

The Mission of Jesus



Romans 6:3-8 1 Cor 11:23-31 Luke 4:16-21

Pastor Dave Bolte

Trinity Lutheran Church, Litchfield Park, AZ

February 2, 2025

In the Gospel lesson for today, Jesus was in Nazareth, his hometown, worshipping in the synagogue *that He grew up in*, and He read the Scripture lesson and explained it to the people¹.

The Scripture lesson He read was several passages from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Luke 4:18-19

This passage describes why Jesus came into the world. You might say that it is Jesus' "*mission statement*". This passage explains what Jesus does for us as the Savior of the world.

The passage begins with "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.*" That is virtually the definition of the word "**Christ**²". **Jesus** is the One *chosen* by **God the Father** and *anointed* by the **Holy Spirit** to do the work of salvation for us. The words, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me*, echoes Jesus' Baptism where the Holy Spirit descended on Him in the form of a dove.

¹ The irony is that at the end of this story, the townspeople reject Jesus for saying these things and they want to murder him on the spot. Luke writes: "All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. 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. (Luke 4:28-29)." Although not a theme of this sermon today, it is worthy to note the rejection and persecution Jesus faced → and that we as His people will also face rejection and persecution because of Him.

² The next phrase in the verse actually has a form of the word "Christ" in it: "He has anointed me to preach the Good News to the poor." The English word "anointed" is translated from the Greek word *Christ* ἁγιάζω

The work of salvation that Jesus will do is summarized as “**teaching and miracles**” in this passage. First, note the emphasis on *teaching*:

"The Spirit Of The Lord Is Upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach GOOD NEWS to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim FREEDOM to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the LORD'S FAVOR." Luke 4:18-19

There is a *triple emphasis* on preaching and teaching: Jesus' Words are powerful: they are **GOOD NEWS** – Gospel³ – that sets free the poor, the broken, and sinful people; Jesus' words announce to the captives the **grace, mercy, love and favor** of God.

We all need to hear **Jesus' powerful Words**, because we too are poor, broken, and captive; we are slaves to sin who cannot break free on our own. Satan is powerful; temptations tangle us up; guilt crushes us; and our own sinful nature betrays us. We are included in the poor, broken, and captive sinners who cannot break free from our sin or find God's favor on our own.

So Jesus, *filled with the Holy Spirit*, does it for us. His death and resurrection sets you free; this **GOOD NEWS** about Jesus is announced to you: it is **preached**, it is **taught**, it is **proclaimed**; the Gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus **is the power of God** that sets you free from Satan, guilt, death, and your own sinful nature!

Jesus' powerful Word works!
It is Gospel: it is good news for us!

This is reflected in the way we worship as conservative Lutherans. **Our worship is centered on the Word of God.** In Lutheran Worship, the Gospel is **preached, taught, proclaimed**; We hear the Gospel in the liturgy, in our hymns and songs, in Scripture lessons, we confess it in the Creeds and Small Catechism reviews, and it's proclaimed in the sermon! **Lutheran Worship is focused on the Word of God.** Jesus still preaches the Good News to the poor, He still proclaims freedom to the captives, and He still teaches us the Lord's grace, mercy, and love! **Conservative Lutheran worship is marked by the proclamation of the Gospel!**

³ The English words “**preach Good News**” is the one Greek verb εὐαγγελίζω → “evangelical”. Interestingly, the next sentence in this same verse says that “He has sent me . . .” in which the word for “sent” is “apostle”. Jesus is the **Apostle** sent by God the Father to **preach the Gospel**!

That is why, when you worship, this needs to be the best hour of your week. When you get here, be fully alert and ready to hear the Gospel, learn Holy Scripture, and grow in faith. Use the resources available: bring your Bible, and use the sermon worksheet; use the hard copy of the sermon; use the hymnal. **This is not the time to be drowsy, distracted, or bored!** God is here in worship speaking His Holy Word and setting people free: make sure that you are here and fully alert and eagerly engaged to hear, believe, learn, and grow in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ⁴!

The way that Luke wrote this account of Jesus in the synagogue, the emphasis is **not only** on *Jesus' teaching* --- but also on His miracles⁵.

"The Spirit Of The Lord Is Upon Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of **THE LORD'S FAVOR**." Luke 4:18-19

Throughout Jesus' ministry, He would use His mighty, divine power **to make the blind see, to heal the sick, to make the crippled walk, to raise the dead, and to cast out demons**. Jesus' miracles "set free" those who are oppressed!

