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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
January 27, 2019  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Scripture Lessons: 1 Corinthians 12:12-21,26-27, Luke  
4:14-21

Hymns: 233; 465; 408; 50:2

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our  
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Isaiah 61:1-6

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me,  
Because the LORD has anointed Me  
To preach good tidings to the poor;  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to the captives,  
And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound;  
<sup>2</sup>To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,  
And the day of vengeance of our God;  
To comfort all who mourn,  
<sup>3</sup>To console those who mourn in Zion,  
To give them beauty for ashes,  
The oil of joy for mourning,  
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;  
That they may be called trees of righteousness,  
The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”  
<sup>4</sup>And they shall rebuild the old ruins,  
They shall raise up the former desolations,  
And they shall repair the ruined cities,  
The desolations of many generations.  
<sup>5</sup>Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,  
And the sons of the foreigner  
*Shall be* your plowmen and your vinedressers.

<sup>6</sup> But you shall be named the priests of the LORD,  
They shall call you the servants of our God.  
You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles,  
And in their glory you shall boast. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: The Sovereign Lord!

In the opening verse of our text we read “the Lord GOD is upon Me.” with the Word “God” in all large case letters. That signifies that here the word “God” is representing the Hebrew “Jehovah” or “Yahweh” the covenant name of God. Immediately before that is the Hebrew for “lord,” as in master or king or a prince, one who has power over you. So the idea is that this Lord who does whatever He pleases is also our Jehovah God.

This is an important designation in the context before us since this “Lord” is modifying God’s covenant name, the name which God uses when addressing us concerning our salvation. This is so significant because it reveals for us exactly what the will of our God is concerning us, the sinners of this world. We are told in other Scriptures that God has *“no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.”* (Ezekiel 33:11) We are told that the Lord “is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9) That is fine, but we might say that we know from living in this world that this not going to happen. Far too many sinners, indeed most sinners are determined to remain in their sinful ways in spite of God’s desire for them to turn away from sin, in spite of His desire that they should repent. So, on its own, God’s desire for our salvation is not sufficient. People are dying in their sin! What is the Lord going to do about it? That is what our text answers for us in revealing the wonder of

grace, power, and glory that is revealed in Jesus our Savior.--

## **THEME: Jesus Was Anointed by the Lord --**

### **I. To Preach Comfort to Sin Oppressed Souls.**

Anointing was very special. It was far more than a public designation or announcement of appointment to office. It was a rich and effective blessing that brought gifts from God upon the recipient to enable him to perform what the Lord desired. Our text speaks of a very special anointing, *"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me."* (v.1) There is no doubt that this is a Messianic prophecy that found its fulfillment in Jesus. There can be doubt about this because Jesus declared that this was true in the synagogue in Nazareth, as we read in our Gospel lesson this morning. We are well aware of what took place at Jesus' baptism when the Spirit of God descended in the form of a dove so that John the Baptist witnessed this anointing by the Holy Spirit. We were told there that the Spirit remained with Jesus. The Spirit blessed the Son of Man in His work of ministry, in His preaching and teaching and also in His miracles of healing. The Spirit was with Jesus who was and is also the Son of God as Jesus fulfilled the will of the God for this world full of sinners.

Our text tells us of what Jesus accomplished in His work of ministry among the people of the Jews, a work that continues among us through the preaching of the Word of God. Jesus was anointed "To preach good tidings to the poor;" He has sent Me "to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *those who are bound*; <sup>2</sup>To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God." (v.2)

Jesus was anointed to proclaim the very best of news to people that desperately needed to hear good news, to

people that were prepared for this message by the oppression that is brought upon the heart of man by the condemnation of the law, by the curse of sin. Only Jesus can heal the heart that is grief stricken by the guilt of sin, that is grief stricken by the reality of sin's curse, temporal and eternal death. Jesus heals the broken heart by proclaiming peace with God, peace that comes by the forgiveness of sins. This peace with God grants the assurance that the Lord no longer looks upon one's sins, but has disassociated the sinner from his sin. This can only happen through faith in the all atoning sacrifice Jesus made when He bore our sins in His own body on the cross, shedding His blood for our redemption.

That's the good news that announces the "Acceptable year of the Lord." In the days of the Old Testament every 70<sup>th</sup> year was year of Jubilee. In the year of Jubilee all debts were forgiven, slaves were set free, properties were restored to their original owners. Jesus is the fulfillment of this year of Jubilee. Jesus coming to Jerusalem and dying and rising again for us and our salvation is the coming of the acceptable year of the Lord, and we are the beneficiaries of this greatest of all Jubilees, a jubilee in which the debt of our sin is forgiven forevermore.

What beautiful pictures are presented in our text to communicate how this wonder of grace impacts each of us!

