

Encountering Jesus Luke 4:14-30

Welcome to this time of getting to know both one another better...and encountering Christ together.

It is helpful to realize that the Scriptures can be understood as a “living testimony” because they are the revelation of the living God and of Christ, the “exact representation of God’s being,” who arose and is alive. In this sense, when we encounter Jesus through the Scriptures, we encounter not only what “was” ...but what “is.”

Getting to know one another...

What was a favorite toy or game from your childhood?

Centering...

Take a quiet moment to center your soul on God. Take a minute for all those participating to close their eyes... take a deep breath...and prayerfully listen as one member reads the following two texts... slowly ...three times.

Psalm 116:8-9 - For you, Lord, have delivered me from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, ⁹that I may walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

Exploring...

Read Luke 4:14-30 (Could have read aloud, divided between two or three readers)

Luke 4:1-14 (NIV)

¹⁴ Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. ¹⁵ He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. ¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him.

Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,

because he has anointed me

to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners

and recovery of sight for the blind,

to set the oppressed free,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” ²² All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked. ²³ Jesus said to them, “Surely you will quote this proverb to me: ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ And you will tell me, ‘Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.’” ²⁴ “Truly I tell you,” he continued, “no prophet is accepted in his hometown. ²⁵ I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. ²⁶ Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. ²⁷ And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.” ²⁸ All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. ²⁹ They got

up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. ³⁰ But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

1. Compare Luke 3:21, 4:1, 14,18. What is the common element in each of these verses? What does this tell us about the source of Jesus' power?

2. What is the significance of Jesus returning to his "home town"? How does his reception there compare to other places he traveled?

3. Read Isaiah 61:1-3. What is this passage talking about? How could Jesus be a fulfillment of it?

"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, ² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor." - Isaiah 61:1-3 (NIV)

4. Jesus said he came to give good news to the poor, freedom to the prisoners, sight to the blind and to release the oppressed. Why might this speak more to spiritual conditions than just temporal physical conditions? (If familiar with his further life and teachings, how was this declaration reflected in what he said and did?)

5. How have you seen this to be true in your life or those around you?

* 6. Verse 19 is a quote from Isaiah but also alludes to Leviticus 25:10, which describes the Year of Jubilee, an every-fifty-year festival of freedom, worship and economic justice. Read Leviticus 25:9-13. What do you think the "year of the Lord's favor" is that Jesus is going to proclaim?

"Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. ¹⁰ Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan. ¹¹ The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. ¹² For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields. ¹³ "In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to their own property." - Leviticus 25:9-13 (NIV)

* 7. Jesus described Elijah and Elisha helping gentiles instead of Israelites. What did this communicate to his audience? In what way were the people of Nazareth like the people of Israel in the days of Elijah and Elisha?

* 8. Why might the people in the synagogue have become furious when they heard this?

9. How does Jesus' declaration of purpose help us understand the "Good News" (Gospel) which he brought and we now are to spread?

* This question is best considered OPTIONAL. It may be best to skip if the group is large or short on time, perhaps having had extensive discussion on a previous question.