

Luke 4:14-30

Hometown Rejection

It is wonderful to be here with you this morning. We will be in our study of the Gospel of Luke this morning.

Let us pray before we get into it...

We are in Luke 4 this morning and we will start in verse 14, now, understnad we are at an important division in Luke's account.

Verse 14 would have been a great place for a chapter break.

After the Temptations of Christ, Luke will now begin to record Jesus' earthly ministry.

Now, interestingly enough, Luke chooses to bypass Jesus' early ministry, and will just summarize His early work with a couple sentences.

Luke instead of giving details of Jesus' early ministry chooses to speak first about the opposition Christ received, when He came to His hometown.

William Hendrickson thinks there could have been a year between verses 13 to 15 of Jesus ministry that Luke summarizes for us.

The Gospel of John really fills in the gap between the Temptations of Christ to His hometown rejection.

John chapter 1 verse 19 – chapter 4 tell the details of Jesus' earliest ministry and Jesus even choosing His disciples and those chapters all show Jesus' early miracles starting at a wedding in Cana of Galilee.

During Jesus' first year of ministry He had already cleansed the Temple once, and even ministered to the outcasts of Samaria.

Jesus' fame was beginning to spread, and talk of a possible Messiah, and at very least a Prophet was spreading through Israel.

We read now as Luke summarizes these events here Luke 4 verses 14 and 15...

Jesus Begins His Galileen Ministry(Matt 4:12-17; Mark 1:14,15)

14 Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. 15 And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

Now Galilee was a region with many towns within it.

Much like we would call the broader area where we live, the High Desert, but within the High Desert you have many communities.

Galilee was the broader region, and Jesus here returns to His home region, for which His hometown of Nazareth is within.

But Jesus ministered and worked miracles outside of Nazareth for a time before He went home, and these verses, although they only summarize, with very little detail, will be very important to the details of Jesus' hometown arrival.

A citizen of Nazareth was becoming famous, and doing mighty acts, and preaching with power and authority, unlike any of the teachers of His day.

Jesus' hometown would be proud, that their little soldier town was getting some king of notoriety from their hometown Star.

Jesus still very much filled with the Spirit, having a commanding presence after His victory over Satan, He captivated the heart of His countrymen and news was spreading all through the region.

In verse 15, we see Jesus went to the various synagogues throughout the region, and had in fact become a great Rabbi, and He was glorified by His insight and depth of understanding of scripture.

Now these Jewish synagogues became an important part of the Jewish way of life when they were taken into Captivity, and the Jews were taken from their homeland, and they no longer had a temple.

They were set up as places of worship for the Jewish Sabbath, and during the week, the Hebrew boys would use them as schools.

The synagogues continue to exist even after the temple was rebuilt.

If in any town, there were 10 or more Jewish males, they could establish a synagogue.

There would be one leader and one assistant in each, and it was common for the leaders to invite visiting Rabbis to share on the Sabbath.

And at this point Jesus was the most exciting Rabbi traveling around.

Matthew tells us **Matt. 7:29 ... He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.**

Jesus was lively, practical, interesting, and had an authoritative Truth that resounded in His message.

Full of the Holy Ghost, He would have an energy that the drab teachers of the day lacked.

And He made church exciting again for many Jews, as the places of worship were packed out.

What synagogue leader would not want to have this fresh Rabbi come and visit their place of worship?

And word is spreading fast of this new Nazarene Preacher stunning the masses.

And as He heads home, we will see Nazareth will be waiting at first with open arms to celebrate their local Hero.

But the hometown crowd expects some kind of privilege and recognition from this Rabbi brought up from their ranks.

And perhaps Jesus is a little excited Himself to be home, to be around the fields that He played in as a child, to stop by the baker that had the best bread, to see His favorite childhood teacher.

His family was there, and perhaps He longed to be around the familiar.

I know, when Jess and I go back to Phelan, we get a rush of memories, and usually for me, as I reminisce about my childhood, I have a burst of excitement, I loved growing up in Phelan as a child.

We would play in the desert all day, make forts, and explore, my mom just wanted us home before dark.

I get wonderful memories of playing little league games as I go by Phelan Elementary, and remember the smell of the lunchroom, and my many teachers there.

