

The Day Jesus Got Kicked Out of Church

- He stands up; cong falls silent. Moves to front of church; it's Sab; he's guest speaker. Everyone's eyes fastened on him; you can hear fragile scroll crinkling as he unrolls it to Isa 61, where he reads **vs. 18a**. Then begins his sermon that Sab day by saying **vs. 21**. "Today Lord's Anointed is here, today Messiah stands before you, today salvation comes to this town." And you'd think it would be great day, and all people of Naz would listen Jesus, praise Jesus, believe in him as Savior.
- But instead, this is the day Jesus got kicked out of church! They kicked him out of church! Jump to end: **vs. 28a, 29**. Going kill Jesus, on Sab! What happened!? What caused this to go from the day Jesus fulfills Isa 61 to day Jesus gets kicked out church?
- I'll tell you what happened: people didn't want listen. Refused to listen to Jesus that Sab day. I mean, they heard what said; in fact, **vs. 22a**. But you notice: weren't amazed at teaching/message. Impressd at his presentation; he was engaging speaker, fun to listen to, good preacher. "We like this guy..."
- "And we know this guy; he grew up here." **Vs. 22b**. Naz was Jesus' hometown. As baby, born in Bthlm; as adult, worked out of Cap. But as child, grew up in Naz, went church/school in Naz, played with kids in Naz. And folks from Naz, at first, all too pleased that their hometown boy back. "He's a good preacher, that son of Joseph/Mary! And, we've heard he's a miracle worker. **Vs. 23b** – "Do here..." Maybe he'll work some miracles here today!"
- But instead, Jesus said this: **vs. 24**. And why not? Bec if you watch a preacher grow up as kid, chances are you won't listen to him as adult. (By the way: this is why pastors usually don't serve in the cong they grew up in. Can be some exceptions. But for most part, a preacher doesn't get called back to his hometown, bec chances are people wouldn't listen to him.) And so it is here in Naz: people refused to listen to Jesus. So that day, as he proclaimed law/gospel to those Nazarenes, and they refused to listen to him, that's the day Jesus got kicked out of church.
- Now, here's where you fit in: When do you kick Jesus out of church? "What? Kick Jesus out church? What you talking about?" I don't mean: maybe someday Jesus preach sermon from this pulpit, you'll get mad, drag him out to parking lot to kill him. But what I mean is this: where really is your church? Where you worship Jesus? 198 Westridge Ave? Sure. But really: it's right here; here in your heart; this is where you worship Jesus. Your heart = your church. And what I'm asking you is this: when do you kick Jesus out of church? And let me tell you something: the day you stop listening to Jesus, day you refuse to listen to Jesus – that's day *you* kick Jesus out of church!
- We must always listen to Jesus. Must always listen carefully to his words, put them into practice, take them to heart, live by them, study them, internalize them, personalize them. That's listening to Jesus.
- Which is easy to do when you like what he says. But lot harder when you don't. When Jesus preaches law, pricks your conscience; when crushes your heart, condemns your sins; or when condemns sins of your kids or others you love – then sometimes it's harder to listen to Jesus, bec you don't like what you're hearing, even if you know it's true. "What you are doing is sinful; by your actions, you're disobeying God." Hard to hear/accept. So sometimes we tune it out, ignore it; goes in one ear, out the other. And instead of hearing Jesus' loving admonition to repent and get back on right track, we get mad at him (or at pastor or elder from church). "You've got no business interfering with my personal life, with my sexuality, with decisions I make. That's my business, not yours, thank you very much." That's not listening to Jesus!
- That day in Naz. Jesus came not to perform miracles but to preach; he wanted people to listen to him preach, bec had wonderful message to share! Remem from last week's sermon: **vs. 18a**. Good news is gospel of our salvation; poor are repentant believers in Jesus as their Savior from sin. Jesus has wonderful message to share! He came to: **vs. 19**, year of jubilee – God's salvation has come! But people wouldn't listen, and they kicked him out of church.
- So he left. That's what Jesus does when people refuse to listen to him: leaves, and his word goes somewhere else. That's why Elijah was sent to widow at Zaraphath; people of Israel wouldn't listen.

That's why Elisha sent to Naaman the Syrian; people of Israel wouldn't listen. And if we become content to listen to Jesus only when we want to, or only when we like what he says, then Jesus is going to leave too, and his word will go somewhere else.

- I know I've used this Luther quote here from this pulpit in sermons before. But today I think it bears repeating. *"Beloved Germans, ...make use of God's grace and Word while it is here! For you should know this: God's Word and grace is a passing downpour, which does not return to where it has already been. It has been with the Jews; but what's lost is lost, and they now have nothing. Paul brought it to Greece; what's lost is lost, and they now have the Turks. Rome and Latin-speaking regions have also had it; what's lost is lost, and they now have the pope. And you Germans dare not think that you will have it forever, for [your] ingratitude and disdain will not let it remain."*¹ When you stop listening to Jesus, his word goes away.
- And that's what happened at Naz. They kicked him out of church, drug through town; they're about to kill him! And there at cliff, Jesus performs miracle that's kind of hard to picture: somehow parts crowd, walks through, walks away, never comes back. We never hear of Jesus coming back to Naz after this incident. He leaves for good.
- However, that doesn't change the good news he preached that morning. Remem: **vs. 18**. And this freedom is the freedom of the forgiveness of sins, which Jesus won for all of us, not on day he was kicked out of church, but on different day: when diff angry crowd carried Jesus to diff hill, not to throw him down but to raise him up. On Good Friday, on that day, Jesus *let* the murderous mob take his life, because that was his plan/purpose/mission all along: to offer his life on cross as sacrifice to pay for all times we fail to truly listen to and live by words of Jesus. If you weren't listening before, listen now, to Jesus, on cross. He's saying, "It is finished;" he's paying for your sins, covering your guilt, pouring out his grace, proclaiming good news to poor. Now he's rising from dead, proclaiming year of Lord's favor, bringing you salvation, preparing home for you in heaven.
- Listen to Jesus! People of Naz didn't. Instead, kicked him out of church. Don't kick Jesus out of your church, your heart. Listen to Jesus; live by his words – when easy & hard. He's the Lord's anointed; and he has wonderful message to share! He's preaching to you, proclaiming good news. Listen!

Luke 4:18-32

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.

³¹ Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath he taught the people. ³² They were amazed at his teaching, because his words had authority.

¹ See <http://www.studiumexcitare.com/content/44> or *Luther's Works, American Edition, Vol. 45* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1962) p. 352-353.