

# Scripture Study

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle C



## Opening prayer

Jeremiah 1:4-5,17-19

(Psalm 71:1-6,15-17)

1 Corinthians 12:31—13:13

**Luke 4:21-30**

## Overview of the Gospel:

- This Sunday's Gospel is a continuation from last Sunday's (Luke 4:14-21). Jesus, speaking in the synagogue in Nazareth, has announced that the Old Testament prophecies have been fulfilled in him; that the long awaited Messiah is here (see last week's study).
- The people are at first filled with excitement at his words. Their amazement turns to skepticism, however, as they recall that they have known Jesus and his family his whole life and he has never seemed exceptional or performed miracles for his own townsfolk, many of whom were relatives (see Mark 6:1-6a).
- They are further incensed when Jesus, pointing out their lack of faith, compares them to the faithless people of Israel in the time of the prophets. These saw no miracles by the prophets, except for the despised Gentiles, or non-Jews (1 Kings 17:1-16 and 2 Kings 5:1-14).
- In a foreshadowing of what will later happen to many of his followers (Acts 7:58, 13:50), the crowd attempts to avoid hearing Jesus' message by getting rid of him—permanently. Jesus, however, is always the master of his own destiny.

## Questions:

- What is Jesus saying through the proverb (verse 23)? Through the Elijah and Elisha stories? How does this relate to the prophetic statements in Luke 2:14, 2:32, and 3:6? In what way do these words of Jesus to the villagers in Nazareth strike a cord in your own heart?
- Why do Jesus' words to them turn the people's amazement (verse 22) into anger (verses 28-29)? What might your reaction be to his words if they were directed toward you?
- Elijah (1 Kings 17:1-16) and Elisha (2 Kings 5:1-14) performed miracles for Gentiles at a time and in a culture where it was frowned upon. Who are the "Gentiles" God desires you to care for? How might you do it?
- Jesus was set aside from all time (see the First Reading) to be the Messiah, the anointed One of God (see verse 4:18; the word Messiah means "the anointed one," as does the Greek word "Christ"). How are we also set apart by God from all time and for *what purpose* are we set apart?
- Jesus' neighbors reject him because he grew up among them (verses 22-24). How have you fared with evangelizing your relatives (or being evangelized by them)? How do you deal with the reactions?

**Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 547—549**

## Closing prayer

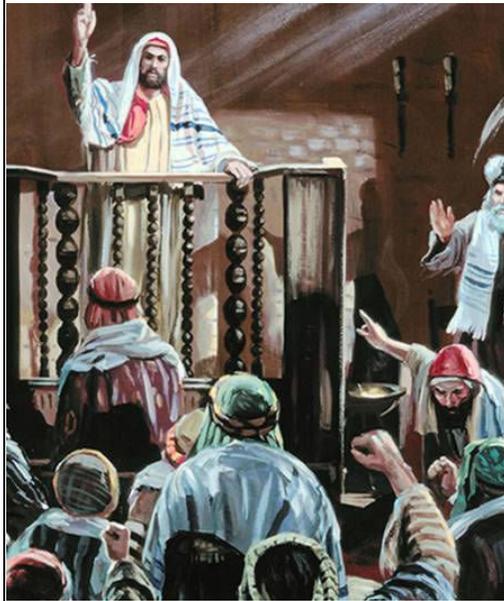
*It is human to err; it is devilish to remain willfully in error.* -St. Augustine

**Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings found in the bulletin!**

# "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing"

**Scripture:** Luke 4:21-30

*And he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. And all spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth; and they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself; what we have heard you did at Caper'na-um, do here also in your own country.'" And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Eli'jah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; and Eli'jah was sent to none of them but only to Zar'ephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Eli'sha; and none of them was cleansed, but only Na'aman the Syrian." When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down*



*headlong. But passing through the midst of them he went away.*

**Meditation:** How would you react if Jesus spoke this message in your worshipping community? It was customary for Jesus to go weekly to the synagogue to worship and on occasion to read the scriptures and comment on them to the people. His hometown folks listened with rapt attention on this occasion because they had heard about the miracles he had performed in other towns. What sign would he do in his hometown? Jesus startled them with a seeming rebuke that no prophet or servant of God can receive honor among his own people. He then angered them when he complimented the gentiles who seemed to have shown more faith in God than

the "chosen ones" of Israel. They regarded gentiles as "fuel for the fires of hell". Jesus' praise for "outsiders" caused them offence because they were blind-sighted to God's mercy and plan of redemption for all nations.

The word "gospel" literally means "good news". Isaiah had prophesied that the Messiah would come in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring freedom to those oppressed by sin and affliction (see Isaiah 61:1-2). Jesus came to set people free from the worst tyranny possible – the tyranny of slavery to sin and the fear of death, and the destruction of both body and soul. God's power alone can save us from emptiness and poverty of spirit, from confusion and error, and from the fear of death and hopelessness. The gospel of salvation is "good news" for us today. Do you know the joy and freedom of the gospel?

*"Lord Jesus, you are the fulfillment of all our hopes and desires. Your Spirit brings us grace, truth, life, and freedom. Fill me with the joy of the gospel and inflame my heart with love and zeal for you and for your will".*

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