It was a simple town, my first job was there, I learned how to drive on the dirt roads there, my first girlfriend, many of my firsts were in that small town.

They have the best Pizza in the world in that town. I have had pizza all over the world, and Pizza Factory Phelan stands out as the best.

There are other Pizza Factories, but the one in Phelan is the best.

I just took skeptical pastor Joe there, and introduced him to it, and he was amazed.

And I picture Jesus walking into Nazareth, just full of His own memories, telling His followers all of the best places to eat, “Oh, she has the freshest goat cheese, and there we can find the cheapest flat bread for our travels.”

And as we will see next, Jesus was probably excited to show the disciples His home church, Jesus probably knew every seat in that synagogue, and He knew the leader by name, as He introduced His disciples to those He grew up with. Telling them, “this is the place I learned God’s Word.”

This synagogue is where Jesus established His faithful routine of fellowshiping with God’s people.

What an exciting time for Jesus to be home, now it will be exciting for all, at first, as they celebrate His homecoming, and at last they can hear Jesus preach.

But we will soon see, His stay will be very short, and we can understand that familiarity can have a huge downfall.

Look at verse 16 with me...

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth(Matt 13:54-58; Mark 6:1-6)

16 So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

Nazareth was a hilly region in Galilee, and a trading route went right through the small soldier town.

So news of Jesus' ministry would have come through very easily as Nazareth was in constant communication with people from all over the world.

Jesus was finally here, and the news of His arrival would have made for a full house in the synagogue there in Nazareth.

His mother would be so proud, as the town was stirred up by her Firstborn's arrival.

We see here something very important, it is written that it was Jesus' custom to gather with the people of God in the synagogue.

Jesus went to church every week. If anyone had a reason to not go to church, it was Jesus.

What could any earthly man ever teach the Son of God?

There are so many excuses today as to why people do not attend church weekly.

"I don't get anything out of it."

"The preacher is long winded"

"The music is not my style"

“The building is outdated and old”

“The temperature is never right!”

“I want to do church in the mountains, I feel closer to God there.”

There are so many excuses, but understand, even Jesus made it a priority to gather with people, and worship, and hear the Word taught and explained.

Satan wants many today to believe isolation is the way to deeper spirituality, “Move to Montana on a 500 acre ranch, and I can be alone with God.”

But understand our faith is demonstrated through gathering together with others.

How can we love one another, forgive one another, be long-suffering with one another, if we live in isolation from each other?

Understand it is a tactic of the enemy to try to get you to isolate yourself from the people of God.

Jesus said the way we show our love to others is like loving God.

After being asked what the greatest commandment is, Jesus said in... **Mark 12:30-31**

30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first

commandment. 31 And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

They go hand in hand; we demonstrate our love for God, by our love for each other.

There is nothing Satan would like to do more, than separate you and your family from the Christ's Body.

Church life is the blessed life.

Sure it is difficult, we all come from different backgrounds and from different paths in life, but that is why we are expected to exhibit the fruits of the Spirit, Gal 5:22-24 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

We need the Body of Christ to do these things, isolation prohibits growth in your spiritual life.

Montana might be peace and quiet, but you are called to fellowship with the saints and we are even called to evangelize the world, and it would be difficult to do that in seclusion.

So, Jesus was in the habit of fellowshiping.

And in His hometown, as the new popular Rabbi, He would have been asked to participate in the scripture Reading and exposition portion of the service.

The service would usually include a recitation of the Shema which starts out in **Deut. 6:4-5 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.**

The service would include benedictions and a Psalm reading, it would include prayers and readings from the Torah, the Law portion of the Scriptures, and also a reading from the Prophets, and a teaching from those portions.

Because there was no established Rabbis in each synagogue, the visiting Rabbis would share.

And the Apostle Paul would later take advantage of this worship setting, as he would go into the synagogues and preach the Gospel of Jesus as a visiting rabbi.

But here, Jesus was asked to read, they would have a scroll to read from, depending on the length of the book, it would determine how long the scroll was.

Here we see Jesus stands, and then next we read in verses 17-20...

