

Facing Opposition . . . Just Like Jesus – Luke 4:16-30

Read Luke 4:14-30

Everybody faces opposition in life – everybody

Key is how you handle it

If you want to face it just like Jesus, this is one of passages to learn from

Some opp comes because you're doing the *right* thing

Like the opp from a city/businesses for trying to establish a ministry (zoning, etc)

Or opp from an unsaved spouse when you want to plug into church

Some comes because you're doing the *wrong* thing

Like opp from your parents when you're running with the wrong crowd

Opp from the authorities when you're speeding

Everybody faces opposition of one kind or another

If you're not encountering opp from time to time for doing what's right – you're probably not doing what's right

If you don't face opp sometimes for doing God's will – you're probably not in his will

Rarely do we accomplish something significant for the K of G apart from opp

It's a fact of life in your walk with Christ

Comes in all shapes and sizes – physical suffering, mental strain, emotional hardship

But most often, opp comes in the form of a person; People are primary source of opp

Hard-hearted, jealous, bitter, envious people

That's the kind of opposition we're talking about this morning

Opp that comes from people

Everybody faces opp at one time or another in their life

How you handle it determines what you accomplish for the Lord

Which is why we need to face it . . . just like Jesus

It starts with staying the course

WHEN YOU FACE OPPOSITION . . .

Stay the course (v16-21)

There's nothing like opp that causes you to want to quit or take a detour

It was the fall of 27 AD, Jesus had just begun his Great Galilean ministry, teaching in the various synagogues and towns

16 – *he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up*

If he didn't know of the opposition *before* he got to Nazareth (and I think he did) . . .

Then he certainly must have sensed it and known about it shortly after he arrived

Despite that, he went about his business/mission of preaching and teaching

He could have avoided the opposition by . . .

Staying away from Nazareth (16) – but he didn't; He stayed the course and went

Not going to the synagogue (16) – but he didn't; He stayed the course and went

Passing on preaching/teaching (16 – *he stood up to read; 21 – he began to say to them*)

But he didn't; He stayed the course; and preached anyway

Reading/choosing a *different* passage (17) – but he didn't; He stayed the course

Concealing his identity and fulfillment of the text (21) – but he didn't; He stayed the course and spoke up

Saying thank you and sitting down after v22 – but he didn't; He stayed the course and

confronted them

He had at least 6 chances to back out, avoid the opposition, and take another route

But he didn't – stayed the course; and in doing so, applied Is 61 to himself . . .

Saying at least 3 things –

1. I'm the Messiah – the one you've been waiting for (18a)

I'm the one, the anointed one, that Isaiah was speaking for in ch 61

2. I'm on a mission; I have a course; It includes –

Preaching the gospel (*good news*) to the *poor* (the poor in spirit; those who need/want to hear; those soft of heart)

Releasing people from the guilt/bondage of their sin (*proclaiming liberty to captives*)

Opening the eyes of people's hearts to see their sin, their need, and their Savior

(*Recovering of sight to the blind*)

Setting people free from the oppression of sin, and sinful people

3. The time is now

I'm declaring right now that the long-awaited time of God's salvation is here (*the year of the Lord's favor* – 19)

Those are some pretty big bomb shells that he knew would create some pretty big opp, and he could have avoided it – but he didn't; he stayed the course

When you face opposition in whatever you're doing, or whatever you're saying – as long as it's the right thing, God's thing – stay the course

Go where you need to go; Do what you need to do; Don't let it deter you

Stay the course

WHEN YOU FACE OPPOSITION . . .

Lean into the problem (v22-23)

In order to do that you have to know what the problem is

All opp from people stems from an attitude of the heart

So it's critical to identify the heart-issue

That's no small thing

It takes discernment; It takes the counsel of other biblically minded people around you

It takes the HS's guidance to clue you in

But whatever it takes, identifying the heart-issue is crucial to leaning into the problem

That's easier said than done sometimes

At first glance, their issues weren't apparent

They *spoke well of him and marveled at his words* (22)

Isn't that so like the opp you face?

It's under the surface; People either don't say it, or they minimize it

But Jesus read between the lines in their question – *Is not this Joseph's son?* (22b), to identify the heart issues, and then leaned into the problem

Read v23 – You don't believe me do you? You're lovin' what I say, but don't buy it

If you did, you wouldn't be so ticked that I went somewhere else first . . .

And you wouldn't be asking for miracles to prove it

He identified at least 2 issues on their part, and leaned into them

1. Unbelief – “He can't be the Messiah, he's Joe's son; He used to run errands for me”

They wanted the proof of miracles to satisfy their unbelief

2. Envy – “He’s Joseph’s son; He’s one of our own; We deserve his miracles more than anyone else

Jesus identified the heart issues, and then leaned into the problem

As best you can, filter out the emotion of those who opp you, wade through the anger, get past the surface talk – and identify the issue

Once done – *address* it; lean into the problem

Doesn’t mean come in with guns blazing or a big 2x4

It means – be up front about it, and speak the truth in love

Beating around the bush will only prolong the opp, and make it worse

Ignoring it certainly won’t make it go away

Does you no good to identify the problem if you don’t address it and lean into it

And it doesn’t do them any good either – you’d be withholding truth they need to hear

Truth that may help them grow or change

When you face opp – identify the issue, and lean into the problem; And when you do . . .

