind. So this is where he's headed with this. He sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives.

[24 : 48] Let me ask you a question. Do you think the people in that synagogue that day got that? No, we don't get that today. We've got preachers in pulpits who are standing in pulpits.

Not in the way, by the way. And who are talking about, yeah, this is why we've got to do this. And forgetting, not even hinting at how this is a spiritual lesson.

Not so much a material. I want you to notice how big, how long verse 18 is.

Verse 18 is three lines here on this screen and another four lines here. I want you to notice how big verse 19 is. That's it.

If you look in your text at Luke chapter 4, verse 18 is those two previous screens. Verse 19 only has this line. And it's just a continuation of what he's already been saying.

[25 : 47] To proclaim, this is chapter 2 of Isaiah, or verse 2 of Isaiah 61. To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Period. Period. And if you don't go back and look at Isaiah 61, you would never know that Isaiah is not done here.

That Isaiah chapter 61, verse 2 has a couple more lines to it. So that's just about the same length as what we saw in verse 18. And I know, I'm going to put Jeff on the spot here.

I know you're looking at Isaiah 61. You look at Isaiah 61, verses 1 and 2. How long is verse 2? It's much longer than just this little portion. Let me show you what it says in verse 2 of Isaiah 61.

Here's the first part of it. To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. That's what Jesus said in Luke chapter 4. Jesus stops it here for a reason.

Now why does he do that? Because the next phrase of what Isaiah is going to say is not talking about the first coming of Jesus. It's talking about the second coming of Jesus.

[27 : 03] Because Isaiah never saw the distinction between a first coming and a second coming. He saw them all as one event. So when he says, second part of verse 2, And the day of vengeance of our God.

That didn't happen in the first coming of Jesus. Matter of fact, it was the other way around. Jesus allowed them to carry out vengeance upon him.

By nailing him to the cross. So Jesus stops in the middle of that prophecy. Talking about the first coming and second coming.

And we have the blessing of hindsight. We can look back and say, Oh ha! Now we can understand what Isaiah was getting at here. There were two comings of Jesus.

That's why we talk about a first coming and a second coming of Jesus. So this is what Jesus is preaching. So he's saying basically all of this.

[28 : 14] The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Because he's anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. Now, again, this is a prophecy about the coming Messiah.

This is the one that they were looking for. This is the one that they had anticipated. The Messiah is coming. And we know some things about him.

We know that he's going to be of the clan of David. That he's going to come from the tribe of Judah. If they had studied further, they would know that he would have been born in Bethlehem.

If they had studied further, they would know other things about in anticipation of things that would happen that were spoken about the coming Messiah.

They didn't get that yet. It's still early on in his ministry. And Jesus hasn't been as forthright yet. He has in private, but not so much in public.

[29 : 18] But now here he is in the synagogue. And it blows my mind when I hear these Bible scholars. And you see my air quotes, right?

So those who are listening later on know I'm throwing up some air quotes. Bible scholars who say that, well, Jesus never really claimed himself to be Lord.

Are you kidding me? Look what Jesus does here. He says, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he's anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

So the people hearing this and reading this, okay, okay, so we know that Messiah is going to be proclaiming good news to the poor. We know that he's going to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, liberty to those who are oppressed.

And oppressed there is not modern day definition of oppressed. It is literal oppression. Proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

[30 : 20] Whoa! And then in comparison there, verse 20, and he rolled up the scroll. And by the way, we don't know if he just read that little bit of portion and that was it.

Or if he read more and this was just the part that was highlighted for us in Luke's gospel. We don't know that. But when he was finished, he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down.

Okay? Him sitting down is not how we would take that. We would take that as, okay, he rolled up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant, and he sat down in the crowd.

No. No. It meant that he sat down. Now, what are we going to say about it?

What are we going to teach about it? We can handle some questions and answers here. That's what that meant. So he's finished reading, he sits down, and all of the eyes of all in the synagogue are fixed on him.

[31 : 35] There's not a preacher in the world who's had this kind of rapt attention on him as he's getting ready to preach, teach. You can imagine, they think they know what he's talking about.

They're about to be, in my mind, they're about to be blown away. They're not going to get it yet. And he began to say to them, today, today, this day, this very day, this scripture, this scripture about the Messiah, what he's going to be doing when he comes.