17 And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me 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; 19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

20 Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

So after the other parts of the service were performed, Jesus, their local Hero will now read and expound on the Prophets.

And it is not clear if Jesus picked this portion of scripture, or if the local leader had this ready for Him.

Either case it would be God's plan for Jesus' hometown to hear this particular portion read by Jesus.

Understand, Jesus had one supreme purpose above all others, and He was here to show them that He came to this earth to save mankind.

Perhaps the Nazarenes gathered that day, thought surely they would be most privileged to see Jesus do the spectacular, perhaps they felt Jesus was obligated to them to do something great to put them on the map.

After all, it takes a community to raise a child, and they were the community that had given rise to this great Teacher.

And Jesus here reads the assigned portion of scripture from Isaiah which reads in totality...

Isa. 61:1-2 "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me,
Because the Lord has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,

And the day of vengeance of our God;

To comfort all who mourn,

Isaiah the prophet was speaking of Israel's deliverance from Babylonian Captivity as a year of Jubilee, and here Jesus was applying these verses to His own ministry.

But the people when they were released from Babylon never really broke free of the bondage of their overlords, there was a greater fulfillment ahead for them.

And Jesus read these verses.

But Jesus stopped short in verse 2, and He left out and 'the day of vengeance of our God.'

The day of vengeance was for a later time.

Jesus' first coming was to usher in the acceptable year of the Lord, or a time that the Year of Jubilee represented, a time of Grace, of freeing slaves, a time of debt cancelation, and a time of land restoration.

And these ancient words of hope and restoration had reached their greatest fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

The crowd was in suspense as Jesus rolled up the scroll, and sat down as they awaited His exposition upon this very important text.

And in verse 21 Jesus boldly declared the “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

That day Jesus announced His purpose for coming to this earth, as they were expecting a Deliverer to overthrow their Roman overlords once and for all, Jesus’ announcement was not what they expected. Jesus didn’t read the vengeance part.

But this prophecy spoke of the five fold damage that Jesus was going to cause over their greater enemy of sin.

He would preach the gospel to the poor, as sin impoverishes, and steals from a person’s life.

Jesus was here now to preach to the poor in spirit.

Understand in this era of Grace, there is no salvation apart from this honest assessment of yourself.

We must be empty of ourselves, before we can fully inherit the riches of our salvation.

It does not matter how much you have in your bank account, you must see yourself as a beggar, in great need of a Savior.

Jesus would spend His time here on earth going to those who were spiritually bankrupt.

The religious traditionalist who felt secure and full of righteousness, and were rich in their position in life, they would receive the greatest rebukes from Jesus.

The second part of Jesus' ministry was to heal the broken hearted, as sin's destructive force breaks many hearts in this life.

Thirdly, Jesus came to set the captives free, as many sinners bound and chained in their sins, would now have access to a Savior who can break every chain.

The fourth aspect of Jesus' ministry was He came to restore the sight to the blind.

As man's sin has a blinding virtue to it.

Jesus came to open the eyes that were blinded by sin.

Amazing Grace, How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me, I once was blind, but now I see, has been the chorus of multitudes touched by this Anointed One.

Lastly, as sin enslaves and oppresses those bound in their rebellion, Jesus came bring liberty and freedom.

And after Jesus gives His countrymen this great revelation of His ministry here on earth, it says in verse 22...

22 So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?"

And they marveled, because they knew Him, they watched Him grow up, they wonder, is this not Joseph's son, the Carpenter.

Now Jesus knows the heart of man, He knows here that His hometown is somewhat bewildered and taken back by the authority of what Jesus is saying.

They were impressed at Jesus messages, Jesus' words were full of Grace, and they were kind and wise.

But their amazement and awe of this young Man who grew up with them, did not give way to any kind of faith.

They went no further than marveling.

They had watched Jesus as a little wiper snapper, grow into puberty, and they watched Him grow as a normal youth into His young adult years.

They knew Him as a skilled worker and handy man, and they marveled that such a familiar person could speak so well and with such insight.

But they were totally unmoved by the content of His message or the meaning of His sermon.

They did not see themselves as poor, brokenhearted, captive, blind or spiritually oppressed.

