

Pastor Jon's Sermon from January 22/23, 2022

Text: Luke 4:14-21

“Jesus Job Description... Ours Too”

My son, Eli asked me if I was going to address the Packer's loss at church today. All I can say is to quote scripture, “The Lord binds up the broken hearted.”

As some of you know, I spent my first career in Human Resources at Wausau Insurance Companies in Wausau, right out of college. Human resources prepared me for my job as a pastor. I learned about the human condition... how humans and organizations treat each other. Sometimes the only flexible resource in the equation were us humans.

Knowing that this is my background...I like to refer to our Gospel for today in Luke 4 as Jesus' job description

After Jesus' baptism he goes out on the road to start his public ministry. He starts in his hometown of Nazareth. But soon after he teaches, he will be met with resistance. They want to run him out of town. It is hard to be prophet in your hometown. They were stuck in their thinking... “Isn't this Joseph's son?”

Jesus' popularity was spreading throughout Galilee. Luke tells us Jesus' custom was to go where the people gathered to hear God's word... in the local synagogues. This was Jesus custom to show up where people gathered. He hung around synagogues. And as a Rabbi, this makes sense.

So, the first take away for us in this text is that Jesus showed up where people were. Why is this important for us? You take church everywhere you go. At home, work, school in public. We are ambassadors for the Lord. As the times change and Covid has changed people's worship patterns, expecting them come to our building might not be as realistic anymore. We need to find ways to meet people where they are at. Keep in mind, you may be the only Bible they ever read. Technology has helped us greatly.

While in the synagogue, Jesus was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Jesus meticulously unrolled the scroll and found the place he

was looking for. He read from Isaiah 58:6 and Isaiah 61:1-2. Read from the Bible.

Then Jesus rolled up the scroll. This would have taken some time. It heightened the drama. He handed it back to the attendant and sat down. When a rabbi sits down, this was an indication he or she would preach or teach. Then Jesus preached the shortest sermon ever preached. “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” Boom. Mic drop.

Here Jesus shares the Words of the prophet Isaiah to reveal his identity and mission. He uses the Word of God as his guide and mission... announcing good news to those struggling economically and on the fringes of society, hope to those who are imprisoned, healing to those without sight, a lifting of the burden from those who are weighed down or oppressed, and even the in-breaking of a holy year of favor.

All these things are fulfilled in Jesus... and Jesus says this happens today. Starting now.

Are any of you struggling economically? Your neighbors? Are you finding yourself on the margins of society? Do you know people who are? Can you identify with being imprisoned? In our confession and forgiveness, we say that, “We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves.” We are imprisoned by our own sins. Are we physically blind or metaphorically blind? Blind to our privilege perhaps? Blind to our sin? Blind to log in our own eyes as we point out the sins or slivers in other’s eyes? Are you feeling weighed down or crippled by your debts?

Today Jesus promises to deliver liberation to you and to our broken world. Today. If this is Jesus’ mission. This is our mission. We are to spend time with people on the margins and lift them up.

For example, we have been called recently to walk with an Afghanistan family through an organization called World Relief Fox Valley. Our church formed a Good Neighbor team that has been trained and we will help a family with nothing get settled in a home in the Fox Valley. This is a 6 month commitment to accompany this

family that we don't even know yet. Imagine having only the clothes on your back and leaving your home country, family, and all that you know. You all have been so generous so far. Thank you, church. We will keep you posted.

So what does our job description look like as Christians? Job title would be Follower of Jesus. Job purpose would be to share the good news of Jesus with all people and creation in word and deed. Job duties To Love God and love your neighbor as yourself. And to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Qualifications, baptism and faith in our Triune God. Salary range... priceless. Benefits: forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and protection from death and the devil.

Amen!