

## Jesus' Timing

King of Glory Lutheran Church

Pastor Ruth Ann Loughry

January 22-23, 2022

Year C: Third Sunday after Epiphany

Luke 4:14-21

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

<sup>16</sup>When 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, <sup>17</sup>and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

<sup>18</sup>“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,

<sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

<sup>20</sup>And 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. <sup>21</sup>Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

*With the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus begins His ministry with this sermon. He is the embodied God sent to proclaim and enact the Good News.*

God’s grace and peace be with us all. Amen.

Timing is everything. The punch line for a joke, the feds and the interest rate, the speed at which our food is cooked and delivered to our table at a restaurant.

Timing is everything.

Have you ever seen the moment a child born deaf gets hearing aids and hears his mother’s voice for the first time? Have you ever seen the moment an inmate gets released from prison after years of incarceration for a crime they didn’t commit? Have you ever seen an Olympic skier come in first place within a millisecond of the second-place skier? The joy on their face reveals they know without a doubt that today is their moment. This time is their time.

So, it was with Jesus on that day. He's in His hometown synagogue. The people there know Him. They watched Him grow up. As a faithful Jew, Jesus goes regularly to synagogue. Yet on this day, the attendant hands Him the scroll and He choose the passage from the book of Isaiah.

It didn't take any longer for Him to say than (me) simply reading it through.

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“Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

That was it. That was all. Yet it was everything. It was His time.

God's Spirit had already formed and shaped Jesus' life up to this moment. It came upon Him at His baptism. The Spirit was with Him in the wilderness empowering Him to survive forty days and nights and resist the devil. Filled with that power, He began to preach and teach in the whole region of Galilee and then came to His hometown of Nazareth. The Spirit told Him it was time. This was the moment, that Jesus' ministry would begin. He announced it within His own community, to the people He knew. The Spirit was upon Him.

He stood up to read. It was what Jesus read that mattered.

For what Jesus read from Isaiah wasn't really about the assembled congregation. It really isn't even about you and me. Listen...

The Lord has sent me to proclaim Good News to the poor.  
to proclaim release to the captives  
recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free...

None of us are truly poor. None of us are actually captive or blind or oppressed. This ministry won't be about us. It might not even be about the folks Jesus was talking to. For the Spirit would guide Jesus to go to peoples near and far, the ones who were truly lost. People who were literally blind. God's children who were

dying under Roman occupation. Prisoners that needed to be released. The Spirit upon Jesus would take this Good News farther than those listening could even imagine. Because Jesus understood.

He understood what His mother Mary understood when she sang her Magnificat.

“(The Lord’s) mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
<sup>52</sup>He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
<sup>53</sup>he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

God was going to do a new thing which would turn upside down the world’s norms. It would reverse the expectations of all who came into contact with the Savior. Jesus was going to bring salvation to everyone who didn’t expect it.

Therefore, it mattered that Jesus chose the prophet’s words from Isaiah to introduce His ministry. This was His inaugural address. It was his mission for ministry.

Yet it didn’t matter what He read. It was who He was.

“The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.” They were sizing Jesus up. We know that feeling, don’t we? When we’re watching a debate, we size up the candidate by what they say and don’t say. By how they act and their voice inflection. Do they seem credible and talk with integrity, or does something about them seem, ‘off’?

Everyone was watching Him. Jesus knows it. It doesn’t faze Him. He says it without saying it. “I am the One. I am He.”

Instead, Jesus says, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” It’s not truly what He says, but who Jesus is. He is the embodiment of God. With the Spirit of the Lord upon Him, Jesus proclaims that now is the time. Now is the moment. His ministry begins, and He is God.

That was the moment then. We truly believe that the Word of God is a living Word, Jesus, alive with us every time we read the Bible or hear its words spoken. Therefore, that moment in the synagogue is also this very moment today.

Whew... Oh my.

Can it be true Lord? Really? Because if we're honest, there are times when we have our doubts, Lord. We're not telling you anything you don't already know, but we have countries on the brink of war. Your children, O God, your precious children, are going hungry. Their parents are so poor there is no food or jobs to be had. People of color are still captive to the systems that do not want them free.

Yes, at times, dear Jesus, we too want to size you up to see if what you say, is true.

Yet, we walk by faith and not by sight. We believe you from your past actions and promises kept: then and now. We trust you, God, that your timing isn't ours. We trust you still set captives free and bring sight to the blind. We trust you are the Savior and your timing is everything. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for helping us believe.

Amen.