Say it like it is (v24-27)

After identifying the problem, Jesus continues in v24-27 with a pretty strong indictment

He was essentially saying to them . . .

Of *all* the people who should believe, *you* should; You know me best

Instead, you’re rejecting me; On top of that, I’m a prophet from God

That claim alone would have angered them

This is no surprise – *No prophet is acceptable in his hometown* (24)

Remember Elijah? God didn’t send him to his own people, but to pagans *outside* Israel

Because his own people were against him

Same with Elisha – He didn’t heal the lepers *within* Israel, but only foreigner fr *Syria*

And he’ll do the same with me because you’re no better than the Israelites of old who rejected God’s prophets

It’s happened before, it’s happening now

That’s essentially the main point of this passage – Jesus is the Messiah, and because those closest to him don’t get it, God will use him elsewhere

This is a veiled reference early in his ministry to the fact that his mission included not just Jews, but the Gentiles also

No wonder they got so angry

Here was Jesus saying –

“You’re just like your forefathers in the worst sort of way”

“They rejected the prophets of God, and so do you”

“And because of that, God will skip over you to reach the “lowly” Gentiles just like he did them?”

“Your special status is not a license to reject the Son of God – it’s still not, today”

You can see why they took great offense to it

But Jesus said it anyway – it was the truth they needed to hear

When you face opp, say it like it is

Don’t try to communicate by implication or innuendo; Don’t mince words

State the problem clearly and concisely, and back it up with facts

But . . . say it as gently as you can

2 Tim 2:24-25 – *The Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone . . . correcting his opponents with gentleness.*

Say it like it is – yes; but say it as gently as you possibly can

Obviously, that’s a fine line – saying it like it is, but saying it gently

3 Guidelines – to make sure you’re always on the right side of that line

1. Leave your anger at home

Be cool; Anger only muffles your message

If that’s what you come to the table with, that’s what they’ll leave with

If can’t say it calmly, wait until you can

2. Leave your salt in the shaker

Say it like it is with words that heal; Words that add value to the situation

The content of your message will cut to the core enough

You don’t need to be throwing salt in on top of the wound

Be very careful of your motive when facing opp

It should be one of healing; Leave the condemnation up to God

3. Leave the door ajar

Say it like it is with the intent to win a friend

Leave the door open to reconciliation

Open to restoring or initiating a relationship with them

Often your worst enemy turns out to be your best ally

Won’t happen if you slam the door and lock it

Becky’s relatives run a rescue mission in the state of WA

Tell the story of being opp by 140 businesses when getting established

One man who owned a warehouse next to their prop. was particularly vocal in his opp

The mission offered to buy it, but he inflated the price to double what it was worth

But they continued to reach out to him and befriend him

And 10 years later, he’s now one of their biggest supporters

Having sold his warehouse to them below market value

When you say it like it is –

Leave the door ajar for a relationship

Leave your salt in the shaker (use words that heal)

Leave your anger at home

Finally, when you face opp . . .

Trust God for the result (v28-30)

Stay the course; Lean into the problem; Say it like it is; Trust God for the result

That’s obviously what Jesus did – he trusted the Father to protect him, and he did

Those people were so mad they wanted to kill him, and even tried, taking him to a cliff outside of town

Can’t be sure if v30 is a miracle, or whether they relented and finally let him go

But either way, God protected and Jesus trusted

When you face opp, you have to do the same because . . .

• Can’t control their *reception* of your message

How they’re going to receive it; Whether they will receive it at all

And if they do, what they will hear most
You don't know what will get through and what won't
What will cut to the core, and what will go in one ear and out the other
You have to trust God for that . . . just like Jesus

- Can't control their *response* to your message
What they will do? Will they get mad? Will they redouble their efforts to oppose you?
Confronting opp is hazardous duty sometimes – people don't take kindly to it
So you never know how they will react
They may curl up and play dead; Only to get up again later
They may lash out at you
They may admit their error and be soft of heart
You never know, so you have to trust God for their response . . . just like Jesus
- Can't control the outcome of your confrontation
Whether you'll escape unscathed, or suffer the scorn of others
Whether your name will be dragged through the mud, or left alone
Whether you'll be reconciled to them, or forever estranged from them

Illustration – HBC-Romania

As a church, we've encountered little bits of opp here and there; Most of it informal
Nothing like HBC-Arad, Romania
Christian Barbosu is the Senior Pastor there, and told me a few weeks back that the
largest Protestant denomination in Romania recently sent a letter to all their churches,
recommending that they *shun* him and the church
Because they worship with contemporary music
They don't teach their petty, man-made rules
They're not a part of their denomination
Nice huh?
Despite that, they have *stayed the course*
Over 500 people call Harvest their church home in Romania
They've *leaned into the problem* as much as they're able
They've *said it like it is* with gentleness; They're *trusting God for the result*

When you face opp just like Jesus, it may not turn out exactly as you imagine it
But if you do the right thing, you can always trust God for the result . . . just like Jesus