

Luke 4: 14 to 30 “Words of God’s Word”

14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

15 He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, **17** and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

18 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,

19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” **20** Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. **21** He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked.

23 Jesus said to them, “Surely you will quote this proverb to me: ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ And you will tell me, ‘Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.’

24 “Truly I tell you,” he continued, “no prophet is accepted in his hometown. **25** I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. **26** Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. **27** And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.”

28 All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. **29** They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. **30** But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

During this season of Epiphany, the baby who was born in the manger on Christmas came to live for us.

During this season, we see who this child grow and begin His ministry

giving us a true idea behind the nature of God. We see Jesus in many different ways during this season.

Three weeks ago the lesson was about the wedding in Cana. In Cana, we saw that Jesus was concerned about his mother and wedding party he had attended when he turned the water into wine.

Yes our Savior spent days, not just a few moments of time during Epiphany with his family. A time where he spent time getting to know them, getting to see them as people and as friends.

And in today's gospel lesson, we see Jesus preach his first sermon. Jesus was invited to open the scroll, turn to a passage in Isaiah and just read it. Then he was to sit down. That is all one who was asked to read was supposed to do. But Jesus does not sit down; he begins to explain the passage, to bring the passage alive for the people.

To fully understand all the significance of this passage, we must first understand the Jewish synagogue system of worship.

In the synagogue the priests were in charge, and a group of non-religious leaders could volunteer to participate only in the readings. So, the volunteer would read only the passage from the scrolls of the Old Testament, selected by the priests during the worship.

This had to be done at the correct time and in a very proper fashion. Afterwards, as the priest would turn and locked up the sacred scrolls, the reader would sit down and in silence, and the community would prayerfully reflect on what that passage read that day, meant to them.

But on this day, it was Jesus' his turn in the synagogue to read the lesson. On this day Jesus did not read what was handed to him. Instead Jesus picked a lesson that was very familiar to the Jews, a lesson that stirred up the hearts and the passions of all Jews.

This passage from Isaiah, chapter 61, verse 2, was a passage of hope, a passage of deliverance, a passage that reminded the Jews that God was indeed still with them, still caring for them. This was a great passage to read, because it was one of the favorite passages from their ancient traditions.

Jesus doesn't sit and reflect. He begins to speak, and speak he does. He begins his sermon with the most amazing sentence, He really grabs their attention by saying, and "Today this scripture is fulfilled." I am the one you have waited for to set you free. You are now free to be forgiven and you no longer need the Pharisee to say you are redeemed or not. If you believe I am the one sent by God, the light is green and you are free to go. Jesus is dropping a bombshell on this congregation.

He is telling them that he is the only way to God's salvation in the world. Through him, God's deliverance, God's promise of hope, God's promise of freedom of forgiveness has come to his people.

Jesus is revealing something about himself; he is making clear his mission, his calling, and his task as he goes about his ministry on this earth. Jesus is setting the bar so to speak of his ministry. Jesus is telling them that he is the Word of God incarnate in the world. Jesus is telling them that as God's word in the world, only he can truly bring hope, salvation and eternal life to all people. Through him there is hope and a better life.

When Jesus said read the scroll and in turn gave the message, those in the temple must have sat for a while and reflected on the word Jesus spoke. True they needed some hope. The Romans are now occupying the region. They were trying to rebuild their temple, but things weren't going very well.

The Jews were discouraged, they thought God had abandoned them. Times were hard, food was scarce and hope for the future was in short supply.

The people were so desperate so full of mourning that they even covered their heads with ashes, and wore sackcloth, the garment of mourning. The nation of Israel has been mourning their favor with God and accepting their fall from favor.

As Jesus spoke he said, God is here, He will deliver, He will save, He will make you a mighty nation again, turn from your evil ways and return to God. When you do, God will keep his promise to bring salvation to the world. This passage is one of hope, of freedom, of release, a passage of salvation.

The part that caused a concern is when Jesus said, "This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read." You are so lucky, because I am the one to bring God's salvation to the world. I am God's word made human in this world... and there is one more thing, you too can speak on God's behalf when you have been filled by the spirit.

Jesus started a riot. Jesus had now weakened the authority of the priests because the words locked in the scrolls are now alive in Jesus. Jesus set loose the word of God. When Jesus led out of the temple, lead to the cliff and then walked through the crowd, they knew the Word of God and God's message was set free. They knew as did the Pharisees Jesus' ministry had begun.

Yes, Jesus is the true word of God and through him, the word can live in all that hear, even outside of these walls. The word of God can now be translated and shared by others, not just to the high priests.

A story says it well: The story is told of four ministers discussing the pros and cons of various Bible translations and paraphrases. Eventually each stated which version, in their opinion which version is the best.

The first minister said he used the King James because the Old English style is beautiful and produces the most reverent picture of the Holy Scriptures.

The second said he preferred the New American Standard Bible because he felt it comes nearer to the original Greek and Hebrew texts.

The third minister said his favorite was the paraphrased the Good News Bible because his congregation was young, and it related to them in a practical way.

All three men waited while the fourth minister sat silently. Finally he said, "I guess when it comes to translations and paraphrased editions of the Bible, I like my mom's translation best. She put the Word of God into practice everyday.

She walked the walk and talked the talk regardless what translation was read to her. So my mom's translation was the most convincing translation I've ever seen."

Likewise, Jesus is putting God's word into practice.

Jesus is putting God's word of salvation into practice in our world, too. This is a passage of hope and salvation for us.

Jesus is reminding us that no matter what we experience in this world He is there for us. Jesus is God's incarnate word in this world of brokenness. As Christians, you are to be priests to one another. You are to help others even in your time of need.

As the word kindles your heart, even as you struggle, Jesus says you will never stand alone while standing on the Word of God. Since you are not alone, you are not to hide and to ignore the world around you, even your darkest hour.

As Martin Luther founder of the Luther church once said, "When we are filled with the word of God we become like little Christ's. Then as we become more like Christ we are to be Little Christ's to one another."

We are to gather each week as Jesus went to the synagogue each week, to hear God's word and to hope and to take it with us throughout the week to lead by example and bring others to Jesus.

I pray this that today's message helps you understand this word does not is to never stayed locked away by an attendant in this holy sanctuary.

This word is to live and in turn it is to be shared by you and me to give hope to this broken world.

If so, as Jesus said, "This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read, it has been fulfilled. Ephesians 3: 20-21 says, Now unto him, who is able to do far beyond all that we could ask or imagine by his power at work within us; unto him [be] the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us pray...

Jesus, our Bread of Life, we are grateful that You have given us peace with God. Because of Your obedience and sacrifice there is no longer a void between us and our Heavenly Father. Lord, You were wounded for our transgressions. You were bruised for our iniquities. Your Name is above all other names. At Your Name every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that You are Lord. Amen