

DAY 5
READING:
LUKE 4:20,21

All the people in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him, as he said to them, 'This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read.'

THE BIBLE – JESUS LIVES IT

One amazing verse in the Bible says, 'Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends.' (Hebrews 12: 2). The people who heard him did just that – they were mesmerized by him. Why?

Somehow, Jesus grabbed and kept their attention as he read the Scriptures and explained that he was the one who is here to fulfil the truth of all the dreams and hopes that can be found there and indeed, the hopes and dreams they glimpsed in themselves. People fixed their eyes on him. He was and still is too good not to be believed.

He speaks with such composure and conviction that his words are compelling.

He communicates such love and energy for

us that we know we want to be with him and hear him.

He draws us towards him with his warmth and we begin to flourish like the first daffodils in the spring sunshine.

He radiates reality and, like iron filings with a magnet, we are drawn to him.

Why not read one or more of the Gospels and allow yourself to become drawn into his story, like the people were in Nazareth, or indeed, like the people who first told and wrote the stories about Jesus that now fill our Bibles?

Eternal God, thank you that you came into our world through Jesus Christ. Help us discover that Jesus still comes into our world through Scripture. Free us to respond well, as we fix our eyes on him. Amen

What next?

There are many excellent Bible reading notes available in the UK today to help you engage daily with the Word of God. To find out more visit

www.grow-with-the-bible.org.uk

This leaflet is produced by Grow with the Bible in association with BibleFresh

www.biblefresh.com and

The 2011 Trust www.2011trust.org

Other leaflets in this series include Bible readings for Christmas 2010, Easter 2011 and Harvest 2011.



WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP YOU EXPLORE THE BIBLE EVERY DAY

BIBLE SUNDAY READINGS

2011 brings the 400th anniversary of the King James Version Bible and with it a call to action for us to try and understand the Bible better. The readings and reflections in this leaflet explore how Jesus saw the Bible by considering what he said in his local synagogue – and what we should do in response to the challenges he presents.

We hope you will enjoy these readings, part of a series of leaflets produced by Grow with the Bible. If you want to know more visit www.grow-with-the-bible.org.uk

Luke 4:16–21

KING JAMES VERSION

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

¹⁷And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

¹⁸The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

¹⁹To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

²⁰And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

²¹And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears

GOOD NEWS BIBLE (SHORTENED)

¹⁶Then Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath he went as usual to the synagogue. He stood up to read the Scriptures ¹⁷and was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written,

¹⁸The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives

and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed

¹⁹and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people.

²⁰Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. All the people in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him, ²¹as he said to them,

This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read.

DAY 1
READING:
LUKE 4: 16-17

Then Jesus went to Nazareth... and on the Sabbath he went as usual to the synagogue. He stood up to read the Scriptures and was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written...

THE BIBLE – JESUS VALUED IT

Like you, Jesus found himself in church. In fact he regularly went to his church – the synagogue. Whether we find church interesting or boring, strange or exciting, one of the most important things that happens there is that the Bible is read.

Even though Jesus was God's Son, the Scriptures mattered a lot to Jesus and he knew his way around them very well. Finding a special passage in a scroll was much more difficult than finding the Letter to the Hebrews in our Bibles today! But Jesus knew exactly what he wanted to share and where it was. Other stories show us that Jesus used his knowledge of the Scriptures to cope with temptation and to understand what God wanted for his life. They

were like a light that helped him along.

This leaflet can help you find your way around a short passage from the Gospel of Luke. It shows us about Jesus' compassion and commitment to us all. And that's another reason why it's worth hearing or reading the Bible. As the Archbishop of Canterbury said to Queen Elizabeth II at her consecration, 'We present you with this Book, the most valuable thing this world affords. Here is wisdom; this is the royal law; these are the lively oracles of God.'

Living God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, thank you that you have provided the Scriptures, to help us make sense of our life, to show us who you are and how we can experience your love for us. Amen

DAY 2
READING:
LUKE 4:18

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor.

THE BIBLE – FINDING GOD'S PURPOSES

SatNavs are useful because they help us know where we are and how to get to where we want to go. Even better, when we go wrong they indicate how to get back on track. Well, the Bible can do all of these for us as people, although we will have to work a bit harder than just listen to the voice from the SatNav. But the Bible does one even more important and surprising thing - it helps us discover who we really are.

Jesus came to know that he was chosen by God. In the Bible to be chosen means also to be deeply loved and cared for. Of course, Jesus was chosen for a very special commission, but the Bible shows us that we too are chosen

by God – loved and cared for. As we read the Bible, hear God speak, and see how Jesus showed God's love to others, no matter how ordinary or even wretched they were, we start to recognise that God loves us also.

Then, again like Jesus, we begin to discover the purposes God has for our lives. To find out that we matter, and that we can make a difference, is like upgrading our TV from black and white to full colour HD. How colour and clarity can enliven our lives!

Loving God, thank you that the Bible shows us Jesus was your only Son, but that we can all be your children. Help us discover and delight in the purposes you have for each of us. Amen

DAY 3
READING:
LUKE 4:18

... good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed...

THE BIBLE – GOOD NEWS

Gone are the days when Bibles usually had black covers – now there's even a Rainbow Bible – with blue, pink and green. That's really appropriate because the Bible does bring vibrancy into our lives

Jesus chose just such a rainbow passage to read out. It's full of hope and help for all kinds of people. It came from the Old Testament, which lots of people think about in terms of 'Thou shalt nots' in the Law and 'doom and gloom' in the Prophets. That's not what Jesus saw there! And, as he tells us, he came to add even more bright colours to it.

Announcing Good News would have reminded people of times when an enemy army

had been defeated and everyone was safe again. This mattered not only in itself, but because it changed everything, made every part of life worthwhile again.

So Jesus came to help us live all of life to the full. He came to open our eyes to all the wonders of God. He came to pick us up and set our feet dancing for joy. He came to deal with all the pressures that grind us down as well as the mistakes that trap us. He came to change the whole world for the BETTER.

Caring God, thank you that Jesus brought the Bible to life. Help us to let the Bible come to life in us as well. Through your Spirit, shape us to be like Jesus in all our feelings, decisions and actions. Amen

DAY 4
READING:
LUKE 4:19

... the time has come when the Lord will save his people.

THE BIBLE – JESUS COMPLETES IT

Sometimes waiting seems endless. If you have ever waited for news after a job interview or for exam results you'll know this. Waiting can also be deeply painful and distressing, for example when you are waiting for news about a life-saving operation for a loved one. But what a relief when you get news that all is OK.

A lot of the Bible is about people waiting for God... to help them, show them what to do or to act to help them. Jesus' friends felt they had been waiting for several hundred years for news that God was going to help them again! They were a despised nation, occupied by foreign armies and mostly extremely poor. Hundreds of years is a long time. Many had lost all hope.

So when Jesus said, 'The time has come...' what a relief, what a release! Sometimes we wonder whether our life really matters, whether anyone truly loves us for who we are, rather than what we can do. Maybe we've wondered whether there was any way to sort out our problems or to cope with the sad memories that haunt us.

Then we hear Jesus say, 'God is acting now to rescue you. See, I'm here for you.' What a relief, what a release!

Rescuing God, thank you that the Bible shows us you keep your promises and at the right time you come to rescue us. Help us through Scripture to discover the wonder of the way that you came to us in Jesus. Amen