

Sunday Sermons – CSI Church, Toronto
Sunday, January 4, 2015

Revelation for Liberation

Isaiah 61:1-11

Psalms 76

Revelation 5:1-10

Luke 4:16-21

The famous passage of today's O.T. reading and Gospel reading is from the *Nazareth Manifesto* in which Jesus proclaims His mission and ministry. It is the beginning of the ministry of Jesus. Luke 4 starts with the narration of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. There Jesus confronted all the temptations with the Word of God.

Early days of Jesus: Bethlehem – Jerusalem (temple) – Bethlehem – Egypt – Palestine – Nazareth in Galilee (Nazarene – *Nazranis*)

Setting is very significant. Galilee, Nazareth & Synagogue

Galilee: Area north of Palestine. 50 miles north to south & 25 miles east to west. Galilee = circle (*Hb. Galiyl*). Encircled by non-Jewish nations. Phoenicia (north), Mediterranean Sea (west), Samaria (south), Decapolis (east). Extraordinarily densely populated. New influences played a part and it was least conservative. 204 villages or towns were there. A land of extraordinary fertility. Sermon on the Mount, healing of a leper, the choice, ordination and sending of 12 disciples (Judas Iscariot – the only non-Galilean), post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to the apostles all were witnessed by Galilee.

Nazareth: A town with 20,000 inhabitants - stood in a hollow in the hills on the lower slopes of Galilee, but the scene from the top was an amazing panorama miles around. History of Israel unwrapped. Plain of Esdraelon (Deborah, Barak, Gideon, Saul Josiah), Naboth's vineyard, the place where Jehu slaughtered Jezebel, Shunem and Carmel. Three routes of importance were around: Pilgrim route to Jerusalem, great way of Sea from Egypt to Damascus & great road to East (used by trade and forces). Historic significance could also be seen in this. Annunciations to Mary & Joseph, childhood and youth of Jesus, announcement of His divine Son ship, rejection by the very own happened in Nazareth.

The Manifesto is declared in a *Synagogue*, the real centre of religious life in Palestine. Only one major temple – Jerusalem. According to the law, one synagogue was necessary for more than ten families in any part.. People met in synagogues to worship. Teaching took place in synagogues, but there were no sacrifices.. Worship in synagogue had three parts: worship (the offering of prayers), reading of the Scripture- 7 people read, translations were given (Hb. to Ar. or Gk.); Law: 1 verse each and Prophets: 3 verses each, and the teaching part (any distinguished person).

The Ministry of Jesus is clearly defined in the Manifesto at Nazareth.

Jesus was anointed by the Spirit of the Lord: Any ministry for the Lord or of the Lord is possible by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has to reveal, guide and strengthen the purpose. We need to move in the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out God's tasks. We are called to perform the stewardship for Jesus. God's mission and ministry is far beyond the management tactics of the human. We need to be filled with the Power of the Holy Spirit for a successful life in our Master's sight. Every laity and the ordained need to keep up the flame of the Holy Spirit received at the Confirmation or Baptism. We need to read the Word of God, we need to pray unceasingly, we need to worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth to minister to the deserved. Even Jesus whom we worship now did not miss any chance to attend the synagogue. That makes sense and should challenge us. Jesus needed to spend hours and hours in prayer.

Sunday Sermons – CSI Church, Toronto

Sunday, January 4, 2015

Jesus needed to be acquainted with the Scripture. How much more should we mortals? We need the power of the Holy Spirit to live a life of witness and ministry.

Anointing is for the Proclamation of the Good News: Proclamation means public statement, announcement, declaration, assertion etc... We have been anointed to declare the works of the Lord. The word *evangelion* is familiar to the people from Syrian background. It means *gospel* or *good news* - the Good News of a saviour who has lived like us and has shared the experiences of human life. Good News of a Saviour who bore our sins and died for us in our place, taking all the shame and curses. We need to say the Good News aloud. We need to share the Good News. We need to declare that Jesus is our redeemer, who wiped the stains of sins from us and cleansed us for eternal happiness with him. That is what we do in our prayer time and worship time. Let us not be ashamed of the Gospel. If we are, then Jesus will also be of us. *“Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels”* (Luke 9:26). We need to take genuine interest in the eternal happiness of the other, and we need to share the good news that one should not be worried of a failed life. Timely sharing of Good News has saved many lives from suicides. Jesus openly and courageously brought forth the Word of the Lord to His surroundings.

Anointing is for the Release of the Captives: Here Jesus refers to recovery of the sight and release of the oppressed. We need to set free those who are in bondage in various ways. We need to work towards bringing freedom to all who are enslaved in various ways. The Biblical History gives us sufficient accounts of slavery. Poverty, imprisonment, deprived state of life... all come under the state of captivity. Literally we need to work to bring in freedom to all those who are captivated in many ways.

In 1800, missionaries came to our state in Kerala and gave us the Gospel. We were enlightened by their strenuous sacrifices. On the call of Bishop Azariah, Mr. K. J. Eapen cut the tip of his finger and signed on a Bible saying that he will work in Parkal to bring in light there. Rev. K. J. Eapen became the first missionary to Parkal. All the missionaries set out with their own anointing, leaving their comfort zones to give education, to build up a healthy community, to awaken a group of people for the Lord.. David Livingstone chose Africa, Ida Scudder chose Vellore, Rev. P. O. Ninan chose Mugalappally in A.P., Hudson Taylor chose China, William Tobias Ringeltaube chose Trivandrum, Thomas Norton chose Alappuzha, Herman Gundert chose Malabar so on and so forth.

Who will go for the Lord today? Our anointing is to release the captives. The captives held in sin, failures, addictions, sickness, etc. We need to work for the release of the captives. Jesus could be moved immensely by the sight of a deprived life, and He could work in that circumstance irrespective of the community (significance of Nazareth).

An illustration goes like this. During World War II, when the Nazis were bombing London, there was an Anglican Church that had the statue of Jesus with outstretched arms on their lawn. The caption below the statue read, “Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden.” As the bombs fell, the Anglican Church was destroyed and the statue was blown up. When the members started to rebuild the church and replace the statue, they discovered the arms and hands were so pulverized from the bombing they could not be salvaged. They could have chosen to manufacture new hands and arms for the statue, but they chose not to.

Today, the statue of Jesus Christ stands outside the London church with no arms, and the caption has been changed to read, “Christ has no hands but your hands, and Christ has no arms but our arms.” We are the body of Christ, and if the body of Christ is going to move, it is going to be by our feet. If the

Sunday Sermons – CSI Church, Toronto

Sunday, January 4, 2015

body of Christ is going to hug, it is going to be by our arms. If the body of Christ is going to speak, it is going to be through our mouth. We are the body of Christ.”

Jesus was anointed by the Spirit of the Lord

Anointing is for the Proclamation of the Good News

Anointing is for the Release of the Captives
