

Extra, extra, read all about it. Shouts from the street corner could be heard all around when the newspaper was being sold. Newspaper boys were hired to stand at the corner and shout and sell. The idea, get people's attention and get them to buy a paper. They wouldn't give the whole story, just the attention grabbing headline. Arouse a desire in people to buy the paper and learn more.

Now if you even open a paper it seems like once you're past the first page with its headline the only thing left is ads. Especially now at Christmas time the sales ads are what people focus on. Many people don't even know the headlines these days because all they have time for is what gifts they still have to buy and what their travel plans will be. The world as a whole is certainly not interested in any headlines from God. They think they're just words. They get lost in the murmur of all the other words being thrown around. Even if some of those words get through so many people feel they won't come true.

The Bible sees it differently. Those words aren't just words. They're the very words of God. What is said on the pages of Scripture is happening or will happen. It's a fact. God's Word shouldn't be lost among the rest; it should be front page headlines. So this morning in the first lesson...

Isaiah gives us the headlines
The Anointed One comes to proclaim
The Anointed One comes to save

We might not know who said these words in Isaiah if it weren't for one day in a synagogue. Jesus wandered into his hometown of Nazareth. Being a rabbi the leaders of that synagogue wanted him to speak. He took the scroll and found Isaiah. When he finished quoting the Scriptures he sat down and said, **"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."** What was he saying? Was he calling attention to himself? What had he read? He read the first three verses of Isaiah chapter 61, the very same verses we have before us today.

Jesus talked about himself before he ever came to earth in human flesh. He identifies himself as the Anointed One, the Servant of the Lord mentioned at other times in Isaiah's prophecy. He speaks of his specific tasks. **"The Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners."** Jesus' tasks would be to preach, bind up, and proclaim. He would be coming for the poor, the broken hearted, and captives. He would be coming with a message of good news and freedom.

Do you think that what Jesus said made the headlines of the next day's *Nazareth News*? Anointed One returns home to preach good news. Anointed One frees prisoners. Anointed One binding up the broken. Probably not. It probably wouldn't even make today's papers. It's just not what passes for headlines. Yesterdays Oklahoman, man charged with '08 killings. Fridays Fort Sill to lose civilian jobs. You have to go back to Monday to find anything remotely good, for OSU Fiesta Bowl is cause to celebrate. Of course that's bad news for OU fans. The headlines of your life probably would read much the same. Friend breaks heart. Person stranded alone at Christmas. Financial meltdown takes toll on family. Those headlines describe your heartache almost every day. They push any promises of God to the back pages where no one reads them. Sin pushes out the Savior.

The Anointed One comes to proclaim good news to you. For those who feel the brokenness of a broken heart Jesus comes with love to bind your heart up. For anyone who has felt loss Jesus comes to release you from the darkness. Anyone losing the financial battle and cursing their luck Jesus comes to comfort you with good news. **"The Lord has anointed me...to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."** Jesus spoke those words in the synagogue and the people wanted to kill him. You hear that message as good news. The Lord's favor overwhelms and defeats sin. It's an assurance of forgiveness. The Lord is showing his favor to you.

Don't crowd out the good headlines. Let others see them. During times of hurt and sadness keep your head up knowing that Jesus proclaims a good news message for you. Sadness won't go away completely, the tears might still come. But they won't take over your life. Keep proper perspective during this season and all times to what's really important. Jesus isn't the one who left the season of Christmas. He's there and always will be. Where we choose to spend our time or our resources, that's what gives people the headlines of what we feel is important during this season and all seasons.

When anyone puts out a press release that they want the press at a certain place at a certain time, they better show up. If they just say they're coming but don't actually follow through people won't take them seriously. The Anointed One would come to proclaim and to preach. His message in Isaiah was one people could take seriously. The Anointed One, Christ Jesus, the Messiah, did come. The Anointed One came to save.

After recording the Anointed One speaking Isaiah turns it around and records the response of someone touched by the Anointed One's good news message. **"I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness."** These garments and robe show we're saved. They will be worn in heaven but for now remain hidden. But they produce joy. And the terms for this joy pile up. The joy like a groom wearing a wonderful head piece or a bride wearing fine jewelry. The joy is like someone seeing their garden bloom and bear fruit. When God keeps his promises to us it's worthy of joy. The person saved by the Anointed One can't help but be joyful and praise his name.

Instead of joy are you feeling distress or pain today? Our bodies in a sense are breaking down each day. We may not have the financial resources we need to provide even the basics at times. We struggle with time wondering where we'll get enough of it. We worry we don't have the blessings to provide a Christmas for our kids or ourselves. The world is constantly helping that thought too. It tells us what we deserve in commercials and magazines. It tells us that without certain things we can't be happy. If you don't have whatever it is for your kids it won't be a Merry Christmas.

Jesus gives us what we need. The Anointed One saves us. We spend these days focused on Christ's coming at Christmas and rightly we should. We remind ourselves of all the things Jesus did for us, even coming as a little child in humility. It was all part of the gift. But Christ gives more. He gives us reminders that he's coming again. He's coming to complete the work that his death and resurrection began. Our sins are completely paid for. They're gone. But we still live here, away from home. Here we don't wear the garments of salvation fully. But we will soon. And look how beautiful it is, the salvation he comes to bring! One priceless gift after another, each one designed to bless us in this life and to make sure that we have what we need to stand before God in joy.

Be joyful as you look to Judgment Day that the Holy Spirit grows faith in Christ in your heart. God promises to make it grow throughout life. Be thankful for it with joy. Live so that this joy shows to others. Appreciate the fact that he came first at Christmas as a child and will come again a second time in glory. On that day the words of Isaiah will come true, **"The Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations."** We stand ready to bring forth that praise through the work of the Anointed One, Jesus Christ.

Today's newspapers don't have the same headlines they once did. It seems like every day a new major headline is given for something rather small. But we've got a major headline in Isaiah's prophecy. The Anointed One is coming to proclaim a good news message of forgiveness of sins for you. The Anointed One is coming to save you and bring you home. Keep your focus sharpened on that headline so you can be joyful today and always till Christ returns.