

Jesus — Through the eyes of a Nazarene:

I'm not really sure what happened today. It was quite extraordinary. There's this bloke who used to live here. Jesus – Joseph's son (a carpenter). I grew up with Him.

Anyway, we've been getting these stories coming through to us from Capernaum, and all around Galilee about this bloke named Jesus. Stories about the words He spoke, stories about the miracles He did. And the rumour was, that it was our Jesus. But I gotta tell ya, I was the one who said "No. Can't be our Jesus.". "Those aren't the words and the doings of the carpenter I know".

But, blow me down, I went into the local synagogue the other day (just this one here at Nazareth) and there He was, our Jesus. And, with the stories we've heard, I'm not surprised they invited Him to read the Scriptures.

¹⁷ 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 preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to release the oppressed,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

I gotta tell ya, we all stared at Him. He had our attention. He rolled up the scroll, and sat down. Every eye in the place was on Him. What was He going to teach us? And He started his teaching by saying "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

And His teaching,.... we were amazed. The graciousness of what He said.

He spoke about how the blessings of God aren't only for the rich. It's good news for the poor. When He spoke about freedom – about freedom from our sin. He spoke about freedom for those who are unjustly accused. He spoke about healing – healing from God.... And release for those who are oppressed. Our nation, groaning under Roman rule, we know what it is to be oppressed.

He spoke such wonderful, powerful words of grace. And we lapped it up...

But then He turned on us. I don't know who He thought He was, but the way He spoke to us, I tell ya, He spoke as if He had some kind of authority over us. But we know better. We know He's just the boy of a carpenter.

He had the hide to compare us with the **un**faithful Israel. To compare us with that time when Israel's prophets moved out of town. He said He wasn't going to do any of His tricks here for us, because this was **His** home town. The prophets didn't do their work in their home town, so neither would He.

Who does He think He is?

I tell ya what, it made our blood boil, and we were going to teach Him a lesson. We drove Him out of the synagogue, and we pushed Him to the edge of the cliff..... **I** wouldn't have thrown him off, but I tell ya what, I reckon there was some there who would've.

But then I don't know what happened. It was almost as if time stood still. He just stopped at the brink of the cliff, turned, and walked through the mob. We saw Him moving; we wanted to reach out and grab Him, but we couldn't. He just passed by, and went on His way.

He said that a prophet wouldn't perform miracles in His own town, but I reckon that **was** a miracle. If it hadn't of happened, He'd be dead by now.

So, now I'm confused. Who is He? Our Jesus – who is He? What has He become? No doubt we'll hear more stories.

Jesus —

Through the eyes of a follower in Capernaum:

I'm amazed. I've followed Jesus for a while now. This bloke,... He wanders into our town, He teaches in our synagogue, He does these miracles. I wanted to see more. I wanted to **hear** more, so what else could I do – I followed Him....

I saw what happened at Nazareth (I have no idea how He walked out of that). But then He went back to **my** home town again (Capernaum), so I followed Him there too – what else was I going to do? I had to go home anyway.

And when we got there, He started teaching. And we were amazed. He taught with such authority. He wasn't like those other teachers who just quote each other, and rely on the fame or the reputation of the bloke they're quoting to try and establish their own credibility... It was plain, simple, straight from the Word of God, and His words, they had a ring of truth to them.

But then, something really bazaar happened.

There's this bloke in town. Oh, he's weird. Whenever something Godly is happening, he just flies off the handle (sabotage) for no reason. He just gets so angry. Some have said he has a demon – that one of the fallen angels, who follow Satan, has some form of control of him. I was never sure, but now that I've seen what happened, I reckon they were right.

When Jesus was in the synagogue, this bloke comes up to Jesus and shouts ³⁴ "Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are — the Holy One of God."

Then Jesus said sternly, **"Be silent and come out of him!"** And at that, the demon threw the man down, and it must've come out of him, because he just changed just like that.

It was amazing to see... Who is this? What teaching is this? Even evil spirits obey His orders. Who is He?

The evil spirit said that he's the holy one of God. What if that's true? If Jesus **is** the holy one, if Jesus **is** the Messiah?

And that wasn't all I saw. Even as the sun was going down... You see, you've gotta understand, this was happening on the Sabbath, And when the sun goes down, that's the end of the Sabbath... And you know what those religious leaders are like — they are pedantic about the Sabbath... I don't think they liked Jesus healing on the Sabbath...

