

Cultural Effects in Ethical Decisions Sidebotham

The topic for this lesson, cultural effects in ethical decisions, My culture is different than others. How do I sort out culture and biblical belief? And I can't in 15 minutes really answer that question, but I do hope to present a foundation from which we can begin to express and understand sorting out biblical culture and biblical practices principles from from culture and and what we're going to do is go verse by verse through Luke chapter 4 verses 14 through 30 and and kind of exegeted as it applies to tribalism, and particularly tribalism in Palestine at the time of Jesus. So...

OK. So I just want to read the text and then we'll go more or less verse by verse through it.

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

He taught in their synagogues and everyone praised him. 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.

the scroll of the prophet isaiah was handed to him unrolling it he found the place where it is written The spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

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.

And he began by saying to them, today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.

All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. Isn't this Joseph's son? They asked. Jesus said to them, Surely you will quote this proverb to me. Physician, heal yourself. Do here in your hometown what we have heard you did in Capernaum.

I tell you the truth, he continued. No prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time.

when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon.

And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet. Yet not one of them was cleansed, only Naaman the Syrian.

All of the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of a hill on which the town was built in order to throw him down the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

So there's a number of kind of mysterious things in this passage we're going to go through. The first is, They wanted to kill Jesus. This is Jesus returning to his hometown. And They, I mean, this is not just killing someone that you don't like.

Jesus grew up there. So, you know, their kids played marbles together. They went to Sunday school together. They played tag together.

So the hometown turns on one of their own.

This is showing the Jesus film in Indonesia. And I ran into this, the idea that a person's own family can turn on them and try to kill them. We saw.

In Indonesia, oftentimes when someone would come to Christ, their own family would try to kill them.

beat them up, poison them. And it's kind of a mystery to some of us as we think about how can your own aunts and uncles, your own cousins turn on you and want to kill you. It's pretty remarkable what was going on here in Jesus's hometown. I want to look a bit at the tribal geography that Jesus is dealing with. The passage starts out, Jesus returned to Galilee. Now, Galilee at the time of Christ was an area with a lot of cultural diversity, a lot of ethnic tension.

This shows the region in about 830 BC. And I want you to notice you have, Arameans in the area of Damascus, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the kingdom of Edom in the south, the Edomites were going to come back to address what's going on with the Edomites in a minute. But now this is, the Middle East, Palestine at the time of Jesus, and you step there in Galilee, it's a crossroads of many different ethnicities. And so you have this Jewish, probably minority or growing group that's there settled in Galilee. And then you have a lot of Greeks, you have the Roman occupiers.

You have the Syrians and Armenians or Aramaeans.

A lot of ethnic diversity and you have a lot of tension between these groups, especially with the Greeks and the Romans that have a completely different culture than the Hebrew. So Jesus is going through this region of Galilee. In the power of the Spirit and news about him, So Jesus is making a splash in this area with incredible diversity.

And he's making a name for himself. So. Then he.

he claims to be the Messiah down in verse 21. He says today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. He goes to the Isaiah, his audience there in the synagogue, they would have known very clearly that this was a messianic passage. And so when Jesus reads this passage and he says, I am fulfilling this passage, The blinders are off. Everybody knows that Jesus is claiming to be the Messiah when he says this. And what's interesting is the reaction. When they find out that he's claiming to be the Messiah, they really like this. They're really happy.

It says, as he taught in their synagogues, everyone praised him. And it says, after he makes this claim that he's the Messiah, the scripture is fulfilled.

All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips.

One of the ways we know that he's making this claim and they understand that he's making this claim, look at the response. They say to each other, isn't this Joseph's son? Now it's very significant here that Jesus, they recognize Jesus as Joseph's son because Joseph was the heir to the throne. Remember, After he was born in Bethlehem, they had to flee to Egypt because Herod wanted to kill him because that was competition for the throne.

Everybody in Galilee that grew up with Jesus and grew up with the Joseph family around him knew that Joseph's line was the rightful line to the throne. And so here they, they've got this person that's been making a big splash all around the region. He comes to his hometown and he's there right there in the hometown. And they're like, wow we've got the future king of Israel the messiah right here among us and he's one of ours. You know, our kids grew up with this kid. We babysat him. We changed his diapers. This is our own. And we are going to be the best.

the headquarters for the messiah well I want to do a bit of a word study here in verse 15, it says, and everyone praised him. Uh, The Greek here is . That's where we get the word doxology, glory.

