



ALL SAINTS

PRESBYTERIAN

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOR ALL SAINTS SMALL GROUPS

“A Violent Epiphany” | Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt | January 27, 2019

Luke 4:18-19

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, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

John 1:46

Can anything good come out of Nazareth?

Mark 2:17

Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick I came to call the righteous, not sinners.

Matthew 13:58

And He did not do any mighty works (In Nazareth), because of their unbelief.

James 4:6

Tho God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Ephesians 4: 21-32

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin, do not let the sun go down on your anger and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Matthew 5:3

Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Tim Keller

The Gospel is for the spiritually poor, especially the actually poor and the Gospel comes through those that are willing to be both.

Intro Question

Often we expect Jesus to be someone and find out otherwise because an Epiphany occurs. Something happens in our life and we see Jesus in a way we have never seen before and it shocks us. This epiphany demands an entire reorientation of our lives. Nazareth experiences an Epiphany in Luke 4. To whom is Jesus actually sent with good news and how does this affect your response?

Background

Jesus ministry comes to Nazareth, where He was raised. On the Sabbath, He reads from Isaiah 61, fulfilling the scripture and proclaiming the good news. Jesus says everything this scripture promises He will now accomplish: good news to the poor, liberty to the captives, sight to the blind and liberty to the oppressed. Nazareth marvels and receives this as good news (for only themselves and no one else). Except they don't see themselves as anyone Jesus just mentioned.

Jesus begins to lift the veil in v.23 and says wait until I tell you what my kingdom actually looks like. He recites two stories from the OT where God blesses a foreigner (Gentile) among the many widows in Israel. Then God blesses a foreign army general (Syrian) of all the people He could have healed from leprosy.

Nazareth did not like Jesus words as they focused on ethnocentrism - attitude that one's own group (Israel) was superior and should only receive God's blessing. They were righteous, noble, they worshipped God, went to synagogue, gave tithes, fasted. Religious. But they aren't the poor, prisoners, oppressed or blind. Jesus wanted to reconcile all peoples, not just Israel. It bothered them that Jesus stopped short in Isaiah by initiating the age of salvation. They were so eager for the Messiah's coming to wreak vengeance on their enemies as they were for Him to bring salvation ONLY to Israel. They hated their oppressors and Jesus was healing opposition and not Nazareth. Nazareth's chosen place as Israel had not produced spiritual poverty but pride and scorn.

They were not initially offended by Jesus. Why the sudden change - from marveling to rage? Epiphany's of Jesus are not easy. If Jesus' words are not offensive to you, perhaps you are only seeing Him in a way that pleases you.

We live in days of great grace and patience - the already but not yet. God withholds wrath and judgement. When the day of salvation is over, the day of vengeance will arrive. Isaiah 61:2 will be fulfilled. Until then, may we learn the virtues of spiritual poverty: powerlessness in ourselves, helplessness before God, moral uncleanness before God, recognizing every and all joy that exists is from God alone.

Discuss:

1. Is the ministry and words of Jesus ever offensive to you? Who are the oppressed today that Jesus wants us to partner with Him in freeing?
2. Is our own religiosity or claim on Christ clouding a response to share the Gospel with others outside our daily routines?
3. Does the supremacy of God and glory of Christ radically shape our acting in "all things for joy of all peoples"? Including our enemies or oppressors?
4. Where do you see the ministry work of Isaiah 61 being worked out? Which ones are you engaged with and where can you do more?
5. How can we remain spiritually poor without being self-deprecating or joyless?
6. Are you too familiar with the truths of the Gospel that you don't let it affect your own heart anymore?
7. Read Ephesians 4 and meditate on this passage.

Conclusion/Application

Heavenly Father, search me O God and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. Teach me to walk humbly with you. Amen.

By: Blake Thompson