They did not want to see themselves this way.

In their hearts, they were wanting to see miracles, mighty signs that Jesus was known for around Galilee.

They wanted more than elegant words, they wanted something dynamic.

Although Luke does not record this as their reaction, we can see this was their heart by their response to Jesus.

Jesus grew up with them for 30 years, He could read the eyes of His countrymen, their bewildered looks said it all.

So Jesus continues His sermon, and He proves here that He sees what is in the heart of man, as He exposes their hard hearts and even racist mindset.

Jesus knew the heartbeat of this town, as He has been around their dialogue His whole life, and He knew first hand that they had a high perception of themselves.

The Jews on a whole, despised Gentiles, and perhaps in Nazareth, the schoolyard talk, and the job site chatter was integrated with these racist overtones.

Jesus knew that they were far from concerned from being delivered from their sins, they were Abraham's decedents, and they only needed their Messiah to come to do away with the Gentiles altogether.

But they had completely forgotten, that through their nation, all the nations of the world should be blessed, their main purpose was to lead the Gentiles to their God, but they only kept them out at this point, and Jesus came to do what the nation had failed to do, lead all mankind to the God who Saves.

We can understand why Luke was so anxious to bring us to this point in Jesus' ministry, because

Jesus right here in His hometown, will openly declare God's love for the Gentiles, and Jesus will even use the Jewish Scriptures to prove this point.

And when people who think they are well, are confronted with the truth of God's Word, and they are exposed, many times the reaction is that of hostility.

Jesus was not here to entertain His listeners, but to bring truth to them.

Look what happens next as Jesus' Words prove to be a discerners of thoughts and intents of the heart.

23 He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.'" 24 Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.

Jesus quotes a proverb to show them He knew what they were thinking, "Physician heal yourself."

Then He immediately explains what is meant by that proverb.

They had heard of the healings and mighty works in Capernaum, and now Jesus was home, and they wanted to see signs and wonders too.

They felt at least Jesus owed them this, after-all, He was from Nazareth.

Surely they should get the best show out of all Galilee.

But they already had the evidence they needed by the stories they heard themselves.

And Jesus already fully understanding the condition of the crowd in the synagogue that day, He declares, “Assuredly I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.”

Even today, we have the saying, “familiarity brings contempt.”

Even for Jess and I, the people who knew us before Jesus Christ, they have a hard time understanding who we are now in Christ.

They are somewhat blinded by the people they knew us as.

Every now and then someone from our past wanders into the church, who knew us growing up, and I will see the bewilderment in their eyes after service.

They cannot understand how God could use us in the capacity that He does.

And I am not offended one bit, because I am in shock at how God can use people like us too.

But usually those from our past do not come back, because familiarity breeds contempt.

And sometimes they cannot hear the message, because all they see is the person they use to know.

Of course, Jesus is dealing with this, and the people are thinking “who does this Young Man think He is, I changed His diapers kind of thing, how does He get off telling me I am weak and poor, and I am in bondage.”

“I am a Jew, we are God’s special treasures, and you are from Nazareth Jesus, You should honor us with Your prestige, and pay tribute to Your people.”

Now you may think that is a lot to get from this text, but watch how they react when Jesus shows how the God of Israel is in fact the God of all nations and every people group.

Racism is nothing new in this world; it existed even in Jesus’ day...

25 But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up

three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; 26 but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."

It is fascinating how self-centered humans are.

The Jews there in Nazareth were content in their standing before God, they could not see themselves against the truth of God's Word.

And sadly, they could care less about the standing of their fellow man before their God.

They were perfectly content on letting the Gentiles of the world die in their sin, as long as they felt they were secure.

Jesus here from their own scriptures explains that He is not the first Prophet that has had His message rejected.

Elijah was not sent to any of the Jewish widows of his day, but instead was sent to the widow of Zarephath, in Sidon, where the wicked queen Jezebel was from even.

Jesus brings home His mission to the Gentiles by mentioning this story of this widow from Zarephath found in 1 Kings 17:8-16.

Remember the poor widow and her son were preparing their last meal together.

When she by faith trusted in Elijah's God and gave her last meal to Elijah, and because of her faith, her bin of flour and her jar of oil miraculously continued to provide food until the Lord ended the severe drought in the land.

