

Explore the Bible: January 24

Rejected • Luke 4:16-30

By Ann Maniscalco



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Brenda and Chad, married for 15 years, had a wonderful relationship – or so Brenda thought. Then one day, this dream life came to an end when Chad announced he was moving in with Sandy, a co-worker whom he'd been seeing while pretending to be working late or out of town on business.

Rejection. The pain wounded Brenda to the core, and facing day-to-day life was almost unbearable. Like this devastated woman, we've probably all faced times of rejection. It could have been small things like not being chosen for a coveted part in a school play, or bigger things such as the loss of a fulfilling job or the dissolution of a marriage.

Delving into Luke 4:16-30, we'll see that even the most perfect man who ever walked on earth likewise faced rejection even from His own townspeople. Of course, Jesus knew this would happen. He was familiar with Old Testament Scriptures like Isaiah 53:3: "He is despised and rejected by men, A man of sorrows, acquainted with grief..." (NKJV).

In Luke chapter three we see the story of Jesus' baptism, after which He began His public ministry (3:28). Chapter four begins by describing how He encountered, resisted, and defeated the devil during a 40-day period of fasting and

testing. In verse 14 we learn, "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news went out throughout all the surrounding region." When he taught in their synagogues, He was "glorified by all."

However, things were about to change drastically. Verse 16 tells us His next stop was "Nazareth, where He had been brought up." The Sabbath day found Him in the synagogue, "as His custom was." Even as the unique Son of God, He knew He needed to be involved in group study of the Scriptures and worship.

He was given the opportunity to read and address those gathered. Opening the book (or scroll) of the prophet Isaiah, He found this passage: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (vv. 18-19).

Closing the scroll, Jesus gave it to the attendant and sat down. Those gathered eagerly awaited His next words. Preaching what was surely the shortest sermon ever, Jesus said, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Look back at those verses. In addition to preaching the Gospel, His ministry and work would address other needs of the people: comforting, relieving oppression, promoting social justice, and healing (both spiritually and physically). Since we're to follow Christ's example, how can we help combat society's ills today? A Gospel message coupled with caring for the whole person is more winsome.

Verse 22 has a different slant in various translations. While the CSB version and many others describe the crowd's response as favorable ("They were all speaking well of him"), others use words such as "bore witness to Him" (NKJV), which could

indicate a negative connotation. Our Learner Guide points this out: "The Greek construction of verse 22 is unclear as to whether their responses were positive or negative. The words can be taken either way."

Regardless, those gathered were amazed at the Lord's grace-filled words. Considering this One who'd grown up among them, their question, "Is this not Joseph's son?" could have also been spoken in respectful, awe-struck tones – or in skeptical ones.

Jesus chose His hometown to introduce Himself as the long-awaited Messiah, the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (v. 21). He sensed the people expected Him to do the kinds of miracles done in other areas (see Matt. 4:23-24). They wanted a similar show of power. Our Lord wasn't willing to perform for their approval. Instead, He clarified the broader scope of His Messianic ministry.

In verses 25-27, He points to Old Testament Scriptures that show how God specifically chose to impart special grace on two non-Jews: the Zarephath widow and Naaman, a Syrian leader. This so infuriated the Jews, they hustled Him out of the city, planning to "throw Him down over the cliff." However, passing right through the angry mob, "He went His way."

Rejection comes in many forms, and it hurts. However, with the Holy Spirit's help, we can put it behind us and like Jesus, continue on our way... His way.

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