Luke 4:14-21               The Spirit of the Lord is Working          Grace & Ada          1/27/2019

Imagine this.  Someone comes to your door and says, “Good news! You have won the Publishers Clearinghouse sweepstakes!” Wouldn’t that be wonderful?  (Don’t tell them that you never entered!)

This may take a little more imagination.  Imagine that you’re in jail.  There is no stated time limit to how long you may be in jail because it’s not an American jail.  Maybe it’s in a predominantly Muslim country and you’re in jail because you’re not a Muslim but a Christian.  An infidel.  Then one day someone you’ve not seen before comes, unlocks your cell and says, “You’re free to go.”

Wouldn’t that be wonderful?  Fabulous! Stunning! Even shocking!  Then after the initial shock, you would get out of there ASAP and probably take the next flight out to the USA.  At least I would.  I would return home ASAP!

In today’s Gospel, Jesus returns home to Galilee, then Nazareth.  For us it would be Fauquier then Casanova or whatever nook in the county you live in.  From where did Jesus return?  The wilderness after being tempted by the devil for 40 days.  He returned to Nazareth and began to teach in the synagogues in Galilee and He received praise from everyone.

Then He came to Nazareth, His hometown and He reads from the scroll of Isaiah which was given to Him and He reads Isaiah 61:1-3.

Anointed by the Spirit to bring:

1. Good news to the poor
2. Release to the captives
3. Recovery of sight to the blind
4. To let the oppressed go free AND
5. Proclaim the year of the lord’s favor

He ends by saying, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

This scripture has been fulfilled…  I am going to get grammatically technical for the next few moments so don’t tune out please.  The verb tense used here for “has been” is in the Perfect Tense.  It is important to understand this in knowing just what this means in Koine Greek, the Greek of the New Testament.  The Perfect Tense is “something in the present state resulting from a past action.”  It’s something that has begun in the past, but which has continuing effect in and for the present.  It’s sometimes called the Past Perfect.

An example might be seen in Ephesians 2:8 which says, “By grace you have been saved through faith…”  If it said were saved, it would have the impact of being rescued say from a river or a fire.  It happened once in the past and is done.  It is in the past.  You were saved one time.

However, have been saved has the impact of being saved in the past and that act of being saved continues to have effect even today.  Past action – saved ----- continuing result – still are saved.

A different example, one you hear each week but hear incorrectly spoken is this.  In our liturgy, the Celebrant says, “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”  It is a line which comes from 1 Corinthians 5:7 which is better translated, “Christ, our Paschal Lamb, has been sacrificed…”  Christ our Passover IS sacrificed is simply present tense and it sounds like we are sacrificing Christ right now, thus the Roman Catholic “sacrifice of the mass.”  Christ has been sacrificed, in Koine Greek, is the perfect tense, that is, “something in the present state resulting from a past action.”  It’s not that the sacrifice still continues but rather that the sacrifice of the past still has a result continuing into the present.

Does this make sense?  So why have I seemingly digressed into such a technical language usage here?  In order to point out something important in this text which, which occurs two times.

The Spirit!  Jesus returned to Galilee filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.  Jesus read and then said it was fulfilled, that “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me…”  Jesus said that this has been fulfilled.  It has occurred and continues to have effect, result in the present time.

The anointing of the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon us and among us.  A past action with continuing results.  This is important for us, here and now, today!

The Spirit did not come just upon Jesus.  The Spirit came upon the apostles and other disciples in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost – more about that in 5 months.  The Holy Spirit of God is also upon us.  A past action with continuing effect and result.

We too are anointed:

1. for ministry
2. in the name of Jesus – that is on his behalf
3. in the Power of God’s Holy Spirit!

Every one of us who believes in Jesus Christ and has been baptized.  Every one of you!  Allow me to read connected snippets of todays epistle lesson from 1 Corinthians 12.

1 Cor 12:12-31

12For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

18… as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as He chose.

25  … that …the members may have the same care for one another.

27Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 28And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. …

Are you a prophet?  You could be.  Maybe a teacher.  Maybe you perform deeds of power – AKA miracles.  Maybe you are gifted to be used for healing.  Perhaps for forms of assistance, that is, helping others / serving others.  Maybe you do behind the scenes things so others can do up front things.  What about forms of leadership, which a different translation calls administration?  You’re in there – somewhere.

Today, we will focus on allowing the Spirit to move among us for healing.  Healing is not something we do but something we participate in along with the Holy Spirit.  Some here today have received that gift and will exercise it along with those with the gift of faith along with all present here who can pray.

We are the body of Christ.  Today we will exercise healing as a body, not just as those who are specifically gifted in the area of healing

WE are anointed and called to bring good news to the poor, though maybe not in the way Publishers Clearing Hose does it.  We can set the captives free from some captivity other than a jail.  Today we will ask God to pour out His power and grace for healing through His Spirit because this is the only way healing ever occurs.

So right now Holy Spirit, we call upon You to be released in power in our midst.  We ask that we may participate with You today in the ministry of healing and we pray that in all that occurs here today, You God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit would be praised and glorified!  We ask in the precious and holy name of Jesus.  Amen

To begin our time of prayer, let us begin with the Confession of sin found on page 360 in the BCP.

Priest and people together

Most merciful God,  
we confess that we have sinned against you  
in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done,  
and by what we have left undone.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.   
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.   
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
have mercy on us and forgive us;  
that we may delight in your will,  
and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Priest says

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

I invite you to come forward to pray for others, to be prayed for yourself or both.  I also invite those of you who remain in the pew to pray for us up front and that the Holy Spirit will be active in a mighty way.