



Unit .21

Session .02

Jesus Reveals His Mission

Scripture



Luke 4:16-31

16 He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. As usual, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. **17** The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him, and unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written: **18** The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, **19** to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. **20** He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him. **21** He began by saying to them, "Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled." **22** They were all speaking well of him and were amazed by the gracious words that came from his mouth; yet they said, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" **23** Then he said to them, "No doubt you will quote this proverb to me: 'Doctor, heal yourself.

What we've heard that took place in Capernaum, do here in your hometown also.'" **24** He also said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown. **25** But I say to you, there were certainly many widows in Israel in Elijah's days, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months while a great famine came over all the land. **26** Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them except a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. **27** And in the prophet Elisha's time, there were many in Israel who had leprosy, and yet not one of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." **28** When they heard this, everyone in the synagogue was enraged. **29** They got up, drove him out of town, and brought him to the edge of the hill that their town was built on, intending to hurl him over the cliff. **30** But he passed right through the crowd and went on his way. **31** Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbath.

In what ways could the proof of Jesus as the Messiah supported by prophecies impact your life today?

What are some ways the good news of Jesus addresses the suffering the world experiences today?



99 Essential Doctrines

The World Opposed to God

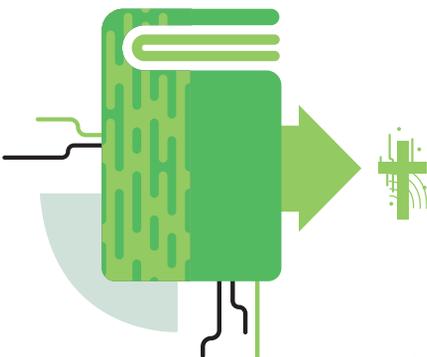
There are times in Scripture where the term “world” refers to more than the physical planet Earth or the collective human population. In many instances, the term refers to an active and evil spiritual force that is in direct conflict with God and His kingdom. This evil world force operates under Satan’s control (Eph. 2:2; John 14:30), displaying the same self-centeredness and deceit that is found within his character. Christians are called to overcome this world of spiritual evil by faith in the Son of God (1 John 5:4-5).

Main Point

Jesus' mission wasn't without opposition—and neither will ours be.

How difficult do you think it was for Jesus, who came to rescue His people, to experience rejection?

What are some ways we can minister and serve the people on the margins of our community?



Christ Connection

Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah wrote of God's plan to send someone to bring good news and redeem His captive people. Jesus proclaimed that He is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy—the promised Messiah. Jesus was rejected by the people, but it was through that very rejection—the cross—that He provided redemption from sin.

How are you challenged or convicted because Jesus took our rejection upon Himself so we could be accepted by God?

In Defense



The odds that Jesus could have fulfilled all the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament by chance are astronomical. Peter W. Stoner, once the Chairman of the Departments of Mathematics and Astronomy at Pasadena City College, authored *Science Speaks* in the 1950s, which examines the accuracy of prophecy and of the Bible using scientific methods. In chapter three, Stoner walks through the statistical likelihood that a man could have fulfilled prophecies about the Messiah, including birthplace and death by crucifixion. He concludes that an extremely conservative estimate of the chances of a man fulfilling just eight messianic prophecies is 1 in 10^{17} . Stoner used the following illustration to help readers grasp this number.

“Suppose that we take 1017 silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote using their own wisdom.”— Peter W. Stoner, “Chapter 3: The Christ of Prophecy,” *Science Speaks*, July 15, 2009, sciencespeaks.dstoner.net/Christ_of_Prophecy.html#c9.



Head

What does this account teach us about the cost of following Jesus?

How does this differ from what you have previously thought concerning the life of a Christian?



Heart

How should Christians respond to persecution and rejection?

In what ways does our endurance in the midst of rejection or opposition strengthen our witness and mission?



Hands

How have you experienced rejection for your faith in Christ?

What encouraging words would you offer to a young believer facing rejection because of their belief in Jesus?

