

This afternoon when the football games are played millions of fans of those teams will hope they can predict the winner so that it's their team. Some, of course, will be right. But did they really predict the future, or did they just happen to get a 50-50 chance right? When picking between two teams there doesn't seem to be much prediction there, just lucky guesses. Even if someone had predicted before the season began that it would be these four teams playing today that doesn't mean they predicted, they just guessed well.

At those times when it seems we've predicted something before it happens in most cases we couldn't control the outcome. There's a reason we can't predict the future with any certainty; we're not God. But sitting in the synagogue that day in Nazareth was God, in the flesh. He could tell the future and more important that day he knew the past. Plenty of predictions were out there about the coming Messiah in the Old Testament. But who would he be? When would he come? No one could have predicted.

Are we still in the dark? There are people still asking who will he be or when will he come? We might even join them at times. But we can stop all the predictions we can stop all the guessing. In the gospel Jesus isn't the one making the predictions, he's the one fulfilling them...

**Today you see Scripture fulfilled
The one anointed by the Lord
The one sent to preach good news**

Just a week ago Jesus turned water into wine. Couple weeks before that he defeated Satan in the desert. Before that he was baptized in the Jordan. We've zoomed ahead almost a year from those events today. After a year there's a buzz about Jesus. Everywhere Jesus goes the word gets out. It was no different in Nazareth. Except there they knew him not as a famous preacher or a miracle worker. They knew him as the carpenter's son. They'd heard the same amazing things about him and they couldn't wait to hear him preach and teach in his old synagogue.

The former Nazareth boy got up to speak. This was the moment the people waited for. He took the scroll handed to him. Isaiah, perfect. He unrolled the delicate paper sliding his way through it until he came to just the right spot. The words are still familiar. **"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me."** Immediately those listening remembered the familiar words of Isaiah they knew from memory. These were words of expectation looking forward to the great Messiah God promised to send. Eagerly they expected Jesus to offer his prediction on whom and when they could expect the Messiah.

I've had one high school reunion so far which I did not go to. For those that have, what's your main reason for going? Isn't it partly to see if you're more successful than the prom queen or the athlete? Of course you don't want to know if someone with worse grades than you is more successful. That's why class reunions are places for extravagant claims. Jesus has just called himself the anointed one, the Messiah. That can't be true; this is the carpenter, Mary's son. He grew up in Nazareth, how could he be the anointed one?

At Jesus' baptism the gospel writer Luke describes how the skies opened up and the dove came down and **"the Holy Spirit descended on him."** With water and the Holy Spirit Jesus was anointed right there in the water; centuries before Isaiah had predicted it. And there's more. Isaiah said the Messiah would **"proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."** Every 50 years trumpets would announce to the people of Israel the Year of Jubilee. All property was to be returned to original owners and slaves were to be released. It was like a nation-wide forgiveness celebration. Jesus popularity was because he was proclaiming a message about God's forgiveness. The year of the Lord's favor wouldn't be just one year. God was saving the world now, all people of all time, and it began with Jesus.

Jesus knows we're thirsty for information regarding the Messiah. He knows he's the Messiah. But instead of simply saying that, he leads us to investigate Scripture for ourselves. The words of Isaiah Jesus quotes are confirmed when we examine Jesus' life. The words of Isaiah are confirmed by matching up what we read with what Jesus says and does. What we find eliminates all doubt that he's the Savior. He must be because the Old Testament description of the Messiah is fulfilled in Jesus in every way. He is who he says he is. Don't doubt, simply believe. He's the Lord's anointed. Today we see the Scriptures fulfilled.

The interview went great. They recognized your talents to do the job, appreciated your college degree, and raved about your great personality. You were hired and everything seemed wonderful. You half expected your first day the whole company would be standing to welcome you. Instead the first day you waited for the secretary to have you fill out the paperwork. Then you waited for HR to run through policies with you. Then you sat at a desk waiting for IT to come and set up your computer. Seemed no one was impressed with who you were now, they simply expected you to work and produce. Jesus walked into town and impressed everyone. But he didn't stop there. Jesus was the Lord's anointed one, the one sent to preach the good news. But soon his popularity didn't matter, it was time to get down to work and produce.

Jesus quotes one line of Isaiah that encompasses everything the Messiah would do on earth. **"He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor."** This isn't poor like they've lost everything in the stock market. These are spiritually poor beggars before God. People who come with their hands empty realizing they have nothing to offer and without God there's no hope. Isaiah describes them as captives, forced to do things they wouldn't normally. Poor sinners are captives to Satan. Isaiah also describes them as blind. Not that they know nothing about God, they simply don't realize some things they do are sins. They can't see sin the way God does. Isaiah also calls them oppressed. They ache under the burden of a mountain of guilt and shame associated with sin.

Are you bound by a sinful desire you can't escape? That's the captive nature of our sinfulness. A woman told me this week when we read about warnings against sexual immorality that she didn't think the Bible talked about that at all. She never knew the Bible called that a sin. You might be experiencing the same spiritual blindness doing something you can't recognize as sinful? Is a sin from your past crushing you with guilt? You are feeling the crush of oppression.

Be reminded Christ came to preach good news to spiritually poor people just like you. His message brings relief. **"He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed."** Christ comes with healing. Jesus brings freedom for you who are stuck in captivity to Satan. Jesus' blood paid the price for your release. Jesus brings sight to those who are blind through faith. Faith in Christ sees things unseen by others. Faith given by the Holy Spirit allows us to see the truth of the cross of Christ. Jesus releases those who are oppressed. He lifts off of us the crushing burden of sin and guilt. The accusing conscience is silenced by the death of Christ. We need not despair. Captivity, blindness, and the oppression of sin are gone. Christ Jesus brings joy to those who know no joy.

The crowd in the synagogue that day sat in wonder and amazement as Jesus spoke. They listened to him teach and preach. They heard him explain freedom, return of sight, and release. They quieted themselves and listened. We would do the same. Sit at his feet and listen. Be found in the Scriptures. Be found partaking of the Lord's Supper. Be found doing home devotions. Quiet yourself and your desire to pay off your own sins and listen to the good news Jesus shares. Today, right now, you're seeing the fulfillment of Scripture in Jesus.