

Open Eyes and Open Hearts?

February 9, 2025 ▪ Nick Braitto

Don't let the familiar hide the _____. (vv. 22-24)

Don't let privilege lead to _____. (vv. 25-30)

Luke 4:22-30

²² And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

²³ And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, "'Physician, heal yourself.'" What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well."

²⁴ And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. ²⁵ But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, ²⁶ and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷ And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian."

²⁸ When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. ²⁹ And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. ³⁰ But passing through their midst, he went away. (ESV)

Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions

Open: Have you ever felt overlooked or dismissed by people who knew you when you were younger?

Read & Discuss: Luke 4:22-30

1. Take a moment to review the events that happened just before this, in Luke 4:16-21. In light of what just happened, why might the people of Jesus' hometown have been impressed by "the gracious words that were coming from his mouth" (v. 22a)? What might have led them to then say to themselves, "Is not this Joseph's son?" (v. 22b.)? (*See also Matthew 13:53-56 or Mark 6:1-3.*)
2. Why, as Jesus said, would it be true that "no prophet is acceptable in his hometown" (v. 24)? (*See also Matthew 13:57 or Mark 6:4.*) What are some ways we can allow our familiarity with something or someone to cause us to think we know all there is to know about that subject or person and thus stop having an attitude of being eager to learn more? How does such an attitude limit us?
3. Why might a Jewish person have struggled to delight in what God did through Elijah's ministry to the widow in Zarephath of Sidon (1 Kings 17:8-24) and through Elisha's ministry to Naaman the Syrian (2 Kings 5:1-19)? What was Jesus' point in highlighting these two events (vv. 25-27)? What could have caused the Israelites to think that they should have received more of God's favor than others? What are some ways we might do something similar ourselves?
4. Why do you think the people were so angry at what Jesus had just said (vv. 28-29)? Although the people end up getting angry at Jesus, there's a sense in which Jesus stirred up the situation Himself with His words back in verse 23. Why do you think Jesus might have done this?
5. What do we miss out on when we stop striving to learn more about Jesus or to expand our hearts to better align with His? What do we gain when we continually press into better knowing and becoming more like Jesus?
6. How can we cultivate an appropriate attitude towards God's grace and an openness to seeing Him bless others? What are some specific ways God might want to break us out of our comfort zone and use us to extend His grace to others?

Apply: As you make it your goal to become more aware of ways that familiarity or a sense of entitlement might be leading you to miss out on God's blessings, what are some places you think this might be true in your life—and what will you do about it?

Pray: Pray that God would reveal any areas of complacency, pride, or stubbornness in our own hearts and lives. Pray that God would cause us to live with eyes wide open to better see His glory and hearts wide open to better share His love with others.