

Dare to speak

Luke 4.21-30

Having, at first, been excited by Jesus' teaching, the people of Nazareth begin to doubt his credentials. He reminds them of times when God has given good news to people outside Israel. Infuriated, the people try to throw Jesus off a cliff, but he eludes them.

Now read **Luke 4.21-30** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

Jesus' words are always challenging and here he explains how risky, even outrageous, God's grace is. Those who don't like what Jesus says often react strongly. The challenge to us is to recognise who Jesus really is and to choose whether or not to follow him.

LISTEN

Go (safely) somewhere out of your comfort zone this week and find somewhere to sit. Then, just listen for a while. Allow the sounds you hear to stimulate your thoughts and prayers. Do you hear anything that is challenging to you? If so, why might that be? What might God be saying to you here?

An alternative to going somewhere might be to listen (e.g. on the radio or online) to someone you wouldn't normally hear speak – perhaps a political commentator, or a child – and ask yourself the same questions. You could do this as a household challenge and compare notes at the end of the week.



How does it make you feel to know that Jesus spoke out in challenging circumstances?



Give each person a piece of paper – use different colours and write names on them. Everyone writes or draws something they (most) need help with this week. Swap papers. Everyone writes/draws something on the new paper which would be (most) helpful for the named person to do for them this week – add initials so you all know who wrote what. Repeat as many times as you like, filling the paper. Return the papers to the original owners. Each day during the week, choose a different paper and support that group member in completing actions on it.

LOVE

Read 1 Corinthians 13.4-7, 13 in as many different Bible versions as you can (Biblegateway.com is a good place to do this). Which version do you find the most challenging? Copy or print it out, making it look attractive. Stick it somewhere that you will see it regularly – e.g. the fridge door. Then, each day, choose one of the attributes of love and ask yourself: When did I love, or experience love in that way today? What is my challenge for tomorrow?

Research

When many worshippers were killed outside a mosque in New Zealand in 2019, Andrew Graystone went to stand outside his local mosque in Manchester with a card saying 'I will keep watch while you pray'. His photo went viral. Search 'Andrew Graystone mosque vigil' to find out more details, then consider: In what ways did Andrew's motives and actions reflect those of Jesus? Is there anything you can do to reflect God's justice in your community? Andrew has also written a book about justice in action called *Faith, hope and mischief* (Canterbury Press ISBN: 978-1-78622-259-6) – it is a challenging, and sometimes very amusing, read.



'Dare to speak; dare to listen'. Ponder these two phrases for a while. What is brought to mind? Try writing a poem in which each verse begins with these two phrases. How many different perspectives can you write from? Is there somewhere you can use this poem or someone you can offer it to?

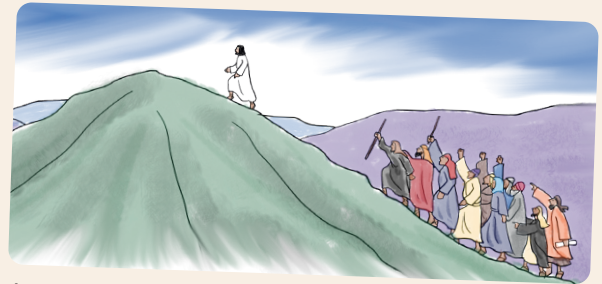
Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

Jesus was in the synagogue in Nazareth, his hometown. Everyone was looking at him. He had just read from the scroll of Isaiah, in the Jewish Scriptures. All eyes were fixed on him. Jesus said, 'Today this Scripture has come true.'

Now everyone looked at each other. And talked to each other. They all spoke well of Jesus and were amazed at the words they had heard from his lips. They asked each other, 'Isn't this Joseph's son?'

Jesus said, 'I know, I know you will say the proverb "Doctor, cure yourself" to me and you will want me to do miracles in my hometown, like the ones you have heard of me doing in Capernaum.'

'But it is true,' he continued, 'that no prophet is accepted in his hometown. Do you remember the stories of Elijah? There was no rain for three and a half years and a terrible famine struck the land. There were widows all across Israel, but Elijah wasn't sent to any of them. He was sent to a widow in Zarephath in



the area of Sidon. And it was the same with Elisha the prophet, who healed a man with leprosy called Naaman, who was from Syria, even though there were lots of lepers in Israel too.'

Everyone who heard Jesus saying this in the synagogue was absolutely furious. They got up out of their seats, and drove him out of the town, right to the top of the hill their town was built on. They were going to throw him off the cliff, but he walked right through the crowd and went on his way – out of the crowd, out of Nazareth.

Luke 4.21-30

Did you know?

- Scriptures are ancient holy writings. The Scriptures Jesus read from were very like our Old Testament.
- Elijah and Elisha were prophets who passed messages from God to the people.

Luke 4.21-30 (NRSV)

Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.' All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?' He said to them, 'Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, "Doctor, cure yourself!" And you will say, "Do here also in your home town the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum."' And he said, 'Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's home town. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up for three years and

six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers* in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.' When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.