**Reflections 26 January – 1 February 2025**

**Good news for everybody**

**Bible study on Luke 4:14-21**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Loving God,
thank you that all are welcome in your presence
and all have a part to play.
Speak to us today and show us how to live
as the body of Christ in this community,
bringing good news to all.
**Amen.**

**Read the passage**

*Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.*

###  **Jesus Rejected at Nazareth**

**14**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. 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 favour.”[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke%204&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25083f)]

**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.”

 **Explore and respond to the text**

*Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.*

**Bible notes**

We meet Jesus on his way from Galilee to Nazareth and the synagogue there. Here is the Jewish teacher standing in the place of worship on the Sabbath. He quotes from Isaiah 61:1-2 and Isaiah 58:6. This great liberation call is the reply to his mother Mary’s own words in the Magnificat. Jesus proclaims that the freedom foreseen by Isaiah has arrived in his own person. This is an identifying moment in the Gospel, in keeping with the Epiphany theme of the person of Jesus being revealed to us anew. Jesus is the one who is meeting the hopes and expectations of the prophets of old. The year of the Lord was one of great eschatological promise and is now here, as Jesus begins his ministry. Those who are on the outside, on the margins, are being brought in. Those who might typically be excluded are welcomed by Jesus. We see this embodied in his ministry as he eats and drinks with socially unacceptable people. This gospel is topsy-turvy – the things that we think we should value, the power structures of the world and the values of society – are questioned.

**Reflection**

*Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.*

In the Gospel passage, Jesus declares his mission of ushering in a new order of things in which those that are seen to be the least and the last are prioritised. In the Corinthians passage, we see that diversity is part of God’s creation and the plethora of gifts listed reflects that. Such diversity can cause strife. However, Paul suggests that this is not God’s way. The message of both these passages is that the social order in the kingdom of God is different. How can we make sure we are always maintaining unity and prioritising those who might otherwise be forgotten? Who are the forgotten in your own context? Do they know that the church welcomes them?

**Questions for reflection**

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

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**Questions**

* When did you last experience a ‘mic drop’ moment (one that completely astounded you)?
* Why do people sometimes not like positive news stories?
* Who most needs to hear Jesus’ good news right now?

**A prayer to end the Bible study**

Lord Jesus, you were anointed to bring new sight,
freedom and good news to all people.
Help us to share this good news of your love and care
with everyone we meet in the week ahead.
**Amen.**