



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke 4: 16-30.

Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord. Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They also asked, "Is this not the son of Joseph?" He said to them, "Surely you will quote me this proverb, 'Physician, cure yourself,' and say, 'Do here in your native place the things that we heard were done in Capernaum.'" And he said, "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong. But he passed through the midst of them and went away.

Introductory Prayer:

Lord, I love you and thank you for all that you have done for me. And yet, Lord, so many times I have plea-bargained with you and made my prayer conditional on receiving what I ask for. This time, Lord, I want to be completely open — no strings attached. In this prayer I place myself completely at your disposal, confident of your good will and grace.

Petition:

Lord, I welcome you into my soul. Help me to allow you to enter and rule over the house of my soul.

1. Speak Lord, Your Servant Is Listening:

As curious as it seems, our openness to a message often depends quite heavily on our openness to its messenger. Have you ever rejected somebody's advice outright only to later embrace it when it comes from a different person? Have you disregarded a light from God because he revealed it to you through a person you would not have chosen, or even imagined God would have chosen? This is the common, simple error of the Nazarenes that Christ felt he had to point out to them. What has Christ been trying to tell me recently? Through whom? Am I ready to listen to him and allow him to use whatever messenger he may choose?

2. Open My Heart to Your Message:

Initially, the people of Nazareth in today's Gospel seemed quite receptive to Christ's message, his delivery, and his authority. What they couldn't stomach was that they believed him just 'one of them.' He would later prove himself 'too much for them.' Surely they must have thought that he had forgotten his roots and that his Capernaum fame had gone to his head. But of course, the Nazarenes were neither the first nor the last to fall into the trap of focusing more on the messenger than on the message. This is precisely why Christ brought up the example of Naaman the Syrian, who was rewarded with a cure only after overcoming his rationalism and eating a bit of 'humble pie.' (See his story in 2 Kings 5.) Has my hurt pride ever blinded me from listening to what Christ is desperately trying to tell me?

3. Lord, I Trust in You:

A tone point in his public ministry, Christ would tell his listeners, 'If you don't believe the words that I speak, at least believe the works that I do' (cf. John 14:10-11). Why wouldn't he at least give his own people from Nazareth the same advice and opportunity? Are a few miracles too much to waste on Nazarene soil? We must remember that faith is a gift. It is given and not bargained for or merited. On Calvary some would taunt him with a similar deal, 'If you come down from the cross, then we will believe in you' (Cf. Mark 15:32). We must wonder from whom came the harder blow: from his accusers, or from 'his own.' A proud demand is especially ugly and hurtful when it comes from a friend or loved-one.

Conversation with Christ:

Jesus, I accept your invitation to come to the house of my soul. Help me to see the areas of my life in need of cleaning. Help me to see the areas of my life which prevent you from coming – those rooms that I close to you. Help me be humble enough to let your grace set to work in me.

Resolution:

I will console Christ with a total and immediate trust in him and in his plan for my life today, whatever may come.