CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
MAY032025

Scripture Story: Luke 4:16-30.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 23; 24.

a tumultuous homecoming



Photo by Colleen Cahill

key text

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

(Luke 4:18, 19, NIV)

flashlight

"The Messiah's coming had been first announced in Judea. In the temple at Jerusalem the birth of the forerunner had been foretold to Zacharias as he ministered before the altar. On the hills of Bethlehem the angels had proclaimed the birth of Jesus. To Jerusalem the magi had come in search of Him. In the temple Simeon and Anna had testified to His divinity. . . . The flashing forth of His divinity in the cleansing of the temple, His miracles of healing, and the lessons of divine truth that fell from His lips, all proclaimed that which after the healing at Bethesda He had declared before the Sanhedrin,—His Sonship to the Eternal" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 231).

what do you think?

What would you expect to see today if you'd joined a throng to hear a preacher you'd heard about who spoke truth in a new and powerful way, brought about strong reaction from his listeners, and rebuked the religious establishment? Choose from the list below. Someone who:

____ has his own talk show
____ blogs
____ wears sharp-looking suits
____ has a beautiful wife
____ podcasts his sermons

What if you found out en route that the preacher was a guy you'd grown up with, who was studious and attentive to duty as a child, but who didn't appear to you to be someone who would grow up to be anything special? Then, upon seeing him, you realize that he doesn't fit what you'd envisioned at all *and* that He *is* someone special!

did you know?

Ellen G. White, in vision, saw Jesus many times. Here is one description she gives:

"As children looked upon His countenance, they saw purity and goodness shining forth from His eyes. In His countenance gentleness, meekness, love, and conscious power were combined. But though every word, every gesture, every expression of His face, betokened His divine supremacy, humility marked His deportment and bearing" (*My Life Today*, p. 300).

INTO THE STORY

"He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'

"All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. 'Isn't this Joseph's son?' they asked.

"Jesus said to them, 'Surely you will quote this proverb to me: "Physician, heal yourself!" And you will tell me, "Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum."

" 'Truly, I tell you,' he continued, 'no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.'

"All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way."

(Luke 4:16-30, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

The words Jesus read from the scroll in the synagogue were punctuated by His startling declaration: "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Had you been there, what would you have thought upon hearing those words, knowing you were looking at a local boy, now grown?

Why do you think His listeners were amazed "at the gracious words" He spoke?

Why do you think a prophet "is not accepted in his hometown"?

Their amazement quickly turned to fury. Why?

What did Jesus mean when He quoted a proverb, "Physician, heal yourself," in the context in which He used it?

Why was the mob unsuccessful in its attempt to kill Jesus then and there?

punch lines

"When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival. . . . While his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. . . . After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, 'Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.' 'Why were you searching for me?' he asked. 'Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?' " **(Luke 2:42-49, NIV).**

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing" **(Matthew 23:37, NIV).**

"Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, 'Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.' At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come" **(John 7:28-30, NIV).**

further insight

"We have reached the period foretold in these scriptures. The time of the end is come, the visions of the prophets are unsealed, and their solemn warnings point us to our Lord's coming in glory as near at hand."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 235

"Our standing before God depends, not upon the amount of light we have received, but upon the use we make of what we have."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 239

Sabbath

Read Mark 9:14-29.

What assumptions arise if you hear of some popular preacher making all the news? What trappings surround them? How is fame handled?

When you grow up with someone, you may have a hard time accepting that that person has become a "big shot." This is why it was probably hard for those in Jesus' hometown to accept Him as Messiah and even more so as God. But He was. "Forever truly God, He became also truly human, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God" (The Son, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 4).

The adult Jesus was not esteemed by those who knew Him in Nazareth. Many may have felt what the father of the possessed boy felt when he cried "I do believe; help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24, NASB). How about you? Have you found it difficult to hear God speak through people you may consider "not religious enough"? Why? Why not?

Sunday

Read Luke 4:28-30.

Sometimes the truth hurts. That's what happened when Jesus spoke truth and many of His listeners went berserk. In their crazed state the mob propelled Him to a cliff with the intent of throwing Him down the side. But their plans went awry as they reached the edge. God calls us to speak the truth, even when it's not popular. Does He always protect us from the consequences? Explain.

Monday

Read Isaiah 61.

When Jesus read from what is now known as Isaiah 61, those words applied to Him in prophetic fulfillment. Is there a Bible passage you can read knowing the words apply to you, not as prophetic fulfillment, but in certainty? Write it below:

Tuesday

Read John 1:4, 5.

In today's reading, Jesus is described as a light in the darkness of ignorance. On rare occasions He allowed that light to shine brighter than usual.

The flashing forth of His divinity in the cleansing of the Temple is strikingly described by Ellen G. White on pages 157 and 158 of *The Desire of Ages*, including this statement: "His eye sweeps over the multitude, taking in every individual. . . . A divine light illuminates His countenance. He speaks, and His clear, ringing voice—the same that upon Mount Sinai proclaimed the law that priests and rulers are transgressing—is heard echoing through the arches of the temple: 'Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.' " How does this display of Jesus reveal His divinity?

Wednesday

Read John 1:1, 14.

The incarnation of the Son of God, at once fully human and fully God, is an abiding mystery. What does the Bible say about this in John 1:1, 14? When did Jesus come into full awareness of His duality? What sorrow do you think He felt to be despised and rejected of men, even those from Nazareth who knew Him longest?

Thursday

Read 2 Timothy 3:16.

The Temple played a strong role in the training of young Jewish children, including the child Jesus. It was a place where questions and answers pertaining to spiritual matters were freely expressed, the history of ancestors learned, and relationships developed. Is this true for your Sabbath School? If so, what makes it that way? If not, what do you think could be done to make it that way? What encouragement do we have in our reading today to keep learning?

Friday

Read Psalm 34:8.

It was hard for those who grew up with Jesus to accept Him as Messiah or even as a prophet. Someone you know may be skeptical about Jesus and Christianity based on what they have been told about it. You might be able to recall some negative things that have been said about Christians or Christianity, so how would you answer those critics? What support can you find in our reading today? Do you have a personal experience of God's goodness that you could share with your class on Sabbath?

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 23; 24.

* A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.