

First Things First

Opening: *The Broken Finger*

Text Luke 4: 14- 30

Daily Bread – “Gorgeous Inside”

Isaiah 53:2 “My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.”NLT

Outwardly – there was nothing exceptional or necessarily attractive about Jesus

Like a tender green shoot – a root in dry ground –The dry ground I believe relates to a period where the Word of God was not proclaimed.

The people of Israel/Judah went 300 years without a prophet ... dry ground! Then John the Baptist began to preach – preparing the way for the Messiah – Jesus

Jesus began his ministry in Galilee – and people hungry for truth eat up his words like a starving man gobbles down food - his reputation spread like wild fire

Read **Luke 4: 14- 30**

Jesus was headed for Nazareth ... a small town

Small towns are different –different – a different kind of closeness

Illustration ...Town of Kill Kenny, Minnesota

Jesus was going back home, the place where he grew up, where he learned the skills of a carpenter, where he played with his brothers and sisters, where Mary his mother and most of his siblings most likely still lived. It was HOME Coming

- ☆ Following the custom of an itinerant preacher – he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath and was invited to read from the ***Tanakh*** (Old Testament)

Jesus stood to read from the scroll of Isaiah and turned to what we would call chapter 61 verses 1 & 2

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the Poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the LORD’s favor has come.” NLT

Can you imagine the power of that moment, the majesty of those words?

Jesus –the Word that became flesh, and dwelt among us, was reading the written Word of God

The Living Word was reading the written Word - reading the prophecy of Isaiah about the about Himself!

The synagogue is drop dead quiet as Jesus rolls up the scroll and quietly sits down ...
Orators refer to that kind of a moment of silence as a *pregnant pause*

With every eye in the place locked on Him – He speaks “*The scripture you’ve just heard has been fulfilled this very day!*”

Stunned speechless, jaws drop eyes bulge, they are breathless, motionless, in an absolute pin drop atmosphere. Why?

Jesus had just revealed to His home town what He will keep hidden from almost everyone else – that **he is the Messiah** the one they’ve been waiting for and that this day ... was the very day of the Lord’s favor.

Check out verse 22 “Everyone spoke well of him and was amazed by the gracious words that came from his lips. How can this be? They asked. Isn’t this Joseph’s son?”

Two things happening here – the people are blown away by His grace, majesty and authority of Jesus words

The next minute these faithful church folk, turn into lynch a mob intending to murder him.

What happened?

You might be thinking these people are crazy – how could they do a thing like that – we would never do a thing like that here! I certainly hope not, especially not while I’m speaking ...

It only takes some who knows how to push the right buttons –Don’t think the Devil wasn’t sitting alongside them in the Synagogue that day or here along side of your today.

Check out one of the references that set them off – **1 Kings 17: 8-16 The Widow of Zarephath**

This poor woman is as desperate as they come. Several years of Famine left people who might normally help a widow and child unable or unwilling to help. She had nothing left with no resource to turn to with no hope. She had come to the end of herself – and she was getting ready to prepare their last meal ... and then face a slow death by starvation.

She must have cried out to God for help, but it came in a way she never expected.

At the precise moment that she is despondently drawing water from the village well to prepare her last meal.

When Elijah asks for a scrap of bread – She breaks down revealing the desperation of her situation.

Then t a ray of light brakes through “Don’t be Afraid”

The Widow didn’t know it but her prayers had already been answered – she had already been rescued

God had told Elijah *“I have instructed a widow to feed you.”*

Romans 4:17 “God calls those things that are not as though they already were.”

☆ **And yet** success still hinged on her decision! She had to play – We have a part to play - To trust God

Will you trust God? Will you do what he asks you to do?

Elijah instructed her – Yes ... you have almost nothing left but before you make that last meal make a little bread for me first

Sure it’s scary – when it looks like there is no way out of the hole you’re in... but then He speaks ... you’ve trusted me before won’t you trust me now?

God doesn’t ask for much but He does ask us to put Him first.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote – “What lies behind us and what lies before us are of small matters compared to what lies within us.”

God is not as interested in the outside – as He is for the inside!

That’s why surrender always begins with the heart! If we allow Him to change the inside – the outside will take care of itself.

Our circumstances and situations are small matters to God as compared to our heart

What are you holding back from God? Give him what he is asking for ...

Don’t be afraid – allow Him to take first place in your life

You might need to begin with your finances

What does God require of us? A tithe – a tenth of everything that He has provided -

He requires that you give that portion back to Him first ... before anything else.

You say ... I can’t do it – I don’t have it ... funny that’s just what the widow said

But in God equation – $2 + 2$ don’t’ always = 4

He doesn’t need your money – he wants your heart – putting Him first in your giving is surrendering your heart – *“... for where your treasure is there will your heart be also.”*

Don't be afraid – trust God ... listen to His voice – putting God first will not only bless your finances it bless your entire life everything you do – as well as extend the blessing to the people around you.

Putting God first changes everything - your relationship with your spouse, fiancé' girl or boy friend? The wisdom you need to help you raise your children ... You're ability to steer through the mind fields of life.

Don't be afraid ... be willing to do what he asks

Lets Pray