

**Jesus Goes to Nazareth**

Jesus experienced a lot of conversations with many people – some caring, some less than caring. The Spirit of God speaks good news, release, recovery, freedom, and favor. How can you do the same in your home?

**Luke 4:14-30 (NIV)**

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 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, and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." 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. Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.' " "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. 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. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. 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." All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. 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 down the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

**Reflections**

With permission, I share this wonderful explanation of "Caring Conversations" written by a brother in Christ halfway around the world. I hope these words by Pastor Greg Priebbenow of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Australia, bless you as they did me.

—Pastor Mike McQuaid

*Words are central to the Christian faith. It was through speech that God brought creation into being; it was through Christ, the "Word made flesh" that God acted to reconcile creation unto himself; and it is through the proclamation of God's Word in various settings and by various means that people are brought to and sustained in Christian faith.*

*According to American Search Institute research, youth that came from church-involved families in which parents often expressed their faith are almost twice as likely to actively participate in congregational life as youth from church-involved families where faith was rarely or never discussed. And sadly, the latter greatly outnumbered the former. The same*

*research found that, of congregational youth, only 12% had a regular dialog with their mother on faith/life issues, and only 5% with their father.*

*One of the primary challenges facing the church today in passing on the Christian faith is simply helping family members communicate with each other in ways which reflect and embody the loving, merciful and saving activity of God in their lives. "Caring Conversations," referring to the multiple and varied ways in which the living and active Word of God breaks through into our day-to-day communications with others, takes place in the home when and where family members::*

- *inquire about and name the presence and activity of God in their lives and in the world around them;*
- *discuss and reflect upon the great stories of faith and their relevance to our lives;*
- *caringly and respectfully listen to one another, engaging each other's hurts, joys, concerns and dreams in the light of their Christian faith;*
- *give one another the gift of focused and undivided attention;*

- *confess their wrongdoing and forgive one another in the name of Christ; affirm, encourage and bless one another both through verbal and non-verbal communication.*

*In essence, "caring conversation" involves weaving faith into our daily interactions. Great times for caring conversation include mealtimes, on the way to and from school, bath-times and bedtimes, before and after church, and during leisure activities. While formal, structured conversation can be helpful, it is often the unplanned spontaneous interactions that have more impact in conveying our heartfelt passions, convictions and values.*

**Resource**

<http://www.formingfaith.com/3.html>, accessed December 11, 2009. Edited for size.

## Readings

### Sunday, January 17

Luke 4:14-30

Many who heard Jesus speak in his hometown already knew him well. How did they respond? How do you respond to hearing the truth from those you know? Why do you think it can be challenging? How can you create an environment for telling and hearing truth in your household?

### Monday, January 18

Romans 10:13-15

How can you have "beautiful feet" this week through your words? Who might God be urging you to encourage so that they might walk with beautiful feet in someone else's life?

### Tuesday, January 19

Philippians 1:1-6

Do you thank God when you remember someone in your home (or office or any other place)? Have you ever told them you do? As Paul shared such gratitude with the church in Philippi, how much you share your thanks for someone with them? An email? A card? Complimenting them in front of other people?

### Wednesday, January 20

Hebrews 1:1-4

Why are words so important? Powerful? When we share God's Word with others, what else are we sharing with them?

### Thursday, January 21

Psalms 54:2

Prayer allows you to share a caring conversation with God. What do you need to pour out to him today? Share openly and freely to God who loves you.

### Friday, January 22

2 Samuel 7:18-29

David prays to God with thankfulness and praise because God is trustworthy (v. 28.) What builds within a family or among friends? How are you currently building trust with those you love the most?

### Saturday, January 23

Romans 15:1-7; Ephesians 4:2

What attitude is necessary to set the stage for healthy, caring conversation? When have you exemplified this quality in the past week? When have you fallen short? What can you take from this into the coming week? Pray for awareness of your attitude toward others.

***Don't have a Bible? Access these scriptures at [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com).***