

Sermon for Sunday, March 16, 1975 by Andrew A. Jumper, D.D., Pastor
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THE PREACHER WITH THE WRONG SERMON

Luke 4:16-21

Text: "And he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

In the Old Testament there are two distinctly different pictures of the Messiah. Actually there are more than that. But there are two strains of tradition as to who and what the Messiah will be. One is pictured as the Suffering Servant. When the prophets spoke of this Messiah of God he was seen as a humble man who suffered for others and who would be rejected by his own countrymen. Isaiah wrote of him this way. "He was despised and rejected by men. A man of sorrow and acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hid their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not." Surely he has born our grief and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken smitten by God and afflicted but he was wounded for our transgression. He was bruised for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that made us whole and with his stripes we are all healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." That's one picture of the Messiah. The word Messiah means anointed one. The Greek word is Christ. So, Messiah is the Hebrew word - Christ is the Greek word and they both mean the Anointed One. This was one picture of the Anointed One of God, a Suffering Servant.

The second picture of a Messiah that we have in the Old Testament is quite different. He is pictured as a Triumphant King. He is pictured as a military and political figure who would be a deliverer to free Israel from her oppressors. He is seen as a conquering hero who, in majesty, would bring peace and rule the whole world from Jerusalem. Jerusalem would be the center of the universe. Through him the Jews would become the spiritual and secular leaders of the world.

And those are two of the main pictures of the Messiah to come that the Jews knew about. Now put yourself in Jerusalem. Make yourself a Jew. You are under Roman oppression. You are taxed and oppressed in every way. You are no longer a free people. The Romans rule over you with cruelty. They rule over you with harshness and bitterness. You have hardly enough to keep body and soul together. You are no longer free to worship as you want. For centuries your nation has been controlled by others. The streets are patrolled by Roman soldiers - your ruler is a Roman. You are treated as second class citizens with little or no rights. And in your heart would you not have longed to be free? Would you not long to throw off the yoke of oppression of your enemies--of your rulers? Would you not have longed for the kingdom of David to be re-established? Which Messiah then would you have wanted? Would you have wanted a Suffering Servant or would you have wanted a Triumphant King to lead your people to greatness?

That was the question the Jews were dealing with and it eventually led to the destruction of Jerusalem. In 70 AD they did rebel against Rome. The temple was destroyed. The city was leveled. The people were taken away into slavery. A small remnant of people fled down to the Dead Sea area and there upon a butte - a little mountain - they took refuge in a place called Massatta and the Jews were relentlessly pursued by the Romans because they would not let even just one small pocket of resistance survive. So Massatta fell and with it the Jewish nation came to an end.

On Palm Sunday they lined the streets of Jerusalem and they hailed Jesus as he came through and they treated him as a king - "Hosanna to God in the highest...The king

has come." And yet a few short days later this same people is a mob before the palace of Pilot crying out "Crucify Him." Why? Because they wanted one kind of a king and Jesus was the other king. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me."--and that's what Messiah means. And if you have your Bibles open to the 61st Chapter of Isaiah let's look at what God has anointed Jesus to be. "...to bring good tidings to the afflicted." And the word "good tidings" is the Greek word euangelion which means 'good news'. Good news to people who are afflicted. Good news that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

Having just come from Israel I am deeply impressed with the poverty there. The Jews have done marvelous things but still there are great pockets of abject poverty. In places along the Gaza Strip; down by Jericho; and in other places there are huge refugee camps. Thousands upon thousands of people living without any hope, without any motivation in poverty---children who have been born there, who have grown up there and that's all they know. There are other places like that all over the world. There are places like that in St. Louis. And Jesus says "I've come to tell you about the good news. God loves you." But another thing that I have been impressed with as I have traveled about and as I know you have is that the poor poor are not the only poor people. There are the poor rich people. The people who have plenty of the material things of the world but who do not have a personal relationship to Jesus; their lives are relatively empty and they spend their lives accumulating, getting, and piling up like the man building the barn that Jesus told about. He built bigger barns and filled them up and God said to him "You fool. Tonight your soul is required of you and then to whom shall belong all this stuff you've accumulated?" So there are some others besides the poor poor. They are the poor rich and the poor middle class and the poor well-to-do. And Jesus says "I've got some good news for you, too. God loves you."