God by-passed all the Hebrew widows to find a foreigner full of faith.

And Jesus again emphasizes His mission to the Gentiles by illustrating how a Syrian was miraculously healed.

Naaman a Syrian army commander, who was in fact an enemy of Israel, came to see the Hebrew prophet Elisha, and God through Elisha healed the non-Jewish leper.

This story is found in 2 Kings chapter 5, and Jesus used the Hebrew scriptures to show that God worked through people the Jews despised and held in great derision, lepers, Gentiles, and even woman.

At that time, the two prophets condemned Israel for their unbelief and lack of faith.

And Israel had a long history of rejecting God's servants, and they were about to reject Jesus and His message as well.

Their hearts will be exposed.

And as we will see here once Jesus cuts through their religious smokescreen, they will turn into animals full of rage.

It is interesting how God's people measure success today.

I have one pastor who every time I see him he asks how many conversions were made on Sunday as though that was the scale of success.

He likes to get hands up, and converts counted, and he seems to keep score.

He gets uncomfortable with me, because I tell him, "I don't know, my job is not to convert, but to sow the seed of God's Word."

I am not responsible for the reaction that people have to it.

I just know, that some soil will be good soil that receives the Word, and its roots will go deep and

there will be fruit in those people's lives, some thirty fold, some sixty, and some one hundred.

However, some will receive it, and Satan will snatch away immediately the Word preached.

They leave here and it was as though they never even came.

Some will hear the Word, and will instantly receive it with gladness, but they will have no root, and when trials come, they will not be able to stand in the truth that they heard.

And others, the Word preached will be choked out by the cares of this world and forgotten completely.

But my job is not to get hands raised, but to sow the Word, and it is the hearers responsibility to prepare the soil of their own heart to receive it.

If conversions were the standard of success, then Jesus' message here would be a complete failure.

But we see Truth going forth is the standard of success, not hands raised or responses counted.

Look, not one person in Jesus' whole hometown respond well to His message.

28 So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29 and rose

up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. 30 Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

Now, sometimes, when you sow the Seed of God's Word, and it abruptly pierces a man's heart, that it can set a man into a blind rage.

The people of Nazareth are beside themselves at their hearts being laid bare by Jesus.

They could not receive this Man as the Messiah, the Messiah they had in mind would be for the Jews, a Deliverer, and a Freedom Fighter.

The Messiah was supposed to heal their nation and bring them into the glorious Kingdom Era, that would have no end.

Jesus just made claim to this Messiahship through Isaiah's prophecy, but now He was using Elijah and Elisha to prove His mission was also to show kindness to the Gentile Nations as well.

Jesus exposed their prejudiced hearts, and put His hometown in the same category as the wicked northern kingdom in the days of Elijah and Elisha.

And Jesus' indignant countrymen when they made sense of what Jesus was saying, it says they were filled with wrath, unified, they rose up, and together with one rebellious heart, they forcefully grabbed Him, and took Jesus to the cliffs of Nazareth, to throw Him over head first into the jagged stones below.

And Jesus just placed the Jews lower than a Phoenician widow and a Syrian Leper.

Surely, He could not be their long awaited Jewish King.

And their presumptuous hearts failed to realize it was salvation from their sins that the Messiah must deal with.

Rome was not their greatest enemy, but as it is for every man and woman, our greatest enemy is ourselves.

And the Jews prove one of the greatest blunders of our world.

It is often those in greatest need of mercy and grace that know it least.

And unfortunately, it is usually the religious, the good people, those with dedicated conservative

values, that often fail to see their own need for God's Grace.

It is interesting when people are use to their traditions, and practicing their religion, and just well satisfied with their own position in life, that they can hold themselves above other people.

You know in the church, as we discussed on Wednesday night, everyone who has come to Jesus the way that is laid out for us in scripture, if we are honest, we come to Jesus as losers, every one of us.

The only way to fully receive the Grace of God, is to come honestly before Him, as a sinner, and with an impoverished spirit, and in humility and ashamed of our sin.

