

"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath..." Luke 4:16

This is our 3rd day travelling in the Galilee. Perhaps the biggest lesson I have learned is a sense of scale. The Galilee is perhaps 20 to 25 per cent of the total land mass of Israel. Nowhere is far from anywhere. Israel is 5 and 1/2 hours by car north to south. It is 1 and 1/2 hours by car east to west.

Our trek yesterday included Nazareth. We wheeled our way in the bus, along an ultra modern multi-laned highway. We could not see the modern city, population 75,000, nor the ancient village we would shortly visit....pop. 3 to 400 in the time of Jesus.

Suddenly, we were able to see a cliff face. We just rounded a bend in the road and it was there. The limestone cliff was yellow in colour, stained with rust, sheer and rising to the sky. I have a fear of heights. In reverse, I suffer from vertigo when I look up a cliff face at the sky. There was time for neither to occur. It was there and it was gone.

Our tour guide was saying, "This is the place. They dragged Jesus out of the synagogue after he read the passage from Isaiah in the synagogue. They knew he was Joseph's son, the son of the carpenter. He had just laid claim to being the Christ. Worse and perhaps what angered some of them most, he has been teaching there is room in the kingdom for Gentiles (the implication is that there is hope fo Canadians...even Romans)."

They were not amused...his former neighbours. These people had watched him grow to manhood. They intended to kill him. They would throw him off this cliff. My flesh crawled at the thought. I gasped for air. If he did not die from the fall, severely wounded they would stone him until he stopped breathing.

Luke tells us it was not his time. Suddenly he is free of their hold on him. He manages to stand. He turns and just walks away....walks through the crowd. He leaves Nazareth and never returns. His ministry will take him to all of Galilee. And eventually to Jerusalem and the cross, and the third day.

But this cliff is the place where he survived. It was not his time. There was a ministry to perform. Parables to tell. People to heal. Need to be met. This cliff is the place where it was time for Jesus to live, walk, work, touch and change lives. Nothing could prevent it! Every place here has sacred significance.

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Sent in the love of Jesus