



Once Affirmed

October 31, 2021

Luke 4:16-30

Connect:

- Name the top three descriptors you would use to claim your identity. Why did you choose those three?
- It's more challenging to talk about topics of which we have no genuine association. Are you in relationship with anyone who identifies being part of the LGBTQ+ community? If so, how has that shaped your understanding of that community?

Engage

- Read ***Luke 4:16-30***. Do you think it was difficult for Jesus to proclaim his identity in front of people who knew him so well? What do you think enabled Jesus to do this? What enables you to accept yourself as you are?
- Jesus faced fierce opposition both here in his hometown and, later in his ministry, elsewhere. Opposition from those closest to us can be painful. How have you experienced such opposition?
- After this rejection at Nazareth, Jesus finds people who are eager to hear his word in the towns and villages around the Sea of Galilee. What have been your places of rejection and acceptance?
- For families, friends and allies of those in the LGBTQ+ community: What was it like for you when your family member or friend first shared his or her identity with you? Have you ever known people who wanted to, figuratively, hurl that person off a cliff? What was your reaction?
- There are six passages that refer to something of the nature of homosexuality, most in the Old Testament. Many are shared in the context of abusive sexual acts between men and boys or the prostituting of young men which may be the issue more than sexual identity. Jesus speaks of homosexuality zero times. Jesus does speak out against divorce. Why do you think homosexuality has been more condemnable than other things named as such in the Bible but are more culturally accepted here in America (*like divorce*)?

Next Steps:

- Start simple. Greet everyone you meet this week with a smile and/or a kind greeting. You never know who you will encounter – what encouragement they may need. Your simple act may be just the affirmation they need to keep pressing forward in that moment. That alone is affirming God's beloved children.
- Reach out to someone who is, or who is family of, someone in the LGBTQ+ community this week. Ask them to share about their experiences. Ask them to share ways you may show support and encouragement to them, their family, and/or their friends.

Pray:

- *"When it comes to our identity, O Lord, we think of so many things. Draw us first to name our identity as your beloved child, crafted carefully in your image. May all you imagined in each of us come to light to beautify the world in every possible hue of the created order. Thank you for affirming what you made and what you love about each and every one of your children. Amen."*