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3 Monday

MONDAY, Week 22 of Year

1 Thess. 4: 13 – 18

Ps 95: 1, 3-5, 11-13

Luke 4: 16 –30

How quickly people changed their attitude to Jesus, even in His own town. At first they approved of what He said and were “astonished by the gracious words” that He spoke. At that moment they were, perhaps, proud of Him as their townsman. And they thought they knew all about Him, His family and who He was. But when He began to say things they did not like to hear, they turned against Him and refused to listen. They did not like to hear that God’s favour and power could include “foreigners” to Israel, people who didn’t belong to their own group. They seemed offended by Jesus reminding them that it wasn’t only the nation of Israel that had widows in need, leprosy sufferers to be cured. Jesus was referring to the cure of Naaman, a Syrian, who came to see the prophet Elisha. Naaman himself too was angry when the prophet told him to wash in the Jordan, Israel’s river --- the rivers of his own country, he protested, had far better water! Like Jesus’ townspeople, he had deep-seated unacknowledged prejudices about how God should work, who He should help or heal. We all have such tendencies, to see ourselves, our families, our clan, our country, our religion as being the center of things. And then to think that God should follow our ways of thinking. It’s mostly perhaps a rather harmless fault. But it can lead, in effect, to not seeing God’s hand at work, not hearing the Word He speaks, when He is trying to widen our vision, open our hearts and minds to His world and His other people.

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