

Time for God – Take 2

Purpose: To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service/passage.

Week beginning Sunday 27 January 2019 Through Jesus' eyes

Pray that we would learn to see things from Jesus' point of view, to assess the needs of what is important and vital – not by their impact on us personally, but on their impact for the kingdom of God – and to grasp the urgency and immediacy of getting things done.

Read Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). Luke 4:14-21

Background Jesus is welcomed back as the home town boy made good. (Notwithstanding his birth in Bethlehem!) He was a celebrity by the standards of his day and was commanding considerable interest among the general population – his outspoken and convincing messages, his miracles and the perception that he might become the standard bearer of a popular uprising against the Romans all contributed to people being interested in what he was saying and doing. Jesus' focus was on change and action – but it was centred on the outworking of God's promises in the Old Testament that pointed to justice, peace and a true honouring of God.

Possible questions/points to consider

1. Jesus was becoming popular. What are the strengths and weaknesses in becoming a popular figure a) generally b) as a Christian? We may not get a million FB followers or become a tv celebrity but how can we be affected (for good or ill) by what others think of us? How far should we go to maintain popularity? Where do we draw the line? To what extent is our faith liable to be affected?
2. Jesus points people back to traditional teaching from the Old Testament (which had been around for hundreds of years) but he gave it fresh application and relevance. How might this be a signal for what is needed today? Are there exceptions and if so, what are they? What are the essentials of biblical teaching that we shouldn't give up on? Are we being radical enough in the outworking of biblical principles? If not what needs to change? And how? How are we to be fresh and relevant without losing the vital gospel?
3. The folk in Nazareth really couldn't see past Jesus being the "carpenter's son". How far do we believe that God can do great things through any of us who are open to his kingdom? How we cope with people who run us down? Are we really willing to go with Jesus' agenda? What may need to change in us? in what we need to do?
4. Sometimes people say "We're out to try and make the world a better place". Maybe Christians have got a bit more to say about what we are doing than that but surely that is part of our purpose in being here. How might we align ourselves with others (whose stance may not be one of faith) in social programmes which at the same time further the gospel manifesto of Luke 4?
5. Jesus is not afraid to personify the good news in his own life and teaching. We can't be so definitive that our lives as such an example but how might our readiness to line up behind the good news programme of change help others to see that it is important? What is the Christian equivalent of "putting your money where your mouth is"? How do we help people to see signs of the kingdom of God among them? What might our part be?
6. Please discuss/consider anything else that arises from the passage or service.

Prayer Lord thank you for Jesus' clear message that the Spirit of God wants to work in our midst to make the world a better place, to bring peace and justice, healing and transformation to lives and communities. Help us to believe that God can work change in us and our communities. Make us open to play our part in making it happen, for your glory's sake. Amen.