How do you identify the Messiah? This scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing today. Questions? Questions? Can you imagine?

Can you imagine being in that room that day? And the little kid who grew up in your town, who played with your kids down at the creek, who was climbing the tree in your front yard and you had to shoo him out of that tree?

Or maybe you were one of his customers and he built you a shelf, a table and chairs. And now, you hadn't seen him in a few years and here he is sitting in front of you.

[33 : 23] And he says this. Whoa. You wouldn't have gotten it. Okay? None of them did. They didn't get it.

But so far, so good. All right? He's back in his hometown. He's done his thing. He's preached. He's taught. He's made this statement. And they're just blown away.

Look at their response to this. And by the way, this story appears in three of the Gospels, what are known as the three synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Luke's story is different from Matthew and Mark's. In its timing, this happened toward the beginning of his ministry.

The one in Matthew and Mark happens toward the end. And they're two different events. A lot of times, if you're reading commentaries about this story, they'll blend them into all just one event.

[34 : 30] But the differences between Luke's account and Matthew and Mark's account, while similar, because they do take place in Nazareth and they take place in the synagogue and the response is different at the end.

At the beginning, Matthew and Mark's accounts are, we don't like this guy. We don't trust this guy. We don't want this guy. Beginning of Luke's account, they're all in love.

They think this is fabulous. They think this is good news for their hometown. Okay? That's the major difference between the two stories. In Matthew and Mark's account, the rest of the disciples are there, all of his family, his mom, his brothers and sisters, they're all there.

This account, we don't have any of that. Okay? They might have been there, but Luke doesn't mention it. All spoke well of him. Ooh.

That's Jesus. He's pretty good with the turn of phrase. I like that. Wow. He marveled at his gracious words that were coming from his mouth.

[35 : 42] And they said, is not this Joseph's son? Both statements are said in all three stories. In this statement, the preface to that phrase is this is not Joseph's son is.

Wow, this is incredible. I thought this was Joseph's son. It's a mystery. It's a, hey, how did this happen? This is fantastic. This is incredible.

In Matthew and Mark's account, it's, isn't this Joseph's son? That bum? That guy who did this? And isn't this his brothers? And isn't this his sister? That's his mother right there.

And they're mad. It's two different accounts. Is this not Joseph's son? They're, they're marveling.

They're thinking, oh, hometown boy made good. And finally, Nazareth is going to be on the map. And don't you know the things that he was doing in those other towns, like the stuff that we heard he was doing at Capernaum?

[36 : 50] How much more is he going to do that kind of stuff in our town? Because he's one of us. And so we can expect him to do some incredible, get ready, buckle up your seatbelts.

Nazareth is never going to be the same again now that Jesus is in town. Hmm. But we know, because we've already, maybe you haven't yet, but you know the end of the story, how this story ends.

It's not going to go well for him, right? Not going to go well back in his hometown. So Jesus went back to Nazareth, but up until this point, it's going really well.

I mean, it's all, it's all gravy now. I mean, it's good stuff. This Jesus guy. We didn't see it before, but man, whoo, it's not going to stay that way.

It's not really that way now. The people there in the synagogue, naively, what does it mean to be naive? Anybody?

[38 : 03] Not aware. They don't know any better. You could say ignorant, but ignorant's kind of a derogatory word. So we say naive. Same thing. They don't get it.

They're clueless. They naively, ignorantly responded very positively to Jesus's claim. They don't even know what it meant. Hey, this scripture today, it's been fulfilled in your presence.

Right now, as you've been listening, boom. Ding, ding, ding, ding, it's me. They don't have a clue. They don't get it.

They had no clear understanding of what his words meant. They were just looking for a show.

We heard about the stuff you did at Capernaum. Come on. Come on. Their warm response to the words of Jesus was the result of a distorted concept of the Messiah and his ministry.

[39 : 13] They didn't understand the words about poor and blind and captive. They didn't get that. They made it about themselves. They made it about material things. Jesus didn't intend it that way.

And his declaration that he was the Messiah, in their minds, if that were true, even if they got that point, that meant for them, literally, liberty from Rome.

He was going to be like a general coming to gather up an army and kick Rome out of their hometown. And everything was going to be wonderful again.

