

# WONDERSTRUCK: CHILDLIKE

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## Luke 4:14-22

14 Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. 15 He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

18 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the  
captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,

19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

20 And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

21 Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.' 22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?'

## REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase, or image stands out to you?
2. Jesus gives us his "mission statement" drawing on the prophet Isaiah. It is meant to frame the meaning of his life and ministry. What do you notice about it? What do you find important or inspiring for following Jesus? What is not there that you might have expected to be there?
3. The people were *amazed* (wonderstruck?). Why?
4. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, a Hassidic Jew who fled Hitler's Europe and settled in the US, wrote about "radical amazement" and "the way of wonder." Wonder is not so much about a feeling about any particular thing (whether a sunset, an unexplained cure, or a kind

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gesture). Wonder is a deep, perpetual surprise that there is anything at all. Wonder receives *everything* as a shocking gift that is bigger and beyond me. Some experiences remind us of that more acutely.

In contrast, the “way of expediency” reduces everything in the world, including other people, to what they can do *for me* (for my own success, happiness, or use).

The way of wonder receives the world as **a gift that is always more-than-me**. Wonder turns us beyond ourselves: toward the **God** who is beyond me, toward **others** who have their own beloved worth apart from me, and toward **the world** with its own beautiful dignity.

How does Jesus embody the “way of wonder” in his mission statement and in his ministry (even his death and resurrection)?

5. Jesus dared claim that God was still up to what God has always been up to: liberating, healing, empowering, restoring. And Jesus claimed it was happening *in himself and through himself*. If the Church is the *body of Christ*, what does it mean to claim this boldly and to live out this same mission now? Why might people be *amazed* by such a claim, mission, and ministry?
6. MLK, Jr. and Rabbi Heschel were close friends. Despite their differences, they shared

overlapping theological convictions and a deep sense that *faith is not faith unless it acts for others*. Like Jesus, both Heschel and King were fueled by the wisdom and words of the biblical prophets. King’s famous I Have a Dream speech quotes from Amos 5:24: “No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until

*justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.”*

Consider learning more about the Civil Rights Movement this MLK, Jr weekend, especially the confluence of *faith* leaders who worked together across racial, religious, cultural, national, and socio-economic differences, to “set the oppressed free.”

For more on King and Heschel, [click here](#) or scan the QR code with your mobile device.



7. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote in a preface to a book of his poems, “I did not ask for success or wisdom or happiness; I asked for wonder. And You gave it to me.”

Take time to pray for the gift of wonder.

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