

Could Jesus Fly?  
Luke 4:16-30

Could Jesus fly? It's a child's question, but demands an adult response. The question came from some of our younger LOGOS kids. Already they have been taught how wonderful, loving, powerful, Jesus is. Already they have learned of his wonder-working power: healing the blind, feeding the five thousand and four thousand, not to mention women and children, raising the dead back to life, walking in the water and so on. So, could Jesus fly, like Superman, perhaps?

It would fit in perfectly with a child's experience of Jesus. Jesus is the son of God. Jesus can do anything. For a child it might be enough for them to know that Jesus is this unique son of God and Son of Man, it is enough for them to know that in Jesus is the revealing and the power of God himself. If a child believes Jesus could fly, then there's not so much harm in that. Could Jesus fly? Maybe so, who knows?

But we adults need to look at the question differently. When we claim Jesus as savior, what are our expectations? Do we expect him to fly in like Superman or even Mighty Mouse, who sings, "here I come to save the day," as he once again pulls off an incredible

rescue?

Or does Scripture describe Jesus' work in a different way?

Temptation: to dazzle with God's power, flying off a mountain or making stone into bread.

But Jesus defines his mission in a different way, and today, in his very first sermon, at least

in Luke, we learn this about Jesus: he is come to proclaim

good news to poor

release to captives

the oppressed go free

And then he mentions that such grace is not just for his friends in Nazareth, but for all, symbolized by those folks down in Capernaum, symbolized by Namaan the Syrian, both an enemy and of another religion, another culture.. At which point the crowd turns on Jesus.

They take him to a cliff, ready to throw him off. And here's where Jesus could have flown away to safety. But he does not. Instead, he dares, he risks, he passes right through the

morass of humanity, come what may.

Jesus had wonder-working power, but he never used it for his own well-being. He never took any shortcuts that would place him apart from humanity. When we are tempted, Jesus understands, because he was tempted, just like us.

I wonder. Was Jesus tempted not to speak truth in Nazareth, for fear of being attacked? He overcame that temptation. But if Jesus had known he could simply fly away from the crowd, then he would not have been tempted at all. His obedience would have cost him nothing.

Now this is both good news and bad news here. The bad news is that Jesus is not like Mighty Mouse or Superman. We probably cannot count on him for a magical rescue from all our challenges and sorrows. True, Jesus performed miracles, and miracles happen even today, but they do not happen on demand and do not seem to happen often. Miracles are up to God, not up to us.

The good news is, we do not have to rely on miracles to experience the full grace of Jesus

Christ. In Nazareth, in his first sermon, he describes who he is as savior. He comes near to the broken-hearted. He offers freedom to those captive to sin or any other malevolent force. His grace extends to us all, even to those considered unclean or unworthy, such as Capernaum folks and Syrian folks. . . And you and me.

Jesus' power is defined not by spectacular flight, but by unconditional relationship with us.

Or to put it another way: Jesus could have revealed God's most mighty power by flying here and there, amazing us and dazzling us, as he soared above your life and mine.

But instead, what Jesus first preaches about God's mighty power in Nazareth, he fulfills on the cross. As he enters fully and completely into our world of pain, suffering, sin, and death. His body broken so we can be made whole; his blood shed so that God's love might live again within us.

Children would be impressed to see Jesus fly. We who are older experience the wonder again and again, that Jesus should love us so much that he would die for us, and believe so deeply that he trusted God to raise him again to new life.

Whatever your burdens, whatever your sin, whatever your doubt, whatever your despair, know that there is new life, new hope, new direction in Christ's love, love taught at the Last Supper and exalted on the cross.

Children might be disappointed in a savior such as this. They would rather dream of a savior who could fly and swoop and soar and do all sorts incredible stuff. But we are not children. We are amazed at a savior who would live among us, and not fly away from us, in the midst of our sin, and die that we might have life eternal and abundant. For ultimately it is not Jesus' miracles that define him, but rather his love and the cross, love and cross which ultimately cannot be separated one from the other. We are amazed at a savior who never, ever, flew away from us, even at the cost of his own life.