
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

March 30, 2014

Uncommon Power (*Location: Galilee*)

“Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee and news about Him spread throughout the whole countryside.

He taught in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.”

Luke 4:14-15 (Common English Bible)

Someone once remarked that we live small lives because we dream small dreams. That may be true. The mistake that is often made is that “small dreams” is what limits us. That isn’t true. What limits any of us isn’t that we dream small dreams. What limits us is that we dream only within the capacity of our own resources and power. We keep a careful balance ledger of available resources and discipline our dreams so as not to create an overdraft. That may be a responsible way to manage a checkbook but it is a poor way to live as a follower of Christ. A life fully given over to the Lordship of Jesus Christ is one that is lived with uncommon power – the power of the Holy Spirit.

Here in these sentences from the Gospel of Luke we read of the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. From the desert, Jesus returns to Galilee where most of His ministry will take place. It must not be overlooked that the beginning of Jesus’ ministry has as a road marker, “Jesus returned.” Returned from where? Begin reading this story at the top of chapter four and what is discovered is that Jesus spent considerable time in the desert facing off temptation. The singular question behind Jesus’ temptation is whether Jesus will trust God to supply His needs. What even the casual reader of this story discovers is that Jesus affirms His unwavering trust in God’s ability to meet His every challenge.

And the challenge would be great. Jesus’ Galilean ministry would not be easy. A common observation by those who visit Galilee today is that it is a serene place, a haven of peace. Central to this area is Lake Galilee, commonly called in the Bible as the Sea of Galilee. This freshwater lake is surrounded by beautiful countryside with numerous harbors and a lively fishing industry. But in Jesus’ day, the entire region teetered on the edge of revolt; it would not take much for Jesus’ preaching to ignite the tensions already present and send the whole region up in flames. Human strength and wisdom would be insufficient for Jesus’ ministry in that place.

Luke asks that we pay attention to how Jesus begins His ministry. Jesus begins “in the power of the Spirit.” Our lives today face no less a challenge than what was present at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. At times we look into the future and we are frightened; economic uncertainty, high cost of education for our children, aging parents with considerable demands we are expected to meet and the list stretches before us. Our strength and wisdom to meet the challenge is insufficient. The result is that we keep our dreams small and manageable. Luke invites us to seek Jesus and the power He lived by; to seek the uncommon power of the Spirit that calms our hearts, steadies our lives and expands our dreams for the future.

Make real in us the life Jesus came to bring, a life that trusts in Your power for the challenges we face this day and all of our tomorrows. This we ask in the certain Name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Doug Hood