

Prayer of the Day:

Almighty God, you sent your son to proclaim your kingdom and to teach with authority. Anoint us with the power of your Spirit that we, too, may bring good news to the afflicted, bind up the brokenhearted, and proclaim liberty to the captive; through Jesus Christ, your son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Verse of the Day:

Alleluia. Jesus went through Galilee, teaching, preaching and healing every disease. Alleluia.

Sermon Text:

Are you tired of the bad news? I know I am. It would seem that every news feed and every news station is simply filled with it. Our government seem more interested in fighting with itself than accomplishing much these days. The nations of our world seem to be more and more anxious and conflict seems

looms around every corner. Sickness and death aren't slowing down either. Even with all our advancements it would seem we are still unable to stop the inevitable march of time and the all-consuming grasp of death. Maybe it's all of it combined with the fact that the snow came down in buckets and now the cold has really settled in but it is all enough to really wear a body out isn't it?

No doubt Israel understood our plight and then some. Oh, maybe not the snow and the crazy cold, after all it's the desert but the bad news was probably wearing thin. Under the thumb of Roman rulers who often treated them like dirt, dealing with the oppression of the taxation that came with it, hospitals didn't even exist yet so sickness and death were just a way of life. But then in walks Jesus and while most of the people of His day didn't recognize it, finally mankind gets a win, a massive dose of good news worth listening too and holding on to for dear life, literally. Today, Jesus announces it, All God's promises are kept in Him!

After Jesus' baptism at the Jordan, He returns to Galilee. He begins what will become his regular cycle of teaching and preaching going to the synagogues and speaking to the people gathered around. One Sabbath day the scroll of Isaiah was handed to Him to read. As it turns out there was another time in Israel's history when things looked pretty bleak and the news wasn't so good. Sin had turned the people from God to themselves and to the idols around them, not unlike Israel of Jesus' day, certainly not unlike the world of our day. But in the midst of doom and

Text: Luke 4:14-21

¹⁴ Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. ¹⁵ He taught 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. And he stood up to read. ¹⁷ 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 preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 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 and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." - NIV

gloom, deportation and the loss of house and home, God commissions Isaiah to speak beautiful words.

Jesus opens the scroll and reads, *“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

This is what Jesus was appointed for. At His baptism the Father announced Him to be the Son of God who had come for this very purpose. He will proclaim the Good News of God. Good News! That’s right, Good News, in a world full of sin and its dreadful consequences there will be news worthy of the title “good” and it will be extended to the poor, to those who cannot afford to attain it on their own. Jesus is the announcement of freedom for the prisoners for the captives of sin and the slaves of Satan, there is freedom in His blood. For the blind fumbling and stumbling in the darkness of sin, the sight of faith will focus on Him. For the oppressed, those destined only for the eternal punishment of hell, complete release from condemnation and new and lasting hope. The year of the Lord’s favor is at hand as God finds His favor in the perfection of Jesus. It is exactly as Jesus proclaims it. All of Scripture finds its fulfillment in Him.

Bad news is stifling. As it comes to us day in and day out it can be so easy to give up hope. It can be easy to think that this News announced by Jesus is something far off and distant. Too good to be true. Of course, Satan’s last ploy is to try and make us believe it is not meant for us. That our sin is somehow too bad to be forgiven. Ah, but nothing could be farther from the truth. This is the season of Epiphany!

At His birth the angels proclaimed it, the birth of good news of great joy that was and is for all people (cf. Luke 2:10). Later the Magi would personify the truth once more (cf. Matthew 2:1-12). This is the beauty of Jesus final statement this morning. Isaiah’s fulfillment wasn’t in the return of Israel from Babylon but in the coming of the Christ. As He extends His saving work to all.

Notice that the Spirit is mentioned now twice in our lesson. In His gift of faith, we are grafted into the vine of Christ, the forgiveness which He extends. Trapped in the darkness of our sin, Jesus sees our poverty, He sees our captivity, He sees our need and He extends His help, His forgiveness. This gift is for us, for you, for me!

This is what the season of Epiphany is all about as we see Jesus as He reveals Himself to us. Behold Him as He saves. Rejoice as He produces the fulfillment of the promises of the Scriptures. Bask in the glory of the forgiveness He freely hands to you, which then gives you the privilege to hand out to others. Jesus does it all through His means of grace as He grants His Spirit to us as that Spirit wrought gift of Faith lays hold of Him and tells us that in the work of Jesus we are truly free. Free from the guilt of our sin, free from the slavery of Satan and His power, free from a death that led to hell. Finally, free to live, to live forever with God now in faith and someday in perfect glory in heaven.

I have grown tired of the constant barrage of bad news in our world today. Sin and its consequences seem to rage everywhere and if we are honest within us as well. It’s why Jesus brings us what we need. Good News of real and lasting freedom founded on the forgiveness He has won for us as He fulfills the Scriptures. Yes, **ALL GOD’S PROMISES ARE KEPT IN CHRIST!** Amen!