

# The Popularity Context

## **A Real Cliffhanger**

### **Luke 4:14-15 (ESV)**

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. <sup>15</sup> And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

The events that took place during this time are recorded in John 1:19 -4:45:

- John & Andrew followed Jesus, Andrew brought Peter to Jesus, Jesus called Phillip to follow Him, all these guys were Galileans specifically from Bethsaida. Phillip found Nathanael and brought him to Jesus – Nathanael is the one who said “can anything good come out of Nazareth”. When he meet Jesus he said “you are the Son of God! You are the king of Israel!” The Wedding at Cana – this is where Jesus says “My hour has not yet come.” Jesus goes to Passover and cleanses the Temple, this is when He says to the Jews “Destroy this temple and in 3 days I will raise it up”, Jesus speaks with Nicodemus:

### **John 3:3 (ESV)**

Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

### **John 3:14-15 (ESV)**

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

### **John 3:16-20 (ESV)**

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup> And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. <sup>20</sup> For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

During this time John transitions by saying:

### **John 3:28-30 (ESV)**

You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’ <sup>29</sup> The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. <sup>30</sup> He must increase, but I must decrease.”

### **John 3:36 (ESV)**

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Jesus meets with a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well on his way back to Galilee.

### **John 4:13-14 (ESV)**

Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever

drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

**John 4:32-34 (ESV)**

But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” <sup>33</sup> So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?” <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.”

Jesus stays in Samaria 2 days and many believed in Him!

**John 4:42 (ESV)**

They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

**John 4:43-45 (ESV)**

After the two days he departed for Galilee. <sup>44</sup> (For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.) <sup>45</sup> So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast.

Luke is the only gospel that mentions this event:

**Luke 4:16-30 (ESV)**

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

It was Jesus custom to join in community worship, an example that His followers should imitate! I’m sure we need it more than He did!

**Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV)**

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Jesus didn’t follow man’s rules but fulfilled God’s will & Word!

A typical synagogue service opened with a petition for God’s blessing, then the reading of the traditional Hebrew confession of faith.

**Rob - Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (ESV)**

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>5</sup>You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. <sup>6</sup> And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup>You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. <sup>8</sup>You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. <sup>9</sup>You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

**Buck - Deuteronomy 11:13-21 (ESV)**

“And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, <sup>14</sup> he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may

gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. <sup>15</sup> And he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you shall eat and be full. <sup>16</sup> Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them; <sup>17</sup> then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land will yield no fruit, and you will perish quickly off the good land that the LORD is giving you. <sup>18</sup> “You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. <sup>19</sup> You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. <sup>20</sup> You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, <sup>21</sup> that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.

This was followed by a prayer and an arranged reading from the law and from the prophets, with the reader paraphrasing the Hebrew Scriptures in Aramaic.

#### **Luke 4:17-20 (ESV)**

And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup> “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” <sup>20</sup> And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

Jubilee - 50<sup>th</sup> year – a rebalancing of the economic system - slaves were set free and returned to their families, all debts were forgiven and land was restored to its original owner and it was a year of rest. Jesus redefined this spiritually!

This was followed by a sermon given by one of the men of the congregation or by a visiting Rabbi.

#### **Luke 4:21-22 (ESV)**

And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” <sup>22</sup> And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”

So it is pretty obvious that He had not served in this capacity before and had waited for His appointed time.

#### **Luke 4:23-24 (ESV)**

And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Physician, heal yourself.’ What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.” <sup>24</sup> And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.

They could only see him as the carpenter’s son that had grown up in their town and not the Son of God. This is what limited any miraculous signs in Nazareth. Not His ability or willingness, but their faith in Him!

#### **Luke 4:25-30 (ESV)**

But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the

heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, <sup>26</sup> and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. <sup>27</sup> And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” <sup>28</sup> When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. <sup>29</sup> And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. <sup>30</sup> But passing through their midst, he went away.

Their admiration of Jesus was short lived, they moved from marveling to murder. My how fickle we are! They turned from admiration to antagonism after his admonition.

How do you respond to admonishment – rebuke and correction? If we fail to humbly receive the gift of admonishment we invite discipline and hardship into our lives and we remain immature and blind to our faults.

In fact, we should seek accountability and live transparent and repentative lives that recognize correction as training in righteousness and discipline as our heavenly Father sharing His holiness with us.

Secondly, if we simply want Jesus to do miracles in our lives without our lives declaring Him Lord we will miss out on faith building moments where Jesus reveals His power in our lives.

St Augustine said – “They love truth when it enlightens them, but hate truth when it accuses them”

If a priest was present the synagogue service closed with a benediction. Otherwise, one of the laymen prayed and dismissed.

**1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 (ESV)**

... may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all...<sup>13</sup> so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Close in prayer