

**Sermon Notes – January 26, 2025**  
**The Holy Gospel of St. Luke 4: 14-21**  
**Peace Lutheran Church**  
**“Reflections of God's Glory”**

Jesus' synagogue scene in Luke may be the oldest known account of synagogue worship. In it we see the outline of what became the worship pattern even of Jesus' early followers. The people are gathered, the scroll is retrieved and read, and a pronouncement is made that transports ancient words into the present: “Today this scripture has been fulfilled” (Luke 4: 21).

Focusing on the “today” of this pronouncement is at the heart of faithful preaching. The question for any preacher of the Good News is always to ask how this image, this story, this truth-telling illuminates our present lives. Jesus as the fulfillment of the promises in Isaiah (quoted by Jesus in this passage) acknowledges in the present time the gifts of release from struggle and suffering.

Jesus' words lay out His mission, His life's work, His reason for being: “to bring good news to the poor,” “...to proclaim release ...and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free” (Luke 4: 18), echoing the words of Isaiah. This “today” announcement - coming right after His baptism and the forty days in the wilderness which followed - is about the Spirit's role in Jesus' very existence, and tells what He will do. His identity is wrapped up with release (*aphesis*) - new beginnings, freedom. And the “today” brings to every present time that very same renewal.

Similarly, the people for whom Ezra reads from the scroll, are sent out to have joy because they are exiles whom God has gathered, given His word, and set loose. The Spirit descends on the newly freed exiles, not for their own gain, but for the well-being of others. They will have enough food and drink to give leftovers to the hungry. We are, thus, as the body of Christ, to proclaim hope in places of that man threatens to destroy.

The reign of God has come near, and yet the release He desires for all people is not complete. “Both preachers and teachers would do well to see ourselves always as leaders trying to help others navigate a persistently unjust and broken system. We should expect big things from

God, fully aware that Luke shows much interest in shining a light on God's salvation. At the same time, Luke portrays Jesus as one who "devotes most of his attention to people at dinner tables and conference tables. This is where the real work of freedom is done ...planning and action! And it is central in our worship experience as well.