

Not Just Another Story:

Jesus Reimagines the Widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian

From songs and novels to movies and TV, there is something unique about the power of stories and their ability to resonate with our hearts in compelling and moving ways. In the gospels, we see many accounts of Jesus telling parables and re-imagining stories to teach, equip and win the hearts of his hearers. And yet, Jesus wasn't a mere teacher or storyteller, but one who communicated, and is himself, the power of God for salvation. Let's examine what makes the stories of Jesus so unique, powerful and life-giving to us today.

Ice Breaker Question:

What is your favorite way to experience a story? What draws you in and keeps you engaged?

Luke 4:22-30

²² 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.

²³ Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself!' And you will tell me, 'Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'"

²⁴ "Truly I tell you," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. ²⁵ 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. ²⁶ Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. ²⁷ 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."

²⁸ All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. ²⁹ They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. ³⁰ But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

What stuck out to you? Share some observations from the passage.

What is something about how Jesus told this story that might have challenged the hearer's assumptions?

How would people from Jesus' hometown have seen themselves and Gentiles?

What is something about how Jesus told this story that challenges our assumptions?

How does this story show us the true realities of Jesus' life, the kingdom of God & the gospel?

Take a look at the stories of Elijah (1 Kings 17: 7-16) and Elisha (2 Kings 5). How is Jesus a better Elijah and better Elisha?

If we have been changed by the gospel, how does today's discussion speak into our daily living?