They're all mixed up. And it goes downhill from there. And he said, now why would you do this?

I mean, if you're Jesus in this moment, and this is why I'm like everyone else, why don't you just zip it?

[40 : 25] Thanks. Appreciate it, guys. Appreciate it. Yeah, I love you too. Oh, let me heal this person. Ah, good. Why, Jesus, do you have to say more words?

Couldn't you just have stopped right at this point? But if you've read the Gospels, you know that that's not what Jesus does. And he has a reason.

And it's a very good reason. We'll talk about that. So he said to them, doubtless, you will quote to me this proverb, physician, heal yourself. And immediately, this is where my mind goes, immediately I'm thinking, okay, he's up on the cross and these people are saying, physician, heal yourself.

This is a very popular phrase back then. And it meant different things in different contexts. And Jesus actually tells us what this phrase means.

And it's not about the cross. Now, doubtless, they will tell him that when he's on the cross as well. But in this context, it has a different meaning.

[41 : 32] And this is that different meaning. Physician, heal yourself. What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.

In other words, physician, heal your town. Heal your people. That's how it can be translated.

Heal this place. We heard about what you did at Capernaum, Jesus. And we're your hometown, so not only are you going to do what you did at Capernaum in performing all these miracles, you're going to do it even more because this is your hometown.

This is yourself. It's your people. You're one of us. So man, that's what they were expecting.

Why wouldn't they expect that? He's from Nazareth. What he did at Capernaum and all these other towns in Galilee, of course he's going to do that here.

[42 : 36] And of course he's going to do it even more so here because he's one of us. We would have expected the same thing. Did Jesus put on a show for Satan just a few verses before this?

Tell me, anyone? Of course not. He's not going to put on a show here. The only miracle that you see happening in this moment is what happens right at the end of the story.

We'll talk about it when we get there. But that's it. And then the second time he comes to Nazareth, Mark and Matthew are explicit to say, hey, hardly anybody was healed in Nazareth because their lack of faith.

They were so against him. Jesus was not about to put on a show to impress his hometown audience. That's not what Jesus is about.

We should know that about Jesus. Instead, he changed gears, at least in their minds. For him it wasn't a changing of gears.

[43 : 56] And addressed their underlying rebellion against God. Wait a minute, Rich. What are you talking about? They're fans of Jesus at this moment. Right?

What are you talking about? Underlying rebellion. Well, Jesus knows what's in their hearts. Jesus knows their history. Jesus knows, he knows the religious veneer that exists on these people.

And he knows how they think. And he says, truly I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.

You can't go back to your hometown. And what he's saying, of course, is true. What did they do to the Old Testament prophets? They killed them. They tortured them. They killed them.

They rejected them. It's going to happen to Jesus too. Why would he be any different? Any true messenger of God was going to be rejected.

[45 : 14] So Jesus is saying the same thing here. Now, get a load of where he goes from this. Because if you and I were writing this story, I don't think any of us are going in this direction that Jesus is going.

Okay? This is weird. But again, after the fact, it makes perfect sense. But you don't realize that until after the fact.

In truth, Jesus says, he's sitting. And he's teaching. In truth, I tell you.

It's very similar, if not the same thing, as verily, verily, I say unto thee. Remember that from the old King James? Or truly, truly, I tell you. Okay?

In truth, I tell you. There were many widows in where? Israel. Where are they now? Where are they as Jesus?

[46 : 18] They're in Israel, right? Okay? Many, why are you talking about widows right now? Many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, one of the Old Testament prophets.

When the heavens were shut up for three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land. You guys remember the story of Elijah and the different, the prophet of Baal, or the God of Baal and the prophets of Baal and the fire and the...

And Elijah was sent to none of those Israelite widows. He served none of them.

But only to Zarephath in the land of Sidon to the north of Israel.

Not Israelite. Not Jewish. Ooh. Now, in your minds, if you're sitting in that synagogue in Nazareth, he's just reminded you of something you don't like.

[47 : 32] why in the world would an Old Testament prophet of God do something special for a widow of Sidon, not for the widows of Israel.

Verse 27, there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, the successor to Elijah.

Oh boy. Jesus, you really gonna go there? Look at this. Many lepers and none of them were cleansed. Not cured.

