

Speak Out Sunday 2010 Commentaries on Luke 4:24-30

Luke 4:21-30

21 Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

23 He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'"

24 And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown.

25 But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land;

A Presbyterian Perspective

Nobody likes a truth-teller, really. People just want to be placated, told what they want to hear and believe about themselves, to be affirmed. We all want to be affirmed. Can we do both? Can we tell others the truth and simultaneously affirm who they are and the value we find in them? We may find ourselves in relationships that we had never anticipated. We may discover that the person with whom we committed ourselves to so long ago is not the one we journey alongside today. Telling the truth is risky – we may find ourselves locked out of a relationship, a family, a home, a bank account. A prophet is not accepted in their own hometown. The life of the prophet points

A Unitarian Universalist Perspective

(4:24) Sometimes those who claim to know us best know us least - are deceived by their preconception, misled by their own needs and beliefs. Therefore, one is well served to remember that each of us is called to a life of self respect. Self respect is not based in physical or emotional dominance over someone else. Self respect exists even when someone else attempts to dominate, for the core of one's self is not subject to the will or whim of another person.

(25-27) Jesus retells how Elisha and Elijah's worlds were filled with suffering. Still, these prophets sought out the strangers among them for healing. We are reminded that whatever healing we bring to our own home, we still have a responsibility to the strangers among us. Perhaps the widow at Zarephath looks like the worker two offices down the hall; or the Syrian appears as a friend of a friend. What are the responsibilities of the prophetic truth teller? Our form of prophecy may be to equip the victim with knowledge and connections that they might plan their own resurrection. Maybe our prophecy includes speaking to the abuser's confusion about his or her own actions and responsibilities.

(28-30) Instilling fear in someone is the most "un-godly" thing we can do. The divine initiative is to relieve fear, not to create fear. Fear prevents us from doing what we have to do and what we are capable of doing. By whatever means we overcome our fears we are made more able to deliver ourselves from our problems. In forthrightly facing anger, rage or threat, one has the opportunity to be his or her best, bravest, wisest and ultimately, most secure self. In honestly facing one's internal challenges or external threats one increases the likelihood of passing through safely and going on one's way.

