

IK Synod Sermon and Prayers
Pastor Nancy Nyland, DEM
3 Epiphany 1.23.2022

Luke 4:14-21

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 4th chapter

Glory to you, O Lord.

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 favor." 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."

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, O Christ.

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In our Gospel reading today, we encounter Jesus returning to Galilee. In the verses prior to this in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus has been baptized in the Jordan and then driven out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Now filled with the power of the Spirit Jesus comes to Nazareth, his hometown. It is the Sabbath. And so what does Jesus do? Naturally, he follows his routine and goes to the synagogue.

On this particular day, Jesus stands up to read and is given the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Jesus unrolls the scroll and finds a certain place and begins to read.

"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,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

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.

Then he began to say to them,

"Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

This is good news, my friends. The good news is that Jesus, the Messiah has come. Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us, has come.....

- To bring good news to the poor
- To give release to the captive
- To give sight to the blind
- To free the oppressed

But the good news reveals bad news, sad news.....

- There are poor people
- There are people who are captive
- There are people who are blind
- There are people who are oppressed

In a perfect world, there would be no poor, captive, blind or oppressed people. But, of course, it was not a perfect world in Jesus' day and it is not a perfect world today.

After Jesus had read from the scroll, he rolled it up and sat down. And He said, "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing"

In other words, Jesus is the one who Isaiah speaks of. Jesus is the one who the Spirit rests upon. Jesus is the one who is the anointed. Jesus is the one who brings the good news, who gives release, who heals, who frees.

And notice that Jesus says today, right now, in your hearing, this scripture has been fulfilled.

In the Greek language, 'has been fulfilled' is in the perfect tense, which means it is an on-going action. The scripture isn't fulfilled once and for all on that day, but it continues to be fulfilled over and over again.

Everyday, since the day Jesus read those words in the synagogue..... everyday.....Jesus has been fulfilling this scripture.

Martin Luther talked about baptism being a daily dying to sin and rising to new life in Christ. Baptism is not a day, but rather a daily event, a way of life. In your baptism you were claimed by God and given a new name....child of God. You were sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

This gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, is a gift that each of us received in our baptism. What an amazing gift, the Holy Spirit!

There is quoted about the Holy Spirit from Winston Persaud, a professor at Wartburg Seminary. It goes like this...."The Holy Spirit does not make up for the absence of Jesus; rather, the Holy Spirit mediates the presence of Jesus."

The Holy Spirit does not make up for the absence of Jesus; rather, the Holy Spirit mediates, brings about the presence of Jesus.

Everyday, since the day Jesus read those words in the synagogue..... everyday.....Jesus has been fulfilling this scripture.

How does Jesus continue to fulfill the scripture he read from the scroll that day? Through us, through you and me. The Spirit dwelling in us brings about Jesus presence into the world, today.

Jesus' first sermon, preached so many years ago, is our sermon to preach and to live.

We GET to bring good news to the poor — to care for the poor, to share with the poor, the economically poor, the poor in spirit, those with poor self-concepts, the poor of heart, the emotionally bankrupt, and the ones who whine 'poor me'. The Holy Spirit working in and through us to bring Jesus' presence into the world.

We GET to proclaim release to the captive — those who are in prisons and jails, those who are captive to sin, those who are captive to the expectations of others, those who are captive to disease and illness, those who are captive to addiction, abuse, past failures, or regrets. The Holy Spirit working in and through us to bring Jesus' presence into the world.

We GET to give sight to the blind — love and care and compassion and truth telling that will open closed minds and lead to discovery of options and choices and bring priorities into focus opening new possibilities. The Holy Spirit working in and through us to bring Jesus' presence into the world.

We GET to free the oppressed — practice love and respect and honor and equity and stand up and speak out for those oppressed because of gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, social class, age. The Holy Spirit working in and through us to bring Jesus' presence into the world.

We GET to do all this.....wow! That is a tall order, a big responsibility. But, we are never on our own.

Surrounded by a faith community, we come to worship and praise, to hear words of forgiveness, to be renewed and filled, nurtured and encouraged, graced and loved, fed and sent out. The Holy Spirit working in and through us and this faith community to bring Jesus' presence into the world.

Surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses of every time and place, we join as saints of God, disciples of Jesus, working together to bring peace and healing and wholeness to a broken world. The Holy Spirit working in us and through this great cloud of witnesses to bring Jesus' presence into the world.

Today this scripture is being fulfilled in your hearing.

Empowered by the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, God's Spirit, working in and through us, the very presence of Jesus comes into the world today and everyday.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance; so we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made.

A brief silence.

You reveal yourself to us in the reading of scripture. Fulfill your word through the faithful witness of your church. Send us out to bring your liberating good news to all people. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

All creation proclaims your handiwork. Teach us to love the intricate and beautiful bodies that you have created. Bless tiny insects, enormous whales, and every creature in between. Sustain species at risk of extinction. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

You desire that there be no dissension among us. Where we are divided in our society, nation, or world, come quickly to reunite us into one body. Ease conflict, dispel violence, and bring an end to war. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Anoint with your Spirit all who seek your favor. Grant provision and justice for people living in poverty, those living under oppression people living with disability, those living with pain, especially those we name now..... God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Build up the body of Christ in this place. Bless the variety of ministries in congregations and ministry sites. Empower us to freely welcome and deeply value each person who enters into worship and ministry among us. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

In thanksgiving we lift before you the saints for whom the promise of salvation has now been fulfilled. Tend to those who mourn. Bring us together in your everlasting glory. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Hear us now as we pray the words that Christ has taught us,

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,

thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

God, who leads you in pathways of righteousness,
who rejoices over you,
and who calls you by name,
✠ bless your going out and your coming in,
today and forever.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go with Christ into a weary world.
Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.