Jesus has promised to work miracles in **two places** in your life: in the **Baptism** and in **Communion**; in the water and in bread and wine. That is why in conservative Lutheran Worship we focus on the Sacraments --- because those are the **only** two places where Jesus promises to work miracles; they are two places where God promises to forgive your sins.

In the water of **Holy Baptism**, Jesus raises the dead as spiritually dead people are given new spiritual life. When you were baptized, your sinful nature was

⁴ The New Testament teaches us to think of God's Word as being spoken fresh and new each and every time, as if it's the first time it's ever being spoken. In other words, God's Word is not an ancient, dusty text that has little meaning to you today. Rather, it is the very voice of God, speaking powerfully and relevantly to you and your life. Ultimately God's Word is doing one of three things: it's calling you to repentance, it's creating or strengthening your faith in Christ, or it's teaching you how to live holy and godly lives of faith. Be alert and pay attention whenever the Word of God is proclaimed, because it is fresh and new, powerful and effective, every single time!

⁵ Luke 4:14-20 is a **double chiasm**! A "Chiasm" is an ancient way of writing that looks like the Greek letter "X" (Chi) – with each line making its way down to the center main point, and then the following lines working their way outward with matching words or ideas from the corresponding lines above the center main point. The double main points are **Jesus' teaching**; and **Jesus' miracles**! These are the two key points of Jesus' "mission"; they are the focus of conservative Lutheran Worship, and they are important for us to learn, know, and understand today!

drowned; it was crucified with Christ, and a *New Creation* emerged; you were *Born Again* and given *New Life* in Christ. Because of Baptism you will not die in your sins, but you will live forever in the Kingdom of Heaven. Holy Baptism is a miracle where *Jesus raises the dead*; He gives you new spiritual and eternal life!

In **Holy Communion**, Jesus works a miracle as *He gives you His very Body and Blood for the forgiveness of sins* when you *take and eat* and *take and drink* the bread and the wine. The miracle is that Christ Himself is really present here for you, to forgive your sins, and to assure you of His love.

Jesus has promised to work miracles in **two places** in your life: in the **Baptism** and in **Communion**; in the *water* and in *bread and wine*. That is why in conservative Lutheran Worship we focus on the Sacraments --- because those are the **only** two places where Jesus promises to work miracles that forgive your sins⁶.

As Jesus read the Scripture lesson and preached to the people in Nazareth that Sunday, He revealed to us who He is and what He would do for us. **He is the CHRIST**: He is *filled with the Holy Spirit* to preach the Gospel and work miracles – both which **“set people free”** from Satan, sin, and death!

Jesus continues to preach the Gospel and work His Sacramental miracles among us – **to set us free** from Satan, sin, and death!

As Lutheran Christians, we value, cherish and fully engage ourselves in Jesus’ Word and His Sacraments: where He continues to preach the Gospel and work miracles in our midst! Amen!

⁶ You have to be VERY careful when you hear about alleged personal “miracles”, no matter who tells you about it. You have no way of knowing whether they are from God or if it is Satan at work to lie and deceive you. The Bible is full of warnings, for instance, Note 2 Corinthians 11: 14-15 : “And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness.” (Note similar warnings in Mark 13:21-23, 2 Thessalonians 2:10, and Rev 13:13-14). Modern day “miracles” are not of the same nature as Christ’s miracles; they never point to Christ and His Gospel; and there is no way to verify if they are from God or not. DO NOT BE DECEIVED! It is best to completely ignore and dismiss any **“personal miracles”** you hear about. Jesus promises to work miracles only in two places: His Water (Holy Baptism) and His Meal (Holy Communion). Our faith rests God’s Word and Sacraments: where God places His promise of forgiveness as He teaches and works miracles in our lives. We do not need nor rely on any other miracles.

Lord Jesus,
you are chosen by God the Father
and filled with the Holy Spirit to be
our Savior.

We thank you for Your Word and
Sacraments by which you work
salvation, peace, and life in us.

Help us to acknowledge that, and
to fully engage in your Word and
Sacraments every opportunity we
have. Send the Holy Spirit to us, so
that we may ever learn and grow
in faith and knowledge. Amen!

Luke 4:16-21

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and 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 proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

1 Corinthians 11:23-31

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, **24** and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." **25** In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." **26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. **27** Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. **28** Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. **29** For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. **30** That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. **31** But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged.

Romans 6:3-8

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.