That day he stood in the synagogue and he read "...because the Lord has anointed me and sent me to bind up the broken heart." There is so much of the broken heart today. There are those of you whose marriages have come apart at the seams. You've divorced and you're undergoing all of the agony and trauma that that involves and there is a brokenness in your heart. There are those of you who have lost a loved one recently and you're awfully lonely - there is a brokenness in your heart. And there are those of you who have had dreams of what you wanted to accomplish and to achieve and you realize you're never going to get there--there's a brokenness in your heart. There are those of you that between you and your children a rupture has occurred - a brokenness - there is a brokenness in your heart over this. "Yes, he sent me to bind up the broken hearted." As I deal with people and with problems and with situations, the one thing I've had come clear for me is that apart from Jesus Christ this brokenness can never be adequately healed. Jesus came to heal the broken hearted--to bind it up and to make it well. I don't know what brokenness you have today, but I know that all of us have a certain amount of brokenness in our lives. And Jesus came to do something about it. He's the one that can help you.

This wasn't the message the Jews wanted to hear. The preacher had the wrong sermon. They wanted political freedom. Jesus came to bind up the broken heart. Then he goes on to say that he came to proclaim liberty to the captives. They thought he was talking about political captivity. But that's the least of captivities to which men are captive today. There are many of us who are captive to the sins in our lives. There are many of us involved in things that are wrong and bad and immoral and we're captive to them. We're not able to let them go. There are others of us who wish we had a dynamic personal faith in Jesus Christ but we are captive to an intellectualism that is our master. We are captive to the emotional problems that grip us that make us do things that we don't want to do and be something we don't want to be. We're not the kind of people we really want to be. We are captives as

we all have captors of one sort or another. And Jesus says to us "I come to set you free." I want to tell you, he's the only one who can!" "I've come to set you free."

He goes on to say that he's come to open the prison to those who are bound. There are a lot of us who are prisoners this morning. All of us in one way or another are prisoners to the genetic heritage that we received. We are bound by that. The shape of your body, the color of your eyes. All of these things - you're bound by that. You're limited by it. We've all been shaped and molded and bound by our environment. The heritage we had in the home as children--we're prisoners to that. We are prisoners to the circumstances of life. I know that many of us sometimes long just to be free of life to go somewhere else and start over--to be a new person to have a new career--to do something entirely different because we are prisoners bound by the circumstances of life. We long to be free. Well there is a freedom from that kind of prison and it's the freedom in Jesus Christ that makes us new persons.

When Jesus went to Jerusalem that last time, the Jews wanted a king who would free them from political pressure. And Jesus says "I'm not that kind of a king at all." I'm the kind of a king who frees you from yourself, from your past, from your circumstances and I permit you to be a free man that way. Well, what kind of a king do you want? You see, if he had led them free politically that nation that would have been established would not long have endured. One thing that impresses me about the Holy Land is that when you walk the streets of Old Jerusalem, the city that Jesus knew is more than 20 feet under ground. Civilization built upon civilization. And had he established such a kingdom today that kingdom would be one of those strata under the ground of Old Jerusalem. But he came to be the king of another sort of kingdom. A kingdom that exists today. He came to be the king of a free people. People don't know what it's like to be free inside. Good tidings to the afflicted, those with broken hearts bound up, those who are captives set at liberty, those who are in prison freed from their bonds. Yes, Jesus came to be king and the real question that we face today is not what kind of a king did he come to be--we know that--not even the question was he a king. He was--we know that. Not even did he establish a kingdom--he did. But the real question is this. Is Jesus my king? You see, only when he's your king can he truly set you free.