

Rev. Seth D. Bode †† Sermon 460, 01-23-2022 †† Epiphany 3

“Credo, Domine; adjuva incredulitatem meam,” Mark 9:24.

“Domine, volumus Jesum videre,” John 12:21.

LUKE 4 – *Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.*



On demand—how is that for timing? We get so many things on demand. Entertain me, TV! And we click into our streaming service just like that, our favorite show on demand.

If only God was on our timing! What if we could have the miracles of Jesus of Nazareth on demand? Where is that miracle that gives me luxury? Where is that miracle that relieves us of the pandemic? So often we wish for the miracle, but instead God leaves us with a book full of words.

Everything is on His time. But make no mistake, God’s timing may be right here, right now. We lack no good thing from God right here, right now. It may not be so bad that God gives us His words, not His fancy miracles. Some may not like that ...

GOD’S TIMING SPEAKS TO HUMAN REJECTION

1. Sinners reject what is on demand

Jesus of Nazareth was in His hometown, invited to teach at the synagogue. Jesus read the scroll of Isaiah. There was nothing but good news in this lesson Jesus read: sight for the blind, binding for the brokenhearted, release for captives, the year of Jubilee. “*Today this reading is fulfilled in your ears.*” Words of grace, words of good news. These words set the tone for all of Luke’s recounting of the ministry of Jesus Christ. He has not come as a new Lawgiver to compound the Law of God or give another impossible rule or regulation. He has come to offer relief like none has ever seen before.

And He brought down the house. The synagogue was amazed at His words of grace.

Yet it grew into hometown disbelief. There was a demand for miracles. The Nazarenes believed that was the point of Jesus’ coming, that He was just getting

to the good stuff. But they were wrong. The gospel was not just there to introduce the miracles. The pure gospel was the main event.

Can we put ourselves in the shoes of these parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers, friends, neighbors of Jesus Christ? None of us witnessed Jesus growing up among us, playing as a child, learning His *alef-bet-gimels* (Hebrew ABCs) and how to count, or stumbling during a game of ball tag. Most of us probably think that we would never reject Jesus if He grew up in our hometown.

Yet we have grown up with Jesus, haven't we? We have had Jesus in our lives as long as we can remember. There are times when Jesus is all too familiar to us, as He was to the people of Nazareth. And our sinful nature wants nothing but to reject Him. There is a part of us that may use His name on-demand to curse instead of bless. There is a part of us that rolls our eyes at unpopular teachings He has to say. There is a desire inside the believer's heart to reject His message and wish for miracles on-demand, saying, "I've been to God's house many times. What new thing can He possibly tell me today?"

Rejection is not the exception, but the rule. Our sinful nature is set to "reject" mode. If we leave the sinful nature on auto pilot, it will reject Jesus and all of His Word. Such a rejection, if it ever had any shot at God's being gracious enough to show His power, will forever receive none of God's grace or power.

Yet the very solution to this rejection was the Savior who Himself was not demanded, but rejected. As we said—

2. The good news is the main event

So I would like to spend the second part of this sermon enjoying that fact.

The Nazareth synagogue was enraged. The Nazarenes drove Him out to try to dump Him off the cliff. They must have had Jesus by the arm, wringing Him along as they left the city. Jesus patiently allowed this to the edge of a cliff. The drop would not have been pleasant, with bumps and tumbles along the way.

Then Jesus did perform a miracle. The one miraculous work Jesus performed, His hometown family and friends and neighbors did not want. Nazareth, His own hometown, was going to kill Him. So Jesus walked through the crowd.

Jesus as true God and the Christ knew when His time was. It would happen again—they would try to kill Him. They would try to stone Him and they would plan His demise. Each time, like this walking through the crowd, Jesus showed the power to lay down His life and the power to take it up again.

This means that when Jesus was put on trial and brought to the cross, then He had the power to walk through that angry mob, too. But instead He allowed them to demand His life from Him. It was sinners like you and me who called for His blood and shouted for His crucifixion. It was our sinful hearts' demand. All good gifts of God so that He could lay claim on our lives and demand that we be made citizens of His kingdom.

Those Nazarenes, the family, friends and neighbors of Jesus may have continued in that unbelief. However, we get the impression that at least two brothers or cousins of Jesus came to faith: James, the New Testament writer, and Jude, also a New Testament writer. Both call themselves the brother of our Lord. Just imagine what you would feel, rehashing this memory, "What did we almost do?" But on the Lord's timetable, they repented of their hatred and sinful demands. Jesus walked through their malice and selfish denial, on to better things.

So what are you waiting for? Jesus knows your time, too. He knows your whole timetable. Everything is on His watch. But make no mistake, God's timing is right here, right now. We lack no good thing from God right here, right now. This Scripture does not need to wait around any more to be fulfilled in your hearing. Now is the time of favor! Now is the day of grace! Now is the year of Jubilee, release for the captives, binding for the brokenhearted, and sight for the blind! Waste no more time looking for videos and shows and entertainment on demand. The gospel is happening all around you, and you're off missing it. Now is the time to devote your heart to it. Now is the time to seize the good habits of worship and Bible study and personal devotions. Now is the time to swim in your baptismal waters and swallow pure forgiveness from the altar. Now is the time to keep your family in the gospel at all costs! Now is your chance to share good news with the hometown around you. Today is this gospel fulfilled in your ears!

For it is all told to you in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**