

Notes on Luke 4: 21-30 -- He went straight through their midst

Many theories as to why Luke wrote both Acts and his Gospel have been suggested and studied. My favorite is that the Gospel is a Christian apology; one that seeks to show that Christianity is a legitimate religion. Because of their religion and its place in Roman society, Jews had certain rights. Luke may have written to demonstrate that Christians should also have such rights along with the other sects of Judaism.

Luke writes in 1:1 that he wanted to "... **compile a narrative** of the events that have been fulfilled in our midst, **precisely** ... as these events were transmitted to us **by eyewitnesses and ministers of the word**. I too have **carefully traced** the **sequence of events from the beginning** and have decided to set it in writing..."

Luke was known to have been with Paul often, (2 Tim 4:11 "**I have no one here with me but Luke**") and to have been a physician, (1 Thessalonians 4:14 "**Luke our dear physician, sends his greetings.**") Luke is also known to have spent much time with Mary. His being with the early heroes of Christianity gives him believability and authority for what he plans to write. When we hear first hand stories, we tend to believe them much more. That is Luke's intention here. It is like someone saying today, "I know how to play and win at football because I played under and coached with Nick Saban."

The Bear Bryant Story -- Mal Moore and Charlotte Moore

Verse 4:21 ends last week's gospel and begins this week's gospel.

Verse 4:22 is Luke's confirmation of the favorable impression Jesus made in his early ministry: "**all spoke favorably, ..., they marveled at the appealing discourse that came from his lips.**"

But there were doubters, "**Is this not Joseph's son? ... Do in your own country the things we have heard you have done in Capernaum.**"

In Matthew 13: 53-58 similar discussions are found, "**They were filled with amazement, and said to themselves, 'Where did this man get such wisdom and miraculous powers? ... Where did he get all this? They found him altogether too much for them. Jesus said to them, 'No prophet is without honor except in his native place, indeed in his own house.'**"

I have often wondered about these verses. We know the commandment to "**Honor your father and your mother.**" As fathers, we all know that we also need to honor our own children. We all know of stories where kids go wrong.

Families that honor each member for their own intrinsic uniqueness build happy children. I know it must have saddened and disheartened Jesus when He felt such distrust in His abilities. He even said, **“No prophet is without honor except in his own native place, and even in his own house.”** How many children do we know who feel that alienated today? Our job as Christian fathers is to make sure that does not happen to our children.

Luke goes on in 4:25-27 to remind the same congregation that disheartened him about three things that happened during the time of the famous prophets Elijah and Elisha: the heavenly vaults being closed for 3.5 years, the great famine and Elisha’s visit to the widow of Zarephath near Sidon, and how no lepers were cured in Israel, except Naaman the Syrian – a leper from a foreign place.

Luke writes in 4:28, **“The whole audience in the synagogue was filled with indignation.”** Luke was trying to teach those present in the synagogue that the customary ways were being supplanted by a new ministry, the ministry of Jesus.

Why would Jesus go to such extremes? Matthew’s conclusion in 13:58 was that **“he did not work many miracles there because of their lack of faith.”** Romans 8:28, **“For we know that all things work together for the good of those who have been called according this decree.”**

Luke takes this story to a different place in vs. 4:29-30, **“they rose up and expelled him from the town, leading him to the brow of the hill on which it was built and intending to hurl him over the edge. But he went straight through their midst and walked away.”**

The ending of these verses in Luke is mysterious for several ways. I have thought about these two passages many times. One, just when he is getting started, why is Jesus alienating his home folks? Sometimes, the status quo is not good and a change is needed. Every winning new politician convinces the electorate that change is needed and he can make change happen.

Two, how could Jesus just walk untouched right through them? I think that Jesus, like in the attempted stoning of Mary Magdalene, gave the audience a look that pierced their inner beings so that they knew not to push him off the cliff. Like in the Avatar movie, when “I see you” meant I see your whole being. I think Jesus saw each person there in that way.

What do you think?