

7 Unto the Least of THESE

18 Feb. 23



Ice-Breaker: *Why do you think prejudice exists?*

Luke 4:16-30 cev ¹⁶⁻¹⁹Jesus went back to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and as usual he went to the meeting place on the Sabbath. When he stood up to read from the Scriptures, he was given the book of Isaiah the prophet. He opened it and read, “The Lord’s Spirit has come to me, because he has chosen me to tell the good news to the poor. The Lord has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind, to free everyone who suffers, and to say, ‘This is the year the Lord has chosen.’” ²⁰⁻²¹Jesus closed the book, then handed it back to the man in charge and sat down. Everyone in the meeting place looked straight at Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, “What you have just heard me read has come true today.” ²²All the people started talking about Jesus and were amazed at the wonderful things he said. They kept on asking, “Isn’t he Joseph’s son?” ²³⁻²⁴Jesus answered: You will certainly want to tell me this saying, “Doctor, first make yourself well.” You will tell me to do the same things here in my own home town that you heard I did in Capernaum. But you can be sure that no prophets are liked by the people of their own home town. ²⁵⁻²⁷Once during the time of Elijah there was no rain for three and a half years, and people everywhere were starving. There were many widows in Israel, but Elijah was sent only to a widow in the town of Zarephath near the city of Sidon. During the time of the prophet Elisha, many men in Israel had leprosy. But no one was healed, except Naaman who lived in Syria. ²⁸⁻³⁰When the people in the meeting place heard Jesus say this, they became so angry that they got up and threw him out of town. They dragged him to the edge of the cliff on which the town was built, because they wanted to throw him down from there. But Jesus slipped through the crowd and got away.

- *What thought prompted the question, “Isn’t he Joseph’s son?”*
- *How would we answer that question?*
- *As Jesus was talking about Elijah what were the people hearing him say?*
- *How does Jesus challenge us in this passage?*

Isaiah 58 cev ¹⁻²Shout the message! Don’t hold back. Say to my people Israel: You’ve sinned! You’ve turned against the LORD. Day after day, you worship him

and seem eager to learn his teachings. You act like a nation that wants to do right by obeying his laws. You ask him about justice, and say you enjoy worshipping the LORD. ³⁻⁴You wonder why the LORD pays no attention when you go without eating and act humble. But on those same days that you give up eating, you think only of yourselves and abuse your workers. You even get angry and ready to fight. No wonder God won’t listen to your prayers! ⁵Do you think the LORD wants you to give up eating and to act as humble as a bent over bush? Or to dress in sackcloth and sit in ashes? Is this really what he wants on a day of worship? ⁶⁻⁷I’ll tell you what it really means to worship the LORD. Remove the chains of prisoners who are chained unjustly. Free those who are abused! Share your food with everyone who is hungry; share your home with the poor and homeless. Give clothes to those in need; don’t turn away your relatives. ⁸⁻¹⁰Then your light will shine like the dawning sun, and you will quickly be healed. Your honesty will protect you as you advance, and the glory of the LORD will defend you from behind. When you beg the LORD for help, he will answer, “Here I am!” Don’t ill-treat others or falsely accuse them or say something cruel. ¹¹⁻¹²Give your food to the hungry and care for the homeless. Then your light will shine in the dark; your darkest hour will be like the noonday sun. The LORD will always guide you and provide good things to eat when you are in the desert. He will make you healthy. You will be like a garden that has plenty of water or like a stream that never runs dry. You will rebuild those houses left in ruins for years; you will be known as a builder and repairer of city walls and streets. ¹³⁻¹⁴But first, you must start respecting the Sabbath as a joyful day of worship. You must stop doing and saying whatever you please on this special day. Then you will truly enjoy knowing the LORD. He will let you rule from the highest mountains and bless you with the land of your ancestor Jacob. The LORD has spoken!

- *In Isaiah 58, for what was Israel being condemned by the LORD?*
- *How does God say they can get back on track with him?*
- *Which people does the LORD want us to help & minister to?*
- *When is a good time to start caring for others?*

Luke 9:1-6 cev ¹⁻⁵Jesus called together his twelve apostles and gave them complete power over all demons and diseases. Then he sent them to tell about God’s kingdom and to heal the sick. He told them, “Don’t take anything with you! Don’t take a walking stick or a travelling bag or food or money or even a change of clothes. When you are welcomed into a home, stay there until you leave that town. If people won’t welcome you, leave the town and shake the dust from your feet as a warning to them.” ⁵⁻⁶The apostles left and went from village to village, telling the good news and healing people everywhere.

- *What mission did Jesus send the 12 apostles on?*
- *Describe the kind of people Jesus sent the apostles to.*
- *What were the resources Jesus gave them to do this mission?*
- *How would we feel if Jesus gave us the same mission?*
- *What has challenged us most from today’s study?*