

January 25

Inciting the Hometown Crowd

For as the earth brings forth its bud, and as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord Yahweh will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations. — Isaiah 61:11

[Luke 4:16-30] He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. He entered, as was his custom, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. The book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. He opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

“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 heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to deliver those who are crushed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” [Isaiah 61:1-2]

He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began to tell them, “Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

All testified about him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, and they said, “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?”

He said to them, “Doubtless you will tell me this parable, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done at Capernaum, do also here in your hometown.’” He said,

They were all filled with wrath in the synagogue

“Most certainly I tell you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But truly I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land. Elijah was sent to none of them, except to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. There were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed, except Naaman, the Syrian.”

They were all filled with wrath in the synagogue, as they heard these things. They rose up, threw him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill that their city was built on, that they might throw him off the cliff. But he, passing through their midst, went his way.

[Matthew 4:13-16, Luke 4:31] Leaving Nazareth, he came and lived in Capernaum, a city of Galilee, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness saw a great light, to those who sat in the region and shadow of death, to them light has dawned.” [Isaiah 9:1-2]

1. What was inflammatory about Jesus’ words? Have you made your ‘hometown’ upset?
2. What’s your reaction to Jesus “passing through their midst”? How did that work?
3. Jesus, you were powerful and inflammatory on earth, help me to proclaim your truth...