**Isaiah 61:2-3** "To comfort all who mourn,  
<sup>3</sup>To console those who mourn in Zion,  
To give them beauty for ashes,  
The oil of joy for mourning,  
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;  
That they may be called trees of righteousness,  
The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified." (v.2-3)

Jesus comforts those who mourn by switching things in and out. Jesus comes to us and removes the sad, and replaces it with joy. When people were in mourning in

deep sorrow over their sin, they would dress in gunnysack cloth scratchy and uncomfortable as could be, and then they would find the ash heaps, we don't have many of those around anymore but in days of old they were present outside every home. Those who truly mourned, and yes that would include those who mourned over their sin, would plop themselves down in that ash heap and pile the ashes all over, piling ashes on top of their heads, smearing ashes on their faces, making themselves look as well as feel vulgar and filthy and miserable on the outside as they felt on the inside. Then along comes Jesus and as faith in Jesus enters the heart, the ashes are replaced with beauty, for "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7) No stain of sin is left behind. The mourning over one's guilt and the impending curse of hell is replaced with the oil of joy. One is well cared for and comforted by the Lord. The garment of praise and singing with joy in one's heart to the Lord takes the place of the hopeless dirge of death.

All this comes as the Lord sustains the faith of His people making them strong, strong as trees of righteousness. This strong righteousness is NOT by the works of man, but the righteousness of Christ which is imputed to the ones who believe. That is the one and only righteousness that stands up to the very gates of death and hell. That this is the planting of the Lord reminds us that even our faith which clings to the righteousness of Christ is not our doing but the gracious working of God the Holy Spirit within our hearts. **He** is glorified in our salvation!

This is the second part of Jesus' mission as the Christ, a portion of His work that continues until the end of the earth. Jesus was anointed --

## **II. To Build His Church.**

Our text presents this important work of Christ in two phases. The first phase references Jesus' ministry among the Jews.

**Isaiah 62:4** “And they shall rebuild the old ruins,  
They shall raise up the former desolations,  
And they shall repair the ruined cities,  
The desolations of many generations.”

While there was most certainly a rebuilding of ruins with the return of the remnant from the Babylonian captivity this was not the complete picture. It was the rebuilding after a spiritual desolation that had transpired repeatedly over hundreds of years; that would happen yet again even after the people were returned from Babylon. That is what was addressed by Jesus as He walked from city to city, village to village, preaching of the coming of the kingdom of God, calling sinners to repentance, We need to understand that while Jesus performed many, even hundreds of miracles of healing, we ought not think of Jesus as a miracle worker. That was the mistake far too many of the people of the Jews made. They were seeking the miracles that would make this life easier and not the hearing of the message of the kingdom of God. Jesus was first preacher and teacher, sharing that message which He received from above, which the Spirit presented with Jesus as Jesus addressed the people in the synagogues, in village squares, on the hill sides, and along the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus desired to repair the spiritual desolations of many generations that the people might know the salvation that was given to them within the words of the prophets, words which were fulfilled in their hearing as Jesus stood before them proclaiming the Acceptable Year of the Lord.

The second aspect of the work of Christ building His church brings us joy and rejoicing, for it speaks of the gospel proclamation that comes to us the people of the gentile nations as well as our response to that gospel proclamation.

**Isaiah 61:5-6** “Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,  
And the sons of the foreigner  
*Shall be* your plowmen and your vinedressers.

<sup>6</sup> But you shall be named the priests of the LORD,  
They shall call you the servants of our God  
You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles,  
And in their glory you shall boast.”

The prophet foresaw the day when laborers in the fields of the Lord would be the people of the Gentiles. God’s chosen people in this day in which we live are also among those who are called the priests of the Lord and servants of God. Especially on this Sunday of our annual meeting we emphasize the gospel mission the Lord has entrusted to us, and what a privilege it is for us to have this divine purpose bestowed upon us in our humble lives.

God has provided for the work of the church to be done and prosper by blessing us Gentiles Christians with many gifts and benefits. Just think of us wealthy Americans, and how much the Lord has blessed us so that we are able to serve Him with this wealth, and finance the ministry of our congregations as well the sending of missionaries to distant lands. All this that the glory of Christ Jesus might shine among those who are still oppressed by sin, sitting in the spiritual darkness of idol worship and superstitions. Now they also have come to know the glory of the Lord, and it has brought them to the knowledge of the truth.

It is simply amazing what the Lord has done among us, and through us. He is the One anointed with the Spirit of the Lord God that He might proclaim the Acceptable year of the Lord, that He might comfort those who mourn with the glad tidings of sins forgiven and the hope of everlasting life for a world of undeserving sinners like us. Look, and comprehend what the Lord has done in saving YOU, in showing you the glory of our Savior, and then calling you to serve the Lord with gladness, and show forth His praises to others who are oppressed by sin that they might know the liberty only Jesus can bring.

**AMEN.**

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.