

May 1

Scriptures: Read Luke 4

Key Verse: “...no prophet is accepted in his own country”. (Luke 4:24)

Overview

You’ve heard the old adage, “familiarity breeds contempt”. And if not contempt, familiarity breeds at least neglect. This was the case with Jesus. Interestingly, it was also the case with the nation on Israel. And, if we’re honest, it’s the case with you and me too.

In Luke’s account, the temptation in the wilderness is followed by Jesus’ return to Nazareth, His hometown. There He attends the synagogue on the Sabbath, and when it’s His turn to read, He finds Isaiah 61. After reading verses 1 and 2, He looks at the assembled men of Nazareth, all friends and acquaintances, and says, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” This obviously met with resistance, for Jesus goes on to say, “no prophet is accepted in his home town” (NIV). Then, as the anger of the hometown men mounts, Jesus does nothing to diffuse it, rather He adds fuel to the fire.

He goes on to refer to Elijah and Elisha’s time. Prophets then were no more listened to by their own people than now, Jesus says in effect. During the three-and-a-half year drought, there were probably thousands of Israelite windows in need. But what does God do? He sends Elijah to a Canaanite woman, a heathen. During Elisha’s day, there were many sick with leprosy. But whom does God heal? Not an Israelite, but a Syrian. The implication was clear, and not lost on Jesus’ audience. So much so that they tried to throw Him over a cliff.

The people of God are often those least accessible to Him. We’re often in church, often praying, often talking about God. We’re very religious. In fact religion is old hat. And that familiarity produces carelessness, boredom and neglect.

It needn’t do so. Not if we thank God every day of our lives for His wonderful gift of life in Jesus Christ. Not if we renew our love every morning, live it all day, and rest in it at night. You might call it “familiar freshness”.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, in this reading You have revealed Yourself as the One who preached the Gospel, healed the broken hearted, set at liberty the captives and met all human need. Thank You for meeting our needs, and grant that today we will have Your strength to share this good news with others.