

“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 favor...

Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:18-21)

In 2008 when I arrived in Jerusalem, I was impatient to visit and see the sanctuaries of the Holy Land. The first church, which our dean guided us towards, was the Saint James Cathedral, where all of a sudden, my heart and soul began praying and I had a unique feeling deep in my heart. The holiness of that sanctuary permeated into my soul and forced me into a deep state of prayer. Part of this is because of the fact that Saint James Cathedral is historic in nature and gives off a hue of such rich history that cannot be denied by common spectators. Another reason why I fell into such a deep state of prayer is because of the undeniable fact that this is a place where the Son of God, his disciples, and Virgin Mary all had visited and sanctified. That was the place where the Scripture came true for me on that day. I met God and from that day on my life started to change.

Today’s Gospel reading is about one of the first public acts of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of Luke. Christ mostly preached down in Judea but Luke begins with the ministry of Jesus in Galilee, with an incident that launched his ministry – his preaching in the synagogue in his own hometown of Nazareth.

He had become well known throughout the region for his sermons in the synagogues and every one praised him. Think of the excitement when he returned to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home and went to the Synagogue on Saturday as he had done all his life growing up. The people were ready to hear him, they had always known him, Joseph and Mary’s Son. Imagine the excitement in the Synagogue that day. Jesus was back home and since he was to be the teacher that day, the scroll was handed to him, and he stood up in front of all of these people whom he had known his whole life, and read from the prophecy of Isaiah and said, “This Scripture came true today.”

“This Scripture came true today.” There is Christ’s life’s purpose. His ministry. I am the Messiah and I come to bring the Good News of salvation to the poor, healing to the broken-hearted, freedom to those who are held captive or who are oppressed and vision to the blind. In his lifetime in the synagogue, Jesus, like all the other Jews, had heard many sermons and the most common subject of those sermons was the hope of the

Messiah's coming. Jewish people were constantly reminded that one day the Messiah would come and the ultimate sacrifice would be made. Their hearts were full of anticipation. They were actively waiting for this moment the way we actively wait for a tax refund, a new baby or the first day of summer. Only they had been waiting for generations and all of a sudden, Jesus, the Son of God from their town, says "I am Here fulfilling this scripture."

Many people asked, "How can this be?" This was wonderful news for them and it is even better news for us because he didn't say, I only have come to save Israel. No, Christ says that he has come to help anyone who needs to be saved from the destruction of sin whether we have been actively waiting for him or not. And so, if the Scripture came true today, what has it changed in my life?

Thousands of people for three years witnessed Christ performing miracles, opening the eyes of the blind, making the mute to speak, resurrecting the dead and healing distinct diseases. Even though many people witnessed all these, however, only a few individuals' hearts were changed. Only a few of them could understand how the Scripture came true that day. Today, Christ wants us to be changed not like those who witnessed his miracles and then neglected him but like those whose life testified afterwards that they loved Christ with all their hearts.

Today, Jesus wants us to change our life, he wants to transform our anxiety into kindness, anger into forgiveness, hatred into goodness, envy into sympathy, laziness into diligence, uncertainty into certainty, pride into meekness, greediness into mercifulness. Today take a few minutes to go over your life and ask God to transform all your sufferings and shortcomings into virtues so that the Scripture comes true for you today as well. Today we have chosen to believe that Jesus is indeed the Messiah who was foretold of thousands of years ago in the words of Isaiah and if so, He is here, every moment of every day, fulfilling the words of the prophet Isaiah. We are here today in the first moments in a new time in the life of our church. God's desire for every child of his is to believe that Jesus came to save us and make us the inheritors of the coming Kingdom. Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. Amen.