Cleansed. Different meaning to that. It reminds me of the story of the guy.

You remember the story in Mark chapter 2? They dropped the guy down through the roof on a sheet, on a mat. They got four guys on each corner of that mat and they cut the hole in the roof and they lower it down in front of Jesus.

[48 : 42] What did Jesus tell him? Your sins are forgiven. I mean, the guy's lying there on the floor. He can't get up. He's been lame. Why is Jesus changing the subject?

He's not. What the man needed was forgiveness. And oh, by the way, to show you that I can forgive, ah, get up. And guess what?

It's the same thing here. What they needed was not for their leprosy to be cured, although that happened in the one character here. It was so they could be cleansed, forgiven, brought into right relationship with the Lord.

So many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, none of them was cleansed, but only who? Don't let the double A fool you.

It's just Naaman. Naaman the what? He's a Syrian general, the general of an army that's fighting against Israel.

[49 : 45] And who's the only guy that Elisha is able to cleanse from leprosy? By the miracle of God, the enemy.

Both Zarephath and Naaman are Gentiles. They didn't serve anybody in Israel, but they served these two Gentiles.

Why? Simply because they believed. When the prophets gave them instruction, these two, Zarephath and Naaman, believed and did as they were told, and they were healed.

Jesus is going to do this throughout the Gospels. He tells a story to a group of Pharisees about Samaritan. There's an adjective in front of it.

It starts with a G and an OO and a D. The Good Samaritan. You know what a Samaritan was? Half Gentile, half Jewish, and the Jews hated them.

[51 : 02] In their minds, there's no such thing as a Good Samaritan. They're only dogs. They're only swine Samaritans.

So when Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan, he's got a priest walking on by. I'm not going to bother with that guy. He's got a Levite walking right on by.

Oh, good member of the tribe of Levi. I'm not paying any time. Matter of fact, I'm going across the road and going to the other side. I'm not helping that poor guy. And then a Samaritan walks by.

And in that moment in the crowd where he's telling that story, the people's faces, you could have seen it on their faces.

What's he doing? Where's he going with this? There's no way. And then at the end, Jesus says, who's the one who did what was right?

[52 : 10] and that guy has had to admit Samaritan. Had no other choice but to admit it was the Samaritan. When Jesus heals servant of a centurion, Roman soldier in charge of centurion, a hundred soldiers, these are hated, hated people, Gentiles.

and when the centurion says, hey, you can heal anybody, you don't even have to go there, you just say it and I know that it's going to be taken care of.

Because I understand when I give an order as a centurion, I know it's going to be done. I don't have to worry about that. So you just say the word, you don't even have to go back with me.

just say the word. And Jesus is startled by this. And he says, I've not found faith like this among any in Israel.

These are offensive words. This synagogue full of Jews is offended at this.

[53 : 30] And you think, oh, come on. I mean, are they going to really get that upset? Seriously? I mean, inside they mean like, okay, come on. What are you doing? I really liked your sermon.

I didn't really know what it meant. But what's the point of this? I mean, I would have expected that. That's not what happens.

So, before we get to that, the blessing of the Gentiles, this is something that was taught throughout the Old Testament. When God called Abraham, the whole point of God calling Abraham and Israel was the point that they would be a light to the rest of the world.

So the rest of the world would look at Israel, would look at the sons and the family and the clans and the nation of Israel and say, wow, what an incredible God they serve.

I want a part of that. And that the people of Israel would proclaim the truth of God to these people and that they would come to faith in him.

[54 : 43] Is that what Israel did? No. They turned it all around and said, well, God shows us because obviously we're special and you're a bunch of pigs. Remember the story of Jonah?

why he didn't want to go to Nineveh? It was the same thing. It permeated all their society. But this Isaiah, all throughout the Old Testament, the Gentiles were meant to come to faith and to serve God Almighty and Israel wrecked it.

Wrecked it. And so a pivotal issue had to be exposed. When Jesus sat down to teach them, he was about to expose their hearts.

What was at the core of who they were and how they thought. So no niceties on this day. This issue had to be exposed and it had to be dealt with and it was their stubborn Jewish pride and their stubborn self-righteousness.

That when they looked at themselves, well I'm a child of Abraham, I'm good. That's all that mattered to them. And if they had any sense of religion, it was all a veneer.