You see this is why it is more difficult, in my observations, for a person who has grown up in the church his or her whole life, homeschooled, and just put in a Christian safety bubble their whole life.

I am not saying it is a bad thing; surely, I want to protect my kids.

But often those kids become very comfortable in their standing before God, their church attendance is superb, and their service to Jesus is exemplary.

Sin is not as evident; in fact, they have learned often times to hide their sin, to keep the right image before others.

I have even seen parents want to sweep their kids sins under a hush rug, for the sake of the family reputation as traditional churchgoers.

And believe it or not those kids have a difficult time being able to come to God to have Jesus' righteousness imputed to them, because they feel their own outward righteousness is enough.

I have even met some of these people well in their adult years and you ask them when they were converted and came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, their answer is very troubling, they say "I have grown up in the church, and I have always been a Christian."

But really, they are saying "I have never seen myself as needing a Savior, I have attended church, done all the sacraments, I am committed, and they present their own works for the bases of their salvation."

Oh, and if you call them out as a sinner, they are repulsed and mortified, and once again they justify themselves on their own behalf.

They look nothing like the sinners coming to church, “I have never drank, I have never smoked, I have never had sex outside of marriage.”

And they put up comparisons.

Jesus told another parable once, that exposed the folly of this kind of thought.

Luke 18:9-14 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men — extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

You see it is only through seeing yourself in light of scripture, through the truth of God's Word, to be able to look at your life honestly, and truly seeing

yourself as a filthy rotten sinner, that is the only way to finding true righteousness and being saved by Grace.

If your good life is the basis of your salvation, if you think your baptism is going to be the evidence of your salvation, or your Christian service, than you have no need for God's Grace in your life.

Eph. 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

To receive Grace, you need to acknowledge you come up way short of God's standard.

Maybe you are still justifying your life as righteous.

Now let me ask you something, what if we just took the thoughts in your head from this week, and played them out on these big screens right here, just from this week?

How about just from the past few days? How about just from this morning?

I imagine not one of us would still be left in the pews, we would run so fast and so far from our heart ever being truly revealed to others in such way.

Yet, God sees and knows all, and when we honestly come to Him, and address the truth of our heart, then and only then can we receive Grace.

Now, understand even we who have honestly dealt with our sin, we still are in danger, we have to guard our hearts as well, because if we are honest, after Jesus cleans up our lives, we have quick forgetters.

We forget so easily, who we were when Jesus found us, the impoverished state we were in, we forget the losers we were when we began to walk in the blessings of God.

And it can be so easy for us to start judging others. You know, it does not take much for you to start looking down your nose at others.

Someone in front of you is using their food stamps, or a mom embarrassingly shuffling through her WIC checks, and you find yourself bothered by them.

Judging what is in their cart, bothered by the alcohol, and you just start making assessments from your moral high ground.

You forget so easily, that before Christ, if there was a way for you to get free alcohol, you would not think twice to do so, no matter what means it took.

They have no Holy Spirit guiding their life in right and wrong.

We so easily forget that we had no conviction of sin before the Holy Spirit was in our lives.

I used to think that I was morally better than my friends because I snorted meth, and I never touched the pipe.

And that is about as of a high rode I found in my lost condition.

But we forget how lost we really were before Christ.

I remember as I grew in my walk with the Lord, shortly after I was ordained as a Pastor in Lake Havasu City.

I was able to perform my very first wedding; it was a coworker and his girlfriend that Jess and I led to the Lord.

Now, Matt was brand new to the Lord, and all of his friends, and the whole wedding party were about as heathen as they come.

And I went to the wedding rehearsal at the church, and they all came in sloppy drunk, cussing, I could smell weed all over them.

And I now had the title pastor, for which, looking back I was probably not ready for a title.

But I remember being so indignant and mortified by their behavior in the church, and in front of me, and man of God!

And in my what I thought was a righteous anger, I almost went off on them, and told them how their behavior was appalling.

I stood high on my moral high horse as a new pastor.

I remember calling my father when I got in my truck to vent, and I went on about a 5 minute holy tirade, and just told him about how disgusting of sinners they were.

And I wanting affirmation from my father, a fellow warriors pat on the back.

