

**Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)**

**Luke 4: 22-30**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue reading Luke Chapter 4, and today we will read verses 22 to 30.

In the previous verses we saw Jesus beginning His public ministry, and He returned to Nazareth, the place where He grew up. On the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and read a passage from Isaiah. After reading, His message was actually very simple: "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

The passage from Isaiah prophesied the coming of the Messiah that all Israel longed for, and Jesus, for the first time publicly, declared that He was that Messiah. As a result, the people's reaction was one of great amazement at everything that came from His mouth—full of grace, full of power, full of authority—so everyone spoke well of Him. Yet in the second half of verse 22 another word was brought out.

**Verse 22 b: "And they said, 'Is this not Joseph's son?'"**

This statement carried not only surprise and astonishment but also a certain degree of incomprehension and a certain degree of contempt. Wasn't He brought up in this city? Isn't He the carpenter among us? How is it that today He seems like a different person? The Jews in Nazareth could not get beyond their existing impression of Jesus from the past. They knew Jesus in the flesh, and when the time came for Jesus to begin His earthly ministry, they could not overcome their stereotypical impression of Him.

Actually this principle is still the same today; we must know that the divine life in every Christian will grow, and when it grows it can do wonderful works. Before a brother was saved he may not have been much, and perhaps because of his

background or things he had done you felt somewhat uneasy about him. But once this saint is saved, the most precious thing in him is that divine life; the Holy Spirit dwells in him. He has that divine life within, and the divine life brings change—this person gradually becomes honorable.

The reason for his honor is not because of the person himself, not because of his flesh, but because of the spirit within him. When he stands up to speak for God, the words actually connect with the spirit and come from God. If we are humble enough in spirit, we must draw in the great work God has done in this person and also receive the words he speaks through the Holy Spirit.

**Verse 23: “He said to them, ‘You will surely say this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.’”**

In verse 14, it was already mentioned that Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee and performed many miracles there, so His fame spread everywhere. When He returned to Nazareth, these fellow townspeople who had watched Him grow up could not get beyond their knowledge of Him in the flesh. When they said, “Is this not Joseph’s son?” Jesus, taking up their words, directly told them: You will quote the proverb to Me, asking Me to do some miracles in My own hometown as well; I did many things in Capernaum, and you will demand that I perform such miracles and wonders here in My own hometown.

**Verse 24: “Then He said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.’”**

Jesus performed miracles in Capernaum—could Jesus not also perform some miracles in Nazareth and cause His own townspeople to believe in Him? Of course He could, but Jesus did not do so. Jesus knew very clearly in His heart that no prophet is accepted in his own country. Behind this matter we also see a principle

of Jesus performing miracles: it must be that people accept Him, people are willing to come to Him, people are willing to receive healing; then He performs miracles, as in Capernaum. When people come with doubt to ask Jesus to perform miracles, even in His own hometown, Jesus will not do it.

Miracles occur when a person's heart first softens, when a person's heart first submits; then God, through our submissive intention within, by His power performs something that violates natural law—this is called a miracle. It is not that you originally did not believe, then you saw some miracles and believed; such faith actually has little value. When the people of Nazareth said to Jesus, “Is this not Joseph's son?”—just this one sentence, on the basis of unbelief, on the basis of doubt—made Jesus unwilling, and unable, to do any more in His own hometown.

**Verses 25–26: “But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.”**

This is recorded in 1 Kings 17:8. When the prophet Elijah began his ministry, the first thing God told him to do was to go directly to King Ahab of Israel and declare that if he did not pray, heaven would not give rain. Afterward God took him to the brook Cherith, where the prophet Elijah was fed by ravens for a total of three years and six months while heaven gave no rain.

Then, at a time when the whole land needed help, Jesus mentioned that there were many widows in Israel, but Elijah was not sent to any of them; instead he was sent to a widow in Zarephath in Sidon. Sidon was in Gentile territory, north of Mount Hermon. When no one in his own family and hometown believed, God turned His grace to the Gentiles. Then Jesus gave a second example.

**Verse 27: “And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.”**

Jesus chose to formally begin His public ministry in the place where He grew up, Nazareth, formally declaring that He was the coming Messiah. Yet when these fellow townspeople who had watched Him grow up could not get beyond their knowledge of Jesus in the flesh and hoped He would perform some miracles, Jesus instead spoke relatively severe words to them. And He implied that if they could not accept it, this grace would turn to other places, just as in the Old Testament God’s grace turned to the Gentiles. This was not easy for the Jews at that time, who were very proud and called themselves God’s chosen people.

**Verses 28–29: “So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.”**

Nazareth was a mountain city; they even led Him to the brow of the hill to throw Him down. We see how fickle people are: one moment they were in the synagogue marveling at the gracious words that came from Jesus’ mouth; the next moment, because what they hoped for did not receive an answer, they wanted to drive Jesus out of the city, even to throw Him down the cliff.

**Verse 30: “Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.”**

Jesus’ speaking, actions, and movements all carried an authority from God; nothing would happen to Him unless God permitted it. And He Himself was so bold—though the crowd was filled with wrath and seemed about to throw Him down the cliff, He passed directly through their midst and went His way.

Actually today God still gives His children such authority. Today God likewise takes care of every child of His in all kinds of circumstances; without God's permission, nothing from outside can harm us. Reading this passage truly causes us to ask God to open our eyes so that we may appreciate those brothers and sisters who faithfully serve beside us.

Perhaps we once knew them in the flesh, and maybe you even knew some things they had done that were not so honorable, but may God help us not to remain in such fleshly knowledge; we must return to the newness of the Spirit, knowing that such service comes from God. Especially when they become the outlet for God's word, when they speak for God, we must know this comes from God and receive God's grace behind the words that come from their mouth.

Just as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:16, "Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer." May God help us today to truly experience that old things have passed away; all things have become new. We once had wrong knowledge; today in the new creation we know anew, appreciate anew.

Let us pray together: Lord! Today let us pray for some saints who have served us. May God continue to strengthen the work in their hands, continue to fill them with rich words, able to speak words that build up others. Lord, bless my life this day, full of renewing power, with renewed vision of You, and renewed burden for the people, things, and matters around me; may my life today be a renewed life. Thank You for Your grace. We pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.