[56 : 12] It was all on the outside. It was all superficial. superficial. Because this is what their hearts were like. Look at this.

When they heard these things, okay, Jesus just, he's just finished telling them about Naaman, the Syrian general, and Zarephath, this widow. Both Gentiles.

When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. how much they rose up, drove him out of the town, brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built so that they could throw him down the cliff.

They were going to kill him. That's how mad, that's how mad they were.

they didn't even wait for the closing prayer. He's not even done. It would be like, I don't even know, where's a nearby cliff you could throw me off of?

[57 : 28] If you all just bum rushed right now and drove me out and threw me in the back of a pickup truck and drove me to the nearest cliff and see you later, Rich, get out of here. They burned with self-righteous rage and rushed to throw Jesus off.

the cliff. And the only miracle that happens, maybe, I don't know, this might not have even been a miracle, could have been, this is how it ends, but passing through their midst, he went away.

Like a little more information, Luke. How'd that happen? I mean, did he just all of a sudden blind all of their eyes and he walked right through? Or was it just they're so enraged and they're fighting amongst each other and he just kind of, they forgot about him and just walked right out of the crowd?

We don't know. But that last, and I know it's late, but let me give you these last three. When we read this passage, there's more to it here if we would just pay attention.

When we get mad at a situation, here's some things to remember. Number one, Jesus didn't lose control. Don't lose control.

[58 : 48] When things are not going your way, particularly, this is gospel ministry involved. You're sharing the gospel with someone and it's not going your way.

Don't lose your cool. Don't lose control. And this passing through their midst, he just kept it cool.

He kept it under control. He wasn't pleading for his life. He wasn't just... Secondly, don't lose heart. I mean, what must this have felt like?

Particularly, Jesus is both God and man. Jesus the man. what would this have felt like to be at his hometown synagogue that he grew up in, that he was taught in, that he had discussions with the rabbis and the elders, just like he did when he was 12 years old at the temple.

You can imagine. And here he is, and they're doing this? It's possible to be hurt and yet not to lose heart.

[60 : 01] I imagine absolutely Jesus was hurt by this. Third, don't lose sight. He just went away. And on your notes, it says this, that that little phrase, he went away, there's purpose behind it.

It wasn't just he wandered off. It can be also translated, he continued on his journey. He had a journey he was on.

He had a purpose to his journey. He kept on going. Later on in this same chapter, verse 43, it says, Jesus said to them, I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to other towns as well.

And I was sent for this purpose. Jesus always kept in mind the reason why he was there. He was going to declare the coming kingdom and he was going to be faithful to that call, to that purpose until he was rejected and crucified.

So don't lose control, don't lose heart, don't lose sight. This gospel of Luke is going to be full of other stories like this and all along the way, and Luke's going to remind us, you're going to be amazed.

[61 : 22] They were amazed and they were amazed. It's amazing when you read and you understand it in context. As I'm preaching, I don't know if I got all the details right. I mean, these stories were kind of filling in some blanks here, but what the scriptures tell us is that Jesus now has begun his ministry and we're already seeing the rejection.

And you're going to continue to see that over and over again. A few places along the way, there are going to be people who put their faith in Christ, people who believe in him. That's what this group is.

In a community as large as what Mason County is and surrounding area, there are a few faithful people in this room and in rooms like this dotted around the county who are serving God and who believe in him.

Be faithful. Be faithful to that. Lord, again, we thank you for your word. we thank you for this story that is hard for us to imagine.

The people responding to the preaching and the teaching of Jesus in this way. But Lord, we also are reminded of the end of this chapter, this story of Jesus and his earthly ministry, that they will eventually reject him completely and abuse him and torture him and nail him to a cross.

[62 : 59] But again, we know that's not the end of the story too. And we are so very grateful that we know the end of the end. You're coming back and we're here waiting for you, looking for you, anticipating your return.

And we know that in your kingdom, there will be no more poor, no more blind, no more captive. And we look forward to that day.

I pray for those who do not yet know you as Lord and Savior, whether in this room or watching or just people in our community and in our world. Help us to remember that people need you.

They need you. We need you day by day. We need the message of the gospel every day of our lives.

So let us be reminded of that. We love you, Lord. We praise you. We ask it now in Jesus' name. Amen.