

Let us pray,

Lord, help us to see that we are better together, that we are called to lift each other up, always.

Amen.

The people loved him, until they didn't.

Today's Gospel is one of the major starting points of Jesus' ministry agenda.

He is now starting to be open about why he is here, and what he is going to do for humanity.

The prophecy has been fulfilled, and it is in him that it is fulfilled.

We say this with ease today, and we glorify Jesus and give thanks for Jesus, and praise Jesus, today.

But to say, I am the Messiah that Isaiah prophesied about, to Jewish people in ancient Mesopotamia, who are waiting for the messiah, is not something that is taken lightly.

Its important to know that, Jesus was very well liked in his hometown.

Joseph and Mary were respected, and Jesus was a good guy.

He was helpful, kind, there are some accounts in non-canonical scriptures that Jesus was performing miracles as a child.

He would even lead some debates and be a part of synagogue life.

This is very similar to if one of the children in our midst today showed a significant interest in sharing God's word and in living out a christian life,

we too would be excited and possibly encouraging, seminary education, to that child.

Of which, I can only imagine was happening with Jesus.

Jesus was the star pupil, and everyone loved him and was excited to see where God was going to lead him.

The people loved him, until they didn't.

For a long time, Jesus was in the background, his ministry had not truly started, until that day that he was baptized.

Until Godself, gave Jesus the authority to teach and a reason to be heard and listened to.

Jesus finally had the authority to say;

“Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

If we would read on to the next few lines of this scripture, we would hear how the people loved Jesus, but after him proclaiming himself to be the messiah, and after he called them out for not accepting him because this was in his hometown.

They tried to kill him by hurling him off a cliff.

The people loved him, until they didn't.

For me, this story is a reminder to all of us, that the Gospel does not just comfort us, it confronts us too.

The Gospel is not just a feel good, your doing great, motivational speech.

Gospel means Good News.

And the good news that we are given is not always news that we as an individual want to hear.

The Good News is for the world, not just the individual.

Sometimes we can get so caught up in our own individual lives, that we forget that Jesus did not just come for me, but for every single human that has ever lived.

We can become so insular, so individualistically focused, that we forget that sometimes our actions, hurt other people.

We sometimes forget to be compassionate, empathetic, caring, loving, and kind to others, because we are so focused on our own stuff.

We love Jesus when he comes to us and comforts us in our time of need.

We love Jesus when he answers our prayers and calls us by name and pats us on the back.

We love Jesus when Jesus shows love to us.

But when Jesus judges us, of which he has every right to do, we so often turn on him, and either go on the attack like the people of nazareth, or we turn our back on him, .

The people loved him, until they didn't.

Jesus' ministry is not about making individual people feel good.

Dont get me wrong, I would love it, if Jesus' ministry was all about making Chad feel good!

But that is not the Gospel, that is not Jesus.

Jesus' ministry, is about saving the world from sin.

And that means the whole world, not just the world that we experience, but every part of the world.

Jesus is not here for one specific group of people, or one specific person, Jesus is here for all of us.

And that means, as Paul said in his letter, "when one part of the body of Christ suffers, we all suffer."

Which means, that as Christians, when we see people, of any race, nationality, religious background, any classification that us humans use to separate people, are being abused or oppressed, we are called to speak up and speak out, because we are the body of christ together.

And “when one part of the body of Christ suffers, we all suffer.”

God asks us to look out beyond ourselves, beyond our communities and see the world the way God sees the world.

To love the way Jesus loves.

When people are abused, oppressed, scapegoated, Jesus hurts, God hurts.

And Jesus is asking us to feel the same way.

To not be afraid to be hated, for loving those on the margins, for living out our Christian call to be the body of christ in the world today.

Remember;

The people loved him, until they didn't.

The people loved him, when he was filled with potential for what they wanted him to be.

The people loved him, when he was just this kind little boy.

The people loved him, when he didn't say anything to upset anyone.

The people loved him, when all he was, was Joseph and Mary's son.

The people hated him, when he became who he was called to be, the messiah, the one who ate and was friends with tax collectors and prostitutes, the one who called out the oppressors, the one who called for grace and mercy, when everyone wanted revenge and blood, the one who showed people their sins, but also their souls, and the one who laid down his life freely, to save the souls of those whom hated him.

The people loved him, until they didn't.

Sometimes the words of Jesus make us want to throw him off of a cliff.

But my word of wisdom to us all, is that when that time comes, and we feel those feelings of anger or uncomfortableness.

Look within.

Ask oneself, why am I feeling this way?

And pray.

Pray that God may enlighten our hearts, to be awakened to the areas of our hearts that need to be softened, so that we may be the compassionate, merciful, and loving disciples, that Jesus needs us to be in this world.

Let us learn from the mistakes of the past, and not get angry with Jesus when he says things we don't like, but recognize his authority, listen to his wisdom, and grow into the people he needs us to be for this world.

Amen.