**Reflections 2-8 February 2025**

**Bible study on Luke 4:21-30**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Loving God,
your love is immeasurably more than we could ever understand.
Draw us deeper into the truth of your love for us
and help us to reflect that love in our daily lives.
**Amen.**

**Read the passage**

*Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.*

Luke 4: 21-30

 **21**He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

**22**All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked.

**23**Jesus said to them, “Surely you will quote this proverb to me: ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ And you will tell me, ‘Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.’”

**24**“Truly I tell you,” he continued, “no prophet is accepted in his hometown. **25**I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. **26**Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. **27**And there were many in Israel with leprosy[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke%204&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25091g)] in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.”

**28**All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. **29**They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. **30**But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

**Explore and respond to the text**

*Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.*

**Bible notes**

After Jesus reads from the scroll of Isaiah (Luke 4:17-19), he returns to his seat. He has fulfilled his intention to announce his purpose and his personhood. However, his message is not received with faith and he is doubted. Through his reading of this Scripture and proclamation in verse 21, Jesus identifies himself as the long promised Messiah, but his listeners can only see him as the son of Joseph. Jesus shows that he fulfils the promises given to Israel. Jesus is identifying himself as a prophet of the type of Elijah and Elisha. Citing them, he indicates that knowledge of God and of Christ will come from outside of Israel. This does not go down well.

**Reflection**

*Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.*

It is not always popular to speak the truth. Some people who have spoken out against injustice within their own organisations have since suffered recriminations and persecution. Jesus is speaking in his home town but his words are designed to be provocative. He names a number of people who God has blessed historically – but all of them are from other nations and not of Israel. We know that God’s love is for the whole world, but this was not a popular truth for Jesus’ hearers. Israel was struggling under Roman rule and was wanting God to step in and save them now. God calls us to be loving to others but sometimes this means speaking the truth to them whether they want to hear it or not.

**Questions for reflection**

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

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**Questions**

* Have you experienced tough love from a parent, teacher or mentor?
* Have you ever had to share an uncomfortable truth with someone else?
* If you had to do it again, would you do anything differently?

**A prayer to end the Bible study**

Loving God, thank you for your great love for us,
love which is patient, kind, protecting and persevering.
Help us to take your love out with us this week
and show it to those who feel they are outside of your family.
Give us your heart for those who don’t yet know you.
We ask this in Jesus’ name.
**Amen.**