

## Luke 4:14-30 | Jesus Teaches in Nazareth

### InterVarsity Bible Study Guide (60 minutes)

#### WELCOME (7 minutes)

Icebreaker: Why did you decide to come to this Bible study today?

We are studying the Bible together because we want to grow in our love for Jesus through Scripture and because we want to grow in our witness to Jesus through Scripture.

Let's pray and ask God to help us as we study today's passage together...

#### GROUP NORMS (3 minutes)

Each time we meet, let's be careful to work well together as a group. We are coming from many different backgrounds, so the purpose of these group norms is to help everyone feel welcome so they can fully participate:

1. Use "I" statements (speak for yourself, not for everyone)
2. Avoid judgmental statements (no shame or blame)
3. Allow space for everyone to share if they choose
4. Practice active listening and give advice only if invited to do so
5. What we share here stays here (confidentiality)

As your leader, I will help us remember our group norms. Also, as members of this group, feel free to speak up if you notice we are straying from these norms.

#### INTRODUCE the Scripture Text (3 minutes)

Luke was a man who lived around the time of Jesus. He was a doctor, so he cared a lot about the details of things that really matter. He did not meet Jesus personally, but he heard what everyone was saying about Jesus and decided to carefully investigate everything, starting back at the beginning. Luke had access to letters, speeches, song lyrics, travel accounts, trial transcripts, and stories from trusted friends. He put that investigation into writing so that people could read about Jesus and "know the certainty of the things [they] have been taught" (Luke 1:4).

Luke also wrote the book of Acts, and these two books together tell the story of how God brought salvation to the entire community of creation through his people Israel. This work of salvation began way, way back at the beginning, and we can read in the Hebrew Bible (which we usually call the Old Testament) how God has been rescuing his people and the land for thousands of years. Yet throughout all that time, God also was telling his people that one day there would be a rescuer or savior who would save completely everyone who follows him. We can be on the lookout throughout the book of Luke for what salvation means for people and all of creation.

You may want to reference Isaiah 61:1-2 and 58:6 for more understanding (that the original readers of Luke would already have had).

#### SEE the Scripture Text (10 minutes)

Let's read the passage and talk about what we see.

- Who are the characters? How are they connected?
- What is happening? When? Where?
- Which words are being repeated?
- Is the author comparing or contrasting anything?
- Would you like to point out anything else you notice?

Luke 4:14-30 NIV

<sup>14</sup> Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. <sup>15</sup> He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

<sup>16</sup> He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup> and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

<sup>18</sup> "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,  
<sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

<sup>20</sup> Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. <sup>21</sup> He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> 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.'"

<sup>24</sup> "Truly I tell you," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. <sup>27</sup> And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian."

<sup>28</sup> All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

### **DISCOVER the Scripture Text (25 minutes)**

Let's discuss a few questions that will help us discover and understand the text.

1. Imagine what it might have been like to be a member of the synagogue crowd listening to this Scripture and teaching from Jesus. What might you feel and experience?

2. Jesus presents a customized mash-up of Isaiah 61:1-2 and 58:6 and then teaches the people that it has been fulfilled in their hearing. As Jesus names these qualities about himself, how would you describe the type of minister he is claiming to be?
3. The hometown audience is thrilled because they expect this ministry to prioritize them, but Jesus challenges their expectation by recalling two instances of prophets doing God's work to benefit foreigners. Why do you think the people are resistant to Jesus opening his ministry to the whole world?
4. The people become so enraged at Jesus that they try to kill him. Jesus risked a lot in revealing his identity, so what was it that he really wanted them to know about him?
5. If we could communicate the core message of this text in just one sentence, what would it be? What do we sense God is communicating through this passage?

### RESPOND to the Scripture Text (10 minutes)

This scene is the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. His teaching is like the inaugural address of a new leader, and he wants people to know that he is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. His hometown audience thinks this means his mission will prioritize them, and they are upset to find out that Jesus is enacting God's salvation plan for *everyone*.

Jesus is the anointed one who came to bring freedom for the poor and oppressed.

Let's discern together how we can respond to what God is saying. We will answer one option from below, whichever seems most relevant to our group's discussion of the text.

- A. What are your thoughts and feelings about Jesus now that you have seen who he claims to be? How is this passage challenging your view of Jesus?
- B. When has God done (or not done) something that made you so angry you wanted to react against him? How did you get through that situation?
- C. Where in the world do you see a need for the type of salvation Jesus says he is bringing? What places of pain or oppression in the world are you passionate about?

### CLOSE (2 minutes)

Let's pray and thank God for our time in Scripture together...

*Tips for leading the group discussion:*

- *Participate but keep your comments short to make space for others.*
- *Silence is okay. Encourage further discussion by saying "What else?" instead of commenting on every response.*