



Jesus said to the people in the synagogue at Nazareth: "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 Jesus, as I prepare for Easter during this Lenten season, I turn to you once again in prayer. I believe that you are my creator and that you have created me to know, love and serve you. I believe that you want to help me fulfill my purpose in life; that is why you came to earth to suffer and die. I offer you my prayer today as a small token of my gratitude, a small token of my desire to live my life for you. I know that sometimes I can let things get between us. Now, during this time of prayer, I want to give all my attention to you so that you – and not my egoism or passions – may govern my life choices.

Petition: Lord, help me to have the humility to accept your will for my life.

1. No Special Privileges: Jesus' fellow townsmen are upset with Jesus for pointing out

that there were times in history that God showed his favor to Gentiles and not just Jews. They are upset because they had put their security in their Jewish heritage and the promises made to their people through the Patriarchs. They want to think that because they are Jews somehow God must show them more favor than the Gentiles. We, too, can make this mistake. We think that because we belong to this or that organization, or because we have this or that position, somehow God must give us more attention and special privileges. Isn't this often the cause of indignation in our lives? We are upset when do not receive preferential treatment. We think that we are deserving of more. Does that indignation ever grow so strong that I try to rid myself of Christ?

2. Seeking God's Blessings: Why did God send Elijah to help the widow in Zarephath and Elisha to cleanse Naaman the Syrian? Surely it was not because they were more important or holier people. God chose them because they welcomed him. The widow in Zarephath happily went to fetch Elijah a drink of water when he asked for it and obediently gave him the last of the food she had. Naaman repented from his indignation and went to bathe in the Jordan as Elisha told him to do. God gives his gifts to those who welcome him.

3. Willful Acceptance of Christ: Christ is perhaps too familiar to his townsmen. They are not able to recognize who he really is. They are upset with the way he speaks, and so they do not accept him. Will I accept Christ in my life? Perhaps he is too familiar to me. I think I know who he is. Perhaps I am unwilling to accept his teachings. Perhaps I am indignant that he has blessed others more than me. The people of Nazareth tried to throw Jesus over a cliff, but they could not get rid of him. Their assault was futile. Christ simply walked away. Christ cannot be gotten rid of. Perhaps there are times in my life when I want to get rid of Christ, but I can never destroy or blot him out of existence. He is always there waiting for me to accept him.

Conversation with Christ: Lord, please help me so that my ideas about how things should be will not cloud my vision of who you are. As I prepare for the approaching Easter, help me to purify myself of all egoism, sensuality, vanity and pride so that I can accept your love with an open heart.

Resolution: I will look for an instance during the day when I can welcome Christ's teaching into my life.