

First words, so memorable. Child's first words; first time you said or heard, I love you, unforgettable. First words out of our mouths make an impression – good or bad – so important.

So it is with Jesus' preaching. St. Luke's first recorded words of Jesus' ministry, first words out of Jesus' mouth ... Scripture. Jesus doesn't warm up the crowd with jokes; no motivational talk; doesn't tell the people what they want to hear, but what they need to hear. His preaching will even offend them.

That day in Nazareth, church packed. Who'd miss it? Jesus had come home. News spreading fast, from Cana, 180g of wine made from bath water; from Capernaum, healing disease, casting out demons with a Word from His mouth. All eyes on Jesus. Every ear open, waiting to hear Him speak. **The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor; sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovering sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.** The people sigh with delight. That passage, near, dear to their hearts, spoke of the Christ to come; to rescue God's people. They knew this passage well, learned it from childhood, could recite it word for word. They longed for the day this would be fulfilled; when God fulfills His promise; they longed to hear what He'd say next...

**Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.** 1 sentence, Jesus sums up the entire Old Testament. Every word points to Him.

Could it be true? Could He be the Christ? But then, this Jesus is not the type of God, Christ they want. *How about a miracle Lord to prove it?* Despite His life without fault, His miracles, despite the fact that everything He says is correct according to Scripture, they refuse to accept He's God. It's not that they have reason to reject it. They don't need reason. They have sin. They love themselves more than what He brings (that's still today, like today). They have different ideas of what God should be. That's why they remind everyone, **Is this not Joseph's son?** (Tactic people still use today, when you can't fault the teaching, attack the person.) They're correct and incorrect. He's one of them, joined Himself to sinners. He's not Joseph's son, but He is Mary's Son. **Is this not Joseph's son?** That question, Jesus' response, indicates Joseph is probably dead, buried over there, so what kind of Christ is this that would let him own father, what kind of Christ would let a loved one suffer and die? You've thought the same.

Then, Jesus goes into 2 stories they know, where God's very own people reject His prophets. Sore topics of their failures; no one wants to be offended. Jesus says, **in truth I tell you** and they run Him out of town, conclude He's a blasphemer, false prophet, deserves to die. They had different ideas of how the Christ would be in power, deliver them, take His place in the temple to be

worshipped, establish an earthly kingdom. Just like people today, create an idea of God to be what *they want Him to be* instead of learning who God really is. People being offended by the Word of God, so you change it, still call it “Christian.” To have a god who agrees with them, supports their lifestyle, accepts their rules. So it is with homosexuality, abortion, adultery, cohabitation, who goes to heaven or hell, what’s still considered sin, and so on. Making a god of their creation.

Like in Nazareth, people run Him out of their lives when He doesn’t do or fit what they want, a god who agrees with me, makes my life easier, happier, miracles when I want, and certainly doesn’t offend anyone.

But we’re no better than the Nazareth mob, who run Jesus out to the edge of town. We want miracles now, to make Jesus convenient. Each of us in our own way run Christ out of the center of our lives to the edge of our souls. We want a Christ who will allow us to hold a few grudges, allows a little gossip, who understands when we’re stingy and selfish. We want Jesus with us as long as He keeps quiet during the movie or TV show or on the computer, when we view things we shouldn’t. Often we want Jesus in our lives as long as He doesn’t get in the way or take up too much time.

Oh, to be sure -make no mistake - your sinful rejection, your rebellion against Jesus will not stop Him or prevent Him from accomplishing His works and love in your life, anymore than the Nazareth mob. As surely as He become Man, sacrificed, risen, so surely will His Name be hallowed, His Kingdom come, His Will be done. The only real question is, what will become of you?

Repent. **Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.** Jesus did not come to be the kind of Christ we desire, that’s not good enough. He came to be the kind of Christ we so desperately need. That’s why this place is but a hospital; the Physician comes for the sick, for the blind, for those in bondage of sin. If you’re not sick, this Jesus is not for you. But for the sick, He most certainly heals, His works of love unto you, gives eternal life.

**Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.** Jesus’ Word not only reveals who he is, but who you are as well. His Person, His work as the Christ. By this Word -not simply a Word about Him -but the Word He continues to speak to His Church through the preaching of the Word — by this Word the most amazing things are done for you, given to you today.

He’s come to lay down His life – not off a cliff, but on a cross. To bear the punishment for their sins, their murderous intent and yours. That all would believe – not in His miracles –but in His sacrifice, to live in the water and blood from His pierced side. His peace, His forgiveness, His life, His glory from the cross are all yours. **Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.** And there’s nothing more powerful, greater in your life than that.