

You Want Me to do What??

Luke 4:14-21

Our faith history is a long history, an evolving, growing, developing, reforming history. It is filled with stories of a people who learned how to move out into the future in faith because they could look back and see that God had always been with them, to lead, to nudge, to shelter, to restore.



Today, we see Jesus, looking back in order to be informed about what shape his life, his future would take. He comes to Nazareth, his family's hometown, and he goes to worship in the synagogue. He is given the privilege of reading the scripture. He chooses two brief texts from Isaiah. Then, having read them, Jesus sits down, the signal that he plans to talk about the texts. Whatever else he might have said that day, we do have one line of his "sermon", a line so profound that the author of the Gospel recorded it, that its message might never be overlooked or ignored. "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

So, what was being fulfilled before the people that day, in Nazareth? "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, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

If we continue reading in Luke, we learn that at first, the people were amazed with and spoke well of this hometown lad, turned preacher. But then, things took a nasty turn. As Jesus continues to instruct them, "all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill ... so that they might hurl him off the cliff." What happened, I wonder? Where did Jesus go wrong?

Perhaps it was because Jesus challenged his listeners, his townsfolk to realize that the mission he took on for his life was also their mission. Perhaps he dared them not only to understand God's intention for His world, but to adopt that intention for themselves. Perhaps, more than likely, Jesus told his neighbours that they were to open themselves to God's anointing, to God's spirit, so that they could/would spend their lives repairing what had been broken, bringing good news to the poor, proclaiming release to captives, providing sight to the blind and ensuring the freedom of the oppressed. Perhaps, more than likely, those listening didn't want that much information, that much challenge in their lives.

Today, in the Spirit, Jesus continues to come to us - calling us, urging us to be his body, to be a people who spend ourselves in responding to God's invitation to be co-creators with God. Jesus calls us to live so that the world where God has planted us will come to know Him, come to know and love His Word, come to rest within His love, come to see the light in the darkness and be committed to shedding that light ever wider until it embraces and enfolds the entire world, until it touches, heals and lays hold of every heart.