

## St Pius & St Anthony Homily 3rd Sunday Ordinary Time Year C (2024)

I don't think I can overemphasize how dramatic, a scene we witness in this return of Jesus to his hometown synagogue for service, reading and preaching on Torah/Prophets. I'd say they were on seat's edge 'hanging on every word; he might say, and they end up just hanging..... as he sits back down mute for a moment! Made for TV moment! What is going to happen, as He is sits down silent?

As an approach to sizing up what is happening here, let me step back a minute, with another introduction to it. Often, when a person asks a child about their favorite subject or class at school, a lot of them respond with, "Lunch" or "Recess". So then, people asking kids that question, usually have to reframe it, coming back saying, "Okay, but what class material studied, subject content is your favorite? Art, Music, English, Math, History? I was thinking of a homework assignment, project or activity that was favorite of mine, but I can't remember what class it was part of? Maybe it was assigned in the class that turned out not to be what it sounds like, 'Social Studies'. But this assignment was a favorite of mine, and I think it's safe to assume we all had it. It was called, 'Show and Tell'. We'd all ask each other, what are you going to bring? It was so looked forward to, kind of a 'win-win' for everyone, I'd say. No lesson plan work for the teacher, no test afterward for the students, grading was simple – you did it or not, failing only if you forgot to bring something to share/talk about. The project gave us kids a safe, non-threatening way to learn about classmates, good to get to know others without the awkwardness of one on one 'courting' (you could safely ask later, "You like that too....how about your game, etc?") Yes, it could make you nervous because of the public speaking element, or the personal nature of what we'd call today the risk of public disclosure..... but I remember 'Show and Tell' it being universally loved by classmates.... Couldn't wait until Friday!

Perhaps a little exercise for all of us, do you remember your favorite show and tell? What did you take and talk about it? I lived through a lot of them. I remember once taking a unique collector's rock from my collection, I think it was called mica (muscovite). It was a flat and flaky, translucent kind of rock, and so light but large, it looked like it would be a great water skipping rock- of course never used it for that- I talked about the family trip associated with getting it from a museum. Another time, I took a B/W picture autographed of Nascar driver, Darrell Waltrip, got it at a public appearance of his at a local mall, alongside his Gatorade car 88 on display. But we all could come up with some stories of interesting 'Show & Tells'.

Well, our gospel reading today has Jesus perform something similar, in his local synagogue service. Not '**Show** and Tell', but the other way around, He performed a 'Tell and then Show'!

His tells, happens first by him by selecting a favorite reading of his, from book of prophet Isaiah (61, 58). He chooses it, finding it in the scroll (*proving his advanced familiarity with all OT scripture- not easy finding a passage in a scroll—its not like a book page just open to page 193. No, a scroll is one long sheet-had to be unrolled-but Jesus knows how to get around in it easily enough*). So he reads a Isaiah's passage about good work accomplished by the presence of God. 1) good news proclaimed to poor, 2) captives set free, 3) the blind healed, and a jubilee year of amnesty/redemption of debts.

So that is Jesus' Tell. He reads, the OT scripture promises, and then he suspensefully (instead of talking on and on, in preaching commentary), he sits back down. And when everyone's attention is drawn to this novelty of no more speaking happens, with all expectant eyes on him, Jesus just announces, "Today, this reading is fulfilled in your hearing!" HE means, Ta-Da, this is fulfilled! He is saying, "Jubilee-I am it!" Stay tuned, watch what I do!

Jesus will Walk his talk, he will **Show his Tell**. Jesus will embody, enact what he is teaching. (Gospel of John 1:14 had said it this way, "The Word made Flesh!")

This scene is the highest drama. Like Street Theater. Jesus' message is performative. Live action. Jesus not only says what God can do for us, Jesus takes steps & enacts the promised, saving deeds (Jesus cashes every check He writes!)

So, will we witness these promises fulfilled? As an interesting scripture exercise, we go searching in the gospel of Luke, finding where Jesus makes His own, these words prophesied by Isaiah. He will display their fulfillment.

For example,

1)"to bring *glad tidings* to the poor". Well, in Jesus' version of Sermon on Mount in Luke (*called 'Sermon on Plain' in Luke*) Jesus will first announce that the poor inherit the Kingdo of God, and that the hungry (poor) will be satisfied, and in Luke 9:10-17 Jesus proceeds to feed at least 5,000 people)

2) combining two similar Isaiahan promises "sent me to proclaim liberty to captives" & the verse "to let the oppressed go free". Well, we will hear in Luke 8:29 about Jesus healing a possessed (what is possessed is captive-held)Gerasene Man, it says the man previously was "bound with chains and shackles as a restraint" (imagine strait jacket) and again at Jesus' trial he liberates Barabbas, in Luke 23:18, we hear about Pilate's offer of of Jesus or Barabbas, & Jesus takes his place (*crowd shouts 'Release Barabbas to us'*)

3) the promise of 'recovery of sight to the blind; we will hear in Lk 18:35-43 about a "Blind beggar on road by Jericho" healed & given sight

And then finally,

4) 'to proclaim a year (Jubilee) acceptable to the Lord.' This enactment of Jubilee practices (Leviticus 25:10ff) included, the forgiveness

of past debts, indentured servants were redeemed-released from obligation past land liens were written off (*think of it as a 'tax holiday' or amnesty today*) Well, I find this jubilee work in every word/deed of Jesus, it culminates together nicely in **Luke chapter 19** when Jesus does two things, 1) He cleanses the Temple, running out the money motives-business (Luke 19:45-48)- He is removing the **regressive tax** of temple sacrifice disproportionately afflicting the poor. He's basically says 'Away with this religious debt-Temple Sacrifices as tax) and in that same chapter 19, Jesus recruits Zacchaeus to his team as an agent of generous jubilee practices! Recall that Zacchaeus gave half his estate back to poor (where it came from!) and he repaid back as restitution 4 times over his earlier grifting (Lk 19:2-9) So, Jesus delivers! He enacts all that he says. But what does this mean for us? That if we claim to follow him, to be a disciple of his, then we are also called to practice what he preaches, to implement what he teaches. Fulfill what we are hearing! We are called to be a jubilee for someone else. How do we be Jubilee? Specifically that means first to help others SEE good/what we do/How we interact with them. Secondly, we should help set others free, by stepping in to serve in their place, whatever we can do with our own sacrificial gift/work **for** them. And thirdly, to bring about new beginnings, facilitate other people starting over fresh. This is redemption of debts, resetting our relationships to them by our own acts of forgiveness or by any charity (whatever may be the need) we share with them. In such ways, we also announce and enact/fulfill this mission agenda of Jesus.