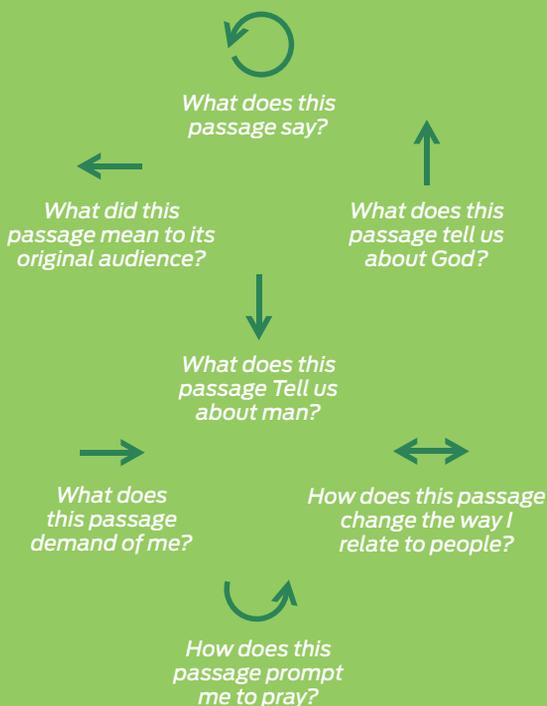
Daily Devotions



Day 1

Isaiah 61:1-7

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Unlike political leaders, the Messiah alone can speak into existence the dynamics of the new creation (vv. 1-3). Nonetheless, the Messiah Himself graciously opts to employ His people as instruments to bring about blessing and redemption to the world (vv. 4-7). We serve as a team of ambassadors for the Lord's anointed, seeing that His campaign promises come to fruition in the transformed lives of flesh-and-blood people.

God's people were always meant to live as a royal priesthood and holy nation who communicates knowledge of His grace to the world around them (Ex. 19:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:9). As followers of Jesus, we are indwelt with the same Spirit who anointed Him and are charged to proclaim the same good news that He made into reality through His life, death, and resurrection. We represent the One who can uniquely deliver on His promise for a better tomorrow.

How does reading Isaiah's description of the Messiah and His mission deepen your hope for the future that Jesus purchased for His people?

Isaiah 61:8-11

Every human has an innate sense of justice, that our actions matter and that good should be rewarded and evil punished. However, this innate sense and perceived entitlement to justice does not in itself guarantee we will experience justice. In other words, the mere desire for justice does not necessarily mean that we will see it carried out. Yet, we, as God's people, can have confidence that in the end we will see justice for all. Why? Because of the unchanging character of God and His unwavering promises.

After promising to bring about restoration and redemption through His anointed servant in verses 1-7, Isaiah 61 then puts forward the assured grounding of these promises: "For I the LORD love justice; I hate robbery and injustice; I will faithfully reward my people and make a permanent covenant with them" (v. 8). God made creation and made it good, and in the end, it will be good again. He will settle for nothing less.

How can someone's innate desire for justice play a role in our evangelism and in defending our beliefs to others?

Luke 4:16-22

It's called "the mic drop," when a speaker makes a declarative statement so compelling that it requires a prolonged pause or stage exit for full effect. Dropping the mic, whether physically or figuratively, adds a dramatic stamp to the bold or shocking words. In the synagogue of His hometown, Jesus begins a worship gathering with nothing short of a mic drop (or perhaps more accurately, a "scroll roll").

Imagine how presumptuous, pretentious, and potentially blasphemous Jesus' claim in verse 21 must have sounded to the folks with whom He grew up. Yet, as Luke records, initially this claim alone was not enough to raise their temper to the maximum, a reaction we will see in verses 28-30. Regardless of people's attitudes, Jesus nonetheless proceeded to "drop the mic" in applying Isaiah's messianic prophecy to Himself: "Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled" (v. 21).

How can we avoid committing superficial "mic drops" when it comes to speaking to people about the gospel and its serious implications for their lives?

Luke 4:23-27

After Jesus' apparent "mic drop", the people's confused and perhaps antagonistic response led Him wisely to point out the basis for their resistance. Jesus was not taken aback at all. Indeed, He proceeded to force the issue by citing an example from redemptive history when Israel previously rejected its own prophets, Elijah and Elisha.

Because of Israel's failure to recognize God's messenger at a given time, He has extended His grace elsewhere, such as in the cases of the widow at Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian. Those of Israelite descent cannot, in other words, presume on God's grace; they are not entitled to it by birth and culture. They must receive God's message with attentive ears and repentant hearts. Likewise, we who are involved in the church today should not presume anything either. We must be careful to heed God's Word whenever it is being proclaimed.

What are some illegitimate reasons that sometimes make you hesitant to respond in faith and obedience to God's Word?

Luke 4:28-31

It takes a village to raise a child. And apparently it takes the same village to carry out a would-be public execution of this same child once He is grown.

Despite knowing what their unbelief would lead them to do (Luke 5:22; 6:8; 9:47; 11:17), Jesus did not hold back in His pronouncements about His messianic identity or about the crowd's capacity to behave as their rebellious ancestors had. Jesus entrusted Himself to the Father's plan for Him, recognizing that He would not die until the appointed time (Luke 22:53; John 7:30). Here, we see God's preservation of Jesus' earthly life helping Him to evade the mob seeking to throw Him from a cliff: "He passed right through the crowd and went on his way" (v. 30).

We then see Jesus' steadfast trust in the Father evidenced further in verse 31, which mentions almost casually how He continued onward in His ministry. Likewise, we too can trust in God to complete His plans knowing that no harm will come to us unless He permits it (Luke 12:4-7).

How does this passage speak to your biggest fear when it comes to telling others about Jesus?