



**OPENING PRAYER:** Open with prayer for any personal needs of your group.

**NOTE:** Our insights are important so remember to respect each other's thoughts/reflections.

**DISCUSSION:** The scripture on Sunday (Luke 4.21-30) was about how Jesus people rejected him as he didn't *do* for them what they felt he should and pointed out things they didn't want to hear. As Christians, we can struggle with understanding why God doesn't *do* for us what we need and instead, find Jesus points out areas in us to transform that are often painful areas of our lives.

- When have you let God transform an area of your life – what steps did you take, what did God do in you, what encouragement would you give to someone struggling in the same way?

**READ:** Luke 5.1-11 (Discuss as many - or as few - of the following questions as you like)

After Jesus rejection in his home town, rebuking spirits, healing people and preaching to large crowds, we now come to the moment Jesus meets three men who come to be his best mates.

- Putting yourself into Simon's shoes, what do you think he might have thought about Jesus request to use his boat and then having to listen to Jesus preach?
- Extending kindness to Jesus with his boat is one thing, letting Jesus tell him how to fish is another. Why do you feel Simon agreed?
- Simon's response brought an amazing catch of fish. Do you feel Jesus offers insight into your working life that could bring abundance? What would it look like to submit your work to Jesus?
- Simon had a strong response – you're holy – I'm not and I can't be in your presence. When is a time you (or someone you know) felt they couldn't be in God's presence?
- What do you notice about Jesus response to Simon? Why do you feel Simon, James and John all felt secure enough with Jesus response to leave their full-time occupations to follow him?

**GOING DEEPER:**

- God takes the little ordinary things we offer and making them extra-ordinary. Discuss whether you feel there is a ministry (either in regular life or church) that God is asking you to take up.

**CLOSING PRAYERS:**

- **CHURCH COMMUNITY:** we have a current financial deficit of \$3'500 – pray this will be met
- **VISION 2021** – for the work of our new Operational Team (Bec Kena, Shane Balcombe and Lyn Baxter) who are working to develop the structure of church ministries
- **OTHER CHURCHES:** other churches spiritual growth, unity and discipleship in North Lakes

**Gracious Lord lead us to a greater awareness of your vision for what you can do in us when we submit ourselves your Spirit. Help us to become disciples who 'catch' people for your Kingdom and are content to do your will alone. AMEN**

## An invitation to transformation - Luke 4.21-30

The question today is – do we allow ourselves to be transformed by what Jesus wants *or - are we expecting Jesus to transform just the areas we want, in the way we want it.*

It is part of human nature to resist change – so what areas of change do you resist?

Let's first get a picture of what's happening so we can see what to take away from it

Vs 18 – 19, we learn Jesus has returned to his home town of Nazareth.

In the synagogue he reads from Isaiah 61.1 written around 700 - 800 years *before* Jesus when the Israelites were *released* from captivity.

This was a message from God for them to rebuild – *to pursue change and transformation*

Vs 20 Jesus finishes reading, gives it back and sits down - everyone loved the way he read.

Jesus then says in Vs 21. "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Then someone said, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" Here's where a small voice begins to *whisper: What's in for you? He came from here – shouldn't he have our interests before others?*

In Vs 23 Jesus tells them - "*You will surely say this proverb to me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in your country.'*"

The crowd has heard about the miracles in Capernaum so Jesus must have moved between Galilee and Capernaum ministering to the people.

Who's had that thought – God, I hear and know what you do for others – when's it my turn? When will I receive a break in the storm of life? *That little voice says – what's in it for me?*

I've asked – shouted even - at God – with my epilepsy, work situations, marriage - being dad – when I over analyse things – *why God won't you just fix it? What's in it for me?*

In Jesus time it was hard to be a good, pious Jew in Nazareth - far from Jerusalem – surrounded by bad influences – no stand out features - no place to grab a decent selfie.

It's why Nathaniel said to Philip, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth"?

So, you'd think God would cut them a break – yet Jesus doesn't say what they want to hear.

In VS 24 – 27 he says how God miraculously provided food for a poor, pagan widow through the prophet Elijah – while many poor, starving *Israelite widows* didn't receive anything.

*A small voice grows a bit louder: Is he saying God likes non-Jews better than Jews?*

Jesus then recalls another story. God miraculously cured Naaman, a pagan leper through the prophet Elisha. There were many sick *Israelite* lepers during that time who received no cure.

*These whispers are now shouting. "He is saying God prefers non-Jews over us"*

*Is Jesus really saying God's grace extends to our enemies and even worse - we not only miss being blessed but the miracles go to our enemies? It's hard to grasp how insulting this was.*

There is a choice when confronted with Jesus – see him as he is or as we presume him to be. Rather than avoid confrontation, he shone a light on darkness & hardness of people's hearts - and said I've come to deal with that if you let me.

We then have to choose our response:

Do we retreat to darkness mentally, emotionally, spiritually – or let his light expose us

Do we thicken the walls of our hearts – or let Jesus grace, mercy & love transform us

The choice Jesus' community made was to reject him. He wasn't what they expected.

He didn't do the miracles they expected. He didn't say the words they expected.

He didn't give them what they wanted, pride took over where humility could've transformed

Vs 28-29 – Jesus community were so angry they tried to throw Him off a cliff and somehow, in Vs 30, Jesus passed through this hostile crowd.

The devil tried to make Jesus jump from a high place - *if you're the son of God you'll be fine*. Now he's forcefully taken to one and miraculously, God allows him to escape.

Isn't it ironic – the people expected a miracle - what they got, because they hardened their hearts, was the *Son of God* escaping from them – the first time a mob came to kill him!

Later another mob will come - rather than escape, He will give Himself to this mob.

He will let Himself be arrested, tortured and killed so that - through his death and resurrection, we might be transformed into sons and daughters of a holy God.

I'm encouraged by the way our church receives God's invitation to transformation – not only because we're growing – becoming more organised – embracing our mission and values – using your gifts to lead – and caring for each other – it's more than this!

It's the humble way you admit – *I'm broken – struggling – messy – and it's more than this!*

You also say - *I will not* get stuck on my own issues – *I will not* hide my sins in the darkness – *I will not* limit my thoughts to what is comfortable – and *I will not* listen to a voice that says – *what's in it for me?*

In the midst of your struggles, you reach out to others locally and those overseas – why - because we know through helping others, God puts *our trials* into perspective.

*In Jesus we know there's real change and transformation* – not that it removes our struggles, however we know God's presence *in the midst of struggles* is what *transforms our response*

Then comes the miracle, our response lets the world know – the Son of God is here with you

let's finish with this prayer together...