And so when the sun was going down and the Sabbath was ending, oh, did the people start bringing the sick in then...

With the touch of His hand, they were made well — every one of them. Demons came out of many people, and they shouted "You're the son of God".

But he wouldn't let them speak. I don't know why — He doesn't seem to want people to know who He is.

We wanted him to stay. It's strange, isn't it. His home town wanted to kill Him. **We** wanted Him to stay. But He wouldn't: "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that's why I was sent."

Now, in hind-sight, I reckon (even then) He was trying to tell us something. **We** wanted Him to stay and be the town doctor – health and healing, that's most important isn't it??? And that's what we wanted – there's nothing wrong with that...

But with hind sight, word got back to us, that later on, He 'bagged us out' – the people of Capernaum – Why would He do that? We were so welcoming to Him. We wanted Him to stay – **He's** the one who chose to leave.

But apparently, Mr High-&-Mighty, once He's heading towards Jerusalem, He's got His sights set on things bigger and better than us, He has a go at us and lumps us in with what He calls "the unrepentant cities"... Apparently He said:
Luke 10:15 (ESV)

**15 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven?
You shall be brought down to Hades.**

I don't know... Maybe He was trying to tell us that when He was here. We were so caught up in the healings and the miracles, and He said: that He was sent for **this** purpose – to **preach the good news of the kingdom of God**

Maybe the good news of the Kingdom of God isn't just about healings and miracles and stuff

Maybe that's what it is: **We** saw what He was doing, but didn't listen enough to what He was teaching.

Jesus —

Through the eyes of a follower in Australia:

One of the eternal truths of the Gospel is that rarely will it be welcomed in its entirety. When one actively preaches the “good news of the Kingdom of God,” (sharing our faith), one of the most frustrating things, is that often people only want to hear **some** of the gospel.

The people in Nazareth were amazed at Jesus' gracious words, but they wouldn't accept his authority.

And while ever the church stays in the place of speaking gracious words, the world's generally pretty happy with that. But when the church dares to speak the whole word of God with authority, well the world does **not** want to hear that — “Who are you Christians to preach at us?”

And like the people in Capernaum, **they** recognised Jesus' authority, and they were very keen on His good works and His miraculous works, but it's not until we get to Chapter 10 of Luke, that we realise that, even at Capernaum (while they seemed open and welcoming), they missed the point.

REPENTANCE!!!

And in our land, people are quite happy for the church to do good works:

- aid to the poor;
- counsel the broken;
- comfort the grieving;
- serve as volunteers;
- provide healthcare for the sick;

- food for the hungry
- aged care for our parents;
- better quality education for our children...

And they might even be happy for miraculous healings for their loved ones...

But they do **not** want to hear the message of the Gospel,
“Repentance for the forgiveness of sins in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ”...

Who do you Christians think you are, to try and push your beliefs on us???

I'll tell you who we are. We are the bearers of the good news. We may be ordinary people. But we have an extra-ordinary message to tell. We bear the good news of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus spread this message through word **and** deed. His words of grace **and** His words of authority went hand in hand with His actions. Not only did He proclaim the year of the Lord's favour – He demonstrated it.

And **this**, is the call that God puts upon **our** lives. To continue to proclaim the message of Jesus (in its entirety) – the message of grace/repentance. And the call, is to continue to demonstrate the love of God. To proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and to demonstrate the love of God, through doing good.

Jesus was misunderstood by most, and we will be too. But let that not stop us – we continue to share the Good News of Jesus, for the sake of those who **will** hear and believe.

Jesus was rejected by many – even by His home-town – those who knew Him best. And we will be too... But let that not stop us.

“The good news of the kingdom of God” is good news indeed. It was good news for us – by the blood of Jesus, we are saved. And it continues to be good news for those to whom we share.

Let's pray:

Heavenly Father,
We thank You for Your Son, Jesus.
We thank You that He came as Saviour.

Lord, we Thank You for the Good News of the Gospel.
We thank You that although it cost them,
many were willing to share the Good News of Jesus
with us.

We thank You for those who have proclaimed
the Year of The Lord's Favour;
and demonstrated
the Year of The Lord's Favour, to us.

And Lord, by Your Holy Spirit,

empower us and embolden us,
to share the Word of Jesus with those around us,
and to demonstrate the Love of Jesus
as we proclaim the Gospel of repentance,
in the Name of Jesus,

to all...

Amen.

ⁱ Bock DL, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament. P.433