And I finished my speech by asking, "Dad, have you ever done a wedding for such heathens and sinners."

And the phone went silent for a minute, as he said, “Son, I did your first wedding, and you and your friends were worse!”

And the Lord immediately showed me the foolishness and the arrogance of my ways.

I wondered how I could forget so quick who I used to be and who God saved me from, and how did I get so high in my own standing toward others?

I told my father, “Thank you for that, I needed to be knocked of my high horse.”

I hung up, and it was not hard for me to look back at days past, when I was so spun out and lost, that I was searching the carpet in my truck for shards of speed, crushing anything that looked like dope, even little pebbles trying to get high.

How could I forget, that before Christ, I was divorced, bankrupt, and had lost everything that was good in my life.

The only thing I had going for me, was this former 18 year old meth addict girlfriend who had just recently found Christ.

Jess wanted to marry me, I had nothing to offer her, when she moved in with me, I had nothing in the fridge but a 12-pack of Miller High Life.

And I remember the week before I agreed to marry her, I was sitting in front of a paralegal, who was finalizing my bankruptcy, and that woman pled with Jessica not to marry me.

She told Jess “you understand, that this man’s failures will be attached to you in this marriage.”

And I was humiliated, but Jess was convinced that her New God, Jesus wanted her to marry me.

And she told the lady I know God will work it all out.

And we wed, and shortly after that, I surrendered my life to Christ.

And God took that man steeped in failure, and saved me by His wonderful Grace.

Who was I to ever judge anyone’s lost condition.

Church, we must learn the lesson of the Nazareth mob, we must see ourselves as inadequate and spiritually impoverished without Jesus.

You know what that does? Instead of looking at those rotten sinners in judgment, instead of holding them to a holy standard they have no idea about, instead of judgment we have hope for them.

Because if God can save me, if He can save you, then no one is too far gone for His Grace to reach. Church we must protect ourselves of looking too highly of our self.

To wake up every morning and thank the Lord for His Grace in our lives.

It will keep the proper outlook on life at the forefront of our heart and mind.

Now, this morning, Jesus' hometown rejection shows us something very important about Jesus ministry, He came to seek and save the lost, from the Jews and every other nation.

He had His sights on all mankind, and His sacrifice was enough to suffice for anyone who would come to Him in faith.

There is no room for racism in the truth of our Gospel. It is unbiased and works in anyone who would come to Jesus Christ for salvation.

But as we see the broadness of Jesus ministry here this morning, we also see the severity.

He escaped the clutches of the mad mob, and the meek and peaceable Christ slipped through them calmly and left Nazareth, and there is no record of Jesus ever returning to His hometown ever again.

Their hearts hardened to the Grace of God, and they never had opportunity to receive it again.

And perhaps there are those here this morning, who have hardened their heart to the Grace of God.

I will warn you if you continue in that path of skepticism and unbelief, Jesus just might oblige your hardened heart.

You may never have another day to receive His wonderful life changing Grace, today may be the last time you are ever offered freedom from your life controlling bondage to sin.

No one is promised tomorrow, and please consider that whatever your life holds from this day out, God this morning has brought you here to respond to Him.

I promise you, if you come honestly before Him with your sin, and you confess Him as Savior, your life will never be the same, and you will find peace and unspeakable joy in your life.

Please during this last song, come forward and pray with one of the pastors or elders that will be up front, and let them lead you in the prayer of salvation.

Come to Jesus today, you are here for a reason, there are no coincidences in this life.

Now for the rest of us, perhaps you struggle with your judgment toward other people, perhaps you are indignant toward sinners, instead of trying to reach them, you find yourself appalled by them.

Please get prayer this morning, and ask for forgiveness.

You understand there is no other hope for the sinner than our gospel, no social program or therapy will fix the sin issue in their hearts.

It is only through love and Grace, that Christ has asked us to herald on His behalf, is there any hope for the degenerate.

Please ask the Spirit to give you love this morning, a love so powerful that your prejudices are crushed once and for all.

May we leave here with Jesus' heart to reach the lost.

Amen?

Please whatever your prayer needs are this morning, please come up and get prayer from one of the gentlemen that will be up here.

Let's Pray.