So this is not a tepid honoring or praising. This is the actual glorifying the fact that Jesus, they want to glorify this guy as the Messiah. And then in verse 22, all spoke well of him.

You recognize that, and that's where we get the word martyr from. Martyr is a testimony. So they're speaking well of him.

They actually – they begin to talk to each other about, you know, knowing Jesus. Hey, you know, we're related to – we're related to this king this messiah this is our hometown boy they're they're really excited uh to be able to be rubbing shoulders with the coming king and the Jews. Now, I want us to understand something about the cultural expectations that you might have as a hometown of a coming king.

Remember, I said we'd talk about the Edomites. Herod, the king there at the time, Herod Herod the Great, who passed away before Jesus moved back to Galilee. But Herod was not a natural Jew. Herod was an Idumean.

And you see down in this part at the bottom of the screen in the south, that's where Herod is from.

Herod has fortresses, so he's got his temple, or he's got his palace in Jerusalem, and then he's got the Herodium.

outside of Bethlehem, he's got En Gedi, he's got Masada.

So if Herod gets into trouble, he can kind of flee back to his hometown as he goes through these fortresses.

The idea here is King Herod, He's reigning in Jerusalem, but he's connected to Idumea. It's like if you remember during the war, In 2003, when the Americans went into Iraq, Saddam Hussein was from Tikrit.

And Tikrit was Saddam Hussein's hometown. And that was like everything that Saddam Hussein did as the ruler in Iraq.

brought prosperity to his hometown and to his clan. In Indonesia, we had President Soeharto when I was there.

If you were related to President Suharto, man, you were wealthy. You didn't have to do anything. All your bills were paid because you were you know, a cousin or an aunt or an uncle or a relative of President Suharto So there's this cultural concept that if you're in the tribe of the ruler, you're kin for the ruler.

you have access to that blessing. Remember the sons of thunder. When, when Jesus is talking about coming into his kingdom, their mom came and said, Hey, can you, Can one of my kids sit on your right hand and one of my kids sit on the left hand? There's this concept that if you're in good with the Kings, you're going to have part of that blessing. So those are the expectations that are in this hometown and that's probably one of the reasons, the main reason why The people in Nazareth in Jesus's hometown are really excited to have him there and him making these claims because it's going to put Nazareth on the map.

And it's going to bring incredible blessing and power and wealth to the city of Nazareth.

One of the ways we know that this is what the town is thinking is from Jesus's reaction.

Jesus understands their expectations and he responds to them after they say, hey, this is Joseph's son.

He says, you are going to quote this problem to me, physician, heal yourself.

Now, what does physician heal yourself mean? That's a proverb, but we haven't really a clue in today's day and age what that means, except Jesus translated. Jesus tells us what that proverb means.

He says, do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum. So the concept of a physician healing himself is using his own gifts and blessings to take care of himself. Or, in Jesus's case, King Do here in your hometown use your great access to power and wealth and glory to bless your hometown.

do here among us, your own kin, what you've done for others. So, Jesus rejects those expectations.

He he says that no profit is accepted in his hometown. And then he talks about.

How in Elijah's time, it was a foreigner that was blessed. In Elisha's time, it was a foreigner that received the blessing. And Jesus...

categorically rejects their expectations. And that's the point that the people become furious.

So Jesus had a plan that transcended the tribe and transcended tribal loyalty.

This was very threatening. When Jesus said, yeah, I'm not just here for you, my hometown, but I'm also here for the foreigners.

Uh, the people inside on in Lebanon and the people in Damascus, um, that, that The people really, that's when they got angry. So this is a quote from Samuel Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations.

People define themselves in terms of ancestry, religion, language, history, values and customs and institutions. They identify with cultural groups.

tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nations, and at the broadest level civilizations.

People use politics not to advance not just to advance their interests, but also to identify, to define their identity. We know who we are only when we know who we are not, And often when we know who we are against. And so I think this explains and kind of gives insight into how Jesus got crosswise with his hometown.

People know who they are, not just when they have a religious identity, which the people of Nazareth did. They had a religious identity, a very strong identity.

but also when they know who they are against. And the people of Nazareth, the people in Jesus' hometown, they were against the Greeks and the Romans and the Arameans and all of, they had a really strong cultural identity.

their view of the Messiah was to affirm and bring blessing and glory to that identity. And when Jesus indicated, no, My kingdom is going to be transcendent and it's going to go beyond this identity and it's going to include and embrace these people who you are against.

then they had to turn against Jesus as well. So Jesus came in and ministered in a tribal environment and he indicated that he was going to be trans tribal in his kingdom.

