

## PREPARING AT HOME

January 28-February 3, 2019

*Focus reading:* Luke 4:21–30 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=414137383>)

*Other lectionary readings:* Jeremiah 1:4–10; Psalm 71:1–6; 1 Corinthians 13:1–13

*Theme:* Power of the Word

We pick up this week exactly where we left off last week. Having returned home, Jesus is in the synagogue where he read and commented upon words from Isaiah. According to verse 22, the hometown crowd is in his corner, for “All spoke well of him”; but seven verses later the same crowd is trying to push him off the cliff! Why the sudden change? Jesus, who has healed people in other cities, indirectly tells the people not to expect the same thing in his hometown. It was an understood ethical imperative that people were to first show care for their own families, then for the community, and finally for foreigners. Jesus had broken the code by first performing miracles among outsiders! Now, by telling their stories, Jesus is aligning himself with the prophets Elijah and Elisha, who also extended their ministries outside the Jewish community. Feeling betrayed, the people who once shared a home with Jesus and spoke well of him are enraged to the point of attempted murder! In response, Jesus does not back down or soften his message. He does not placate them with a miracle or two. He simply (rather inexplicably) passes through the crowd and goes on his way. God’s word is not always comforting. It is not always recognized as “Good News.” It does not always say what we expect or want to hear. If we are paying attention, it might even be disturbing, demanding changes that make us uncomfortable, perhaps even angry.

### REJECTION

Children are devastated by rejection. Talk about how Jesus was rejected by those in his hometown. Did that stop Jesus or make him change what he was doing? Why not?

### INSIDE OR OUTSIDE?

Jesus compares himself to Elijah and Elisha, who extended their ministries of healing and comfort to people who were outside the Jewish community. Likewise, Jesus did many miracles in Capernaum rather than his hometown of Nazareth. How might the “insiders” tell such stories? How would the “outsiders” tell such stories?

### PRAYER

Loving God,  
Sometimes your teachings are hard to hear  
because they ask us to do things that are not easy.  
Forgive us when we resist what we know is right.  
Help us to be brave enough to reach out to others  
and to hear your Good News  
even when it is saying what we do not expect to hear.  
Amen.

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