

# Race & Religion

## Week 3: Jesus & Justice

**Weekly Summary:** Early in his ministry, Jesus' hometown neighbors tried to murder him. Not because he claimed to be God. Not because he broke the laws of the Sabbath. But because he claimed that God might actually love other cultures. His bold sermon and the visceral reaction remind us that followers of Jesus are called to boldly proclaim God's love for all races, no matter what it costs them.

- ◆ Luke 4:14-16a - Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. **15** He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. **16** He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom.

Luke 4:16b-21 - He stood up to read, **17** and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: **18** "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, **19** to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." **20** 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. **21** He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Luke 4:22 - 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.

- ◆ Luke 4:23-24 - 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."

Luke 4:25-27 - 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 in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian."

- ◆ Luke 4:28-29 - 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.

Luke 4:30 - But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

- ◆ **"Me First!"** makes a mess.

- ◆ **"You First!"** makes us blessed.

### **Points to Ponder**

1. Read Micah 6:8. What do these famous words have to do with our modern struggles with race?
2. Study Philippians 2:1-11. What would be different about our lives if we put these words into practice? Why is Jesus' selfless love the key to making necessary changes?
3. Think about and pray for the racial/social struggles that exist in your community. How might you be a small part of the solution? What might it cost you personally? Why would your sacrifice be worth it?

### **Homework For Next Week: Revelation 7:9-17**