And Jesus gives us a model for an antidote to tribalism. And it kind of deals with that concept of inward and outward identities.

we have to wrestle with who we are and we have to wrestle with who we are not. And I think, a good passage to focus on for understanding who we are in Christ. Galatians 3.28 says, There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, There is neither male nor female. And you can see there's a lot of identities there, right? Jew and Gentile, very strong identities, slave and free, very strong personal identities, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

The idea here is that our identity in Christ transcends every other identity.

It doesn't mean that being a Jew or a Gentile isn't important. It doesn't mean that being a man or a woman isn't important.

If you're a mathematician, you understand the concept of infinity, right? As you go to infinity, everything else becomes zero you could have the number of google the biggest you know a one with like a million zeros after it And compared to infinity, that's still going to be zero because infinity is so much bigger than even the biggest number we can imagine.

And so our identity in Christ is grounded in eternity. It's eternal. It's infinite. And it, by comparison to all these other identities, they translate into not being very significant compared to identity in Christ.

So that's the first part, the inward concept, the inward understanding of who we are in Christ and how that transcends every other affiliation.

But then there's this other concept of not just who we are, but who we are not. And I like to apply Matthew 24, 14 to this concept.

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations. And then the end will come. That word all nations is *pantata ethne*.

all *Pantata* the nations. *Ethne* is the word from which we get ethnic groups.

So you could translate this testimony will be to all tribes. Jesus is in an area where there's intense loyalty to the tribe.

And he's saying the gospel of the kingdom is not for my tribe. It's for every tribe, for every tribe in the whole world.

And we in military Christian fellowships, we rub shoulders with people, you know, Army and Navy and Air Force are different tribes, right? In America now, we've got great friction between the Republicans and the Democrats. There's this tribal identity, and there's a lot of hostility between who is my group and who is not my group. But Jesus is for every group.

And so, getting back to the, reflect on where we began. Cultural effects of ethical decisions, my culture different from others, how do I sort about culture and biblical belief. Well, one thing, one foundation as we begin to wrestle with communicating cross-culturally, working with people that are different than we are. It has to be founded in our identity.

and the two components to our identity. One is who we are in Christ. That gives us an incredible security. We don't have our security in you know, being male or female or Jewish or Gentile or Army or Navy or Republican or Democrat. Our security is in Christ. And then The blessing isn't just for ourselves or for our own group. The kingdom of God is transcendent and goes beyond our individual group.

and has not just a desire but an inevitable result that it's going to impact every identity in the world. So this is the outline of where we went and I'd like to open it up.

Cal, I think for questions and answers, comments.

Roger that. I think I'm going to change you from presenter, presenter now.

Unless you had another slide that you're... Let me cut and paste these into the chat screen. Okay, that'd be great. That'd be great. The...

Oh, okay. I see you have a Q&A restriction. Okay. Yeah, we made that.

There we go. So if you want to look at these bullet points, you can see them in the chat screen. Okay, great. And I will leave.

I'd like to say, you know, one of the things that you ended up in that we're to be a blessing to all nations.

Um, and, uh, I think that it's a, an important thought, just like, uh, what was it, Daniel? And they were to be a blessing to even Nebuchadnezzar, the non-Christian nation.

Yeah, but on top of that, you see how that's very threatening. I mean, Jesus basically said, I'm going to be here to be a blessing to everyone. And they tried to kill him for that.

it's very threatening to present a gospel that transcends identities.

Okay, other questions. And we have some discussion topics to come up. I'm going to go to Vic Grazier here in a moment.

and just go to an incident there and I'll put a slide up from that and I'll be taking Bruce down as the presenter in the meantime.

other questions that people want to ask at this time. Hey Bruce, this is Bob Collins. I really appreciated that devotion of That was great. In today's language, I guess you could say the group there tried to cancel Jesus.

Yeah, no. And of course, you see concurrently in American culture, it's There's an incredible, how do you say it, not just cultural culture, but what's the word?critical race theory is trying to I mean, it's great, you know, you have people that are African American, you have people that are Hispanic, you have people that are, you know, gay or lesbian or transgender, but But the attempt to focus on that identity without giving a transcendent foundation for unity is fragmenting the society.