

TODAY!



SERMON NOTES JANUARY 26, 2025

Scripture: Luke 4:14-21

LUKE 4:14-21 (NRSV)

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

¹⁶When 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, ¹⁷and 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, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' ²⁰And 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. ²¹Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

"In Jesus, God's promises are fulfilled and God's purpose is made known...even to us today!"

I. "THE BEGINNING!"

- A. In the beginning of Jesus' public ministry Luke wants his readers to know that it is by the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus ministers in Galilee.
- B. Although Jesus alludes to "things" that he has done in Capernaum, Luke names no "signs" only that Jesus' fame has spread throughout Galilee after his return.
- C. Luke tells of Jesus' ministry being set within the context of Judaism in that he begins teaching in the synagogues throughout Galilee and is praised by everyone!
- D. The Synagogue developed during the Exile in the absence of Temple worship. It became the center of religious life for the Jewish people (a community center, where justice was administered, and even a school) and was formed wherever ten adult males constituted themselves for worship, prayers, reading of Scripture, comments and collecting an offering for the poor.
- E. Jesus is at home in the synagogue, and in Nazareth, among his family and friends!

Where were you "brought up?"

Where did your faith journey begin?

Who are those who have nurtured you in faith?

II. "JESUS IS AT "HOME"!"

- A. Jesus was a man of worship, prayer and study...and it was his custom to participate in the synagogue. He would have stood to read, and then been seated to teach, and comment on the Scripture.
- B. Jesus reads from the Prophet Isaiah (61:1-2)...a familiar passage to its hearers...one of the "servant songs" in Isaiah referring to God's chosen one ("anointed") who will bring to reality the hope, deliverance, restoration and salvation of God!
- C. The "servant songs" speak to a future time when God's promises are fulfilled and God's purpose comes to fruition, and God's reign comes to the earth! Everything will change for those who have waited, and hoped....like the poor, the injured, and the oppressed!
- D. Jesus rolls up the scroll, hands it back to the Hazzan (attendant) and sat down (to teach)...all eyes are fixed on him, wondering what he would say next!

Are we being shaped by worship, prayer, study, and caring for the poor?

Do we believe in God's promises and purpose?

III. "TOO CLOSE TO HOME?!"

- A. Jesus' first word of ministry in Luke's Gospel is "today!" Jesus understands that he is the "servant" proclaimed and with his coming the reign of God has come and God's promises and purpose are fulfilled!!
- B. The reactions are of awe, wonder, amazement and doubt...what does it really mean for the Kingdom of God to be "today"....here and now?"
- C. The ministry of Jesus did, and would continue to demonstrate that God's Kingdom had come in the person of Jesus, and indeed, is still coming!
- D. The proclamation of the "year of the Lord's favor" is equated with the Kingdom of God in Luke's Gospel and Jesus' ministry signaled that the time of God's justice, liberation, and deliverance had come!
- E. All that Jesus did attests to his being the Son of God, anointed by the Holy Spirit and fulfilling the Scriptures.
- F. However, we will see next week that Jesus' understanding of these verses in Isaiah will differ sharply from what those in the synagogue believed they meant!

How are you living in the reality of the present Kingdom of God?

How are we in the church bringing Good News to the poor, release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind and setting the oppressed free?