



Living Lent | March 13

## What We Need to Hear

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*In the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus 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.'" And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. 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; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.*

**Luke 4: 23-30 (NRSV)**

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### Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

When you close your eyes and picture Jesus, what do you see? Maybe you picture a kind and benevolent teacher who gently instructs his followers. Or maybe you picture a strong and caring healer who goes out of his way to care for the spiritual and physical needs of people. Or maybe you picture a Jesus much like we find in this reading of the gospel of Luke, a fiery prophet who goes out of his way to tick people off. For that is what it seems like Jesus does here.

In the gospel of Luke, this story follows Jesus' temptation in the desert. After spending some time teaching and performing miracles elsewhere, Jesus travels back to his hometown, reads that passage from Isaiah, declares it to be fulfilled in him, and everyone is amazed at him.

And then Jesus ruins it.

Jesus' hometown crowd expects him to do what he just said he would do, heal THEM, deliver THEM, proclaim the Lord's favor to THEM. Instead, Jesus essentially says, "what I do isn't for you! Remember Elijah and Elisha, they could have blessed their fellow Israelites (the insiders), but God sent them to heal and bless Gentiles (those on the outside)."

What in the world is Jesus doing here? He gains absolutely nothing from this. In fact, the only thing he gains is a near death experience as the crowd is so angry with him that they try to kill him. Why would Jesus do this?

Because time and again, Jesus tells us what we NEED to hear, not what we WANT to hear.

Sometimes what we need to hear encourages and builds us up. Sometimes what we need to hear tears down the parts of our lives that need to be turned to rubble, so the Spirit can build something new and Godly within us.

Those Jews in Jesus' hometown needed to hear the message that God loves and accepts those Gentiles who were considered outsiders, judged and disdained by God's people.

As we continue through this season of Lent, what might the Spirit be saying to you that you need to hear? Be open to hearing something that stings or maybe even initially makes you angry. Maybe, just maybe, that is exactly what you need to hear. Then pick up that cross and continue the journey of following Jesus more faithfully than before.

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### ***Contributor and Contributing Body of Christ***

Rev. Justin Moser is a Jesus-loving husband and father of 2 boys who serves as the Associate and Youth Minister at First Baptist Church St Simons Island, a generous and friendly congregation that seeks to share Christ's love with all people. What became known as First Baptist Church of St. Simons Island, has been the culmination of many years of working towards the goal of a beautiful house of worship on Ocean Boulevard just north of Demere Road. The groundbreaking was held on 18 April 1946, and the Church has increased in membership through the years and in their dedication to Community, including Morningstar Children's Home.

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