

Pastor Geoffrey R. Boyle
Funeral for Eugene Pralle
23 July 2011
Trinity Lutheran Church, Wichita
Isaiah 61:1-3

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

As parents of young children, my wife and I already get tired of saying the same thing twice.
“If you would just listen the first time,” we say, “we’d be much happier.”

I’m sure you’ve felt this way before, too.

There’s a frustration to saying the same thing twice.

A frustration that goes along with not being heard the first time,
or ignored,
or avoided,

or any of the many reasons we weren’t heard the first time.

Let us thank God that He doesn’t frustrate as quickly as we do!

In fact, our God delights to say the same thing twice!

And Eugene was just the sort of person who would like to hear the same thing twice.

In our Old Testament reading chosen for today the Lord repeats Himself—
everything is said twice!

Notice how the text starts

(you might want to follow along here, in your bulletin)—

**“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me”** (Isa 61:1).

Those two things are the same!

The Spirit of God is upon this servant the Prophet—
that’s what it means to be anointed.

And another word for anointed is “*messiah-ed*” or “*Christened*”.

Again, we have another double!

Isaiah is the Prophet who gives us these words today,

but we know there’s another who is anointed, “*messiah-ed*” and “*Christened*”—
that’s Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ!

And, in fact,

Jesus Himself quoted this passage of Isaiah on that day when He entered the synagogue,
unrolled the scroll, read it, and proclaimed to those gathered around,

“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Lk 4:21).

They heard it once from Isaiah, and now again from Christ.

And I'm sure Eugene, having both a Father and a brother in the ministry,
heard it countless times throughout his life.

But that's just the way of our Lord—
He never tires of saying the same thing twice.

So now, what is it that this Lord says that's so important He must do it twice?

Well, here we've got to follow our text carefully—
there are three things this Lord is sent to do:

1. to *bring* good news to the poor, giving to those who mourn a great sign of hope and restoration and joy.
2. to *bind up* the brokenhearted, comforting those who mourn.
3. to *preach*.

Preach what?

Preach freedom to the captives,
release to the prisoners,
and the year of favor and justice and life for the oppressed.

This Lord is sent as a preacher with a Word.

It's this Word,
this proclaimed and preached freedom that stands at the very center of the Lord's work.

And when we remember that Jesus Christ Himself *is* the Word made flesh—
we can begin to understand why the Lord loves to say the same thing twice.

He says it once through all His prophets of old,
the entire Old Testament tells of our God speaking forth His Word of freedom *for us*.
And then He says it again by taking flesh born of Mary and becoming man.

In Christ, God shows that He has more patience than a typical father or mother.
God *wants* to say the same thing twice.
And He wants to be heard.

He doesn't want you to miss what He says—
He doesn't want you to miss this word of *freedom, liberty, release, joy, and resurrection*.

Eugene got this message—
I'm not sure whether it was the first time, or the second time—
or the fiftieth time or the 3,000th time—
Eugene got this message.

Our Lord Jesus came to Eugene both by the preached Word by the mouth of his pastor,
and by the enfleshed Word, the bread and wine of Holy Communion.

It's this double-speak, this saying the same thing twice, that seemed to catch Eugene's attention.

And because of that, how blessed is he now!

He's received the good news,

his broken heart (both physically and spiritually) is bound up and fixed, better than new!

His captivity to sin and weakness and the prison of his sinful flesh is now open;

he's no longer bound by anything!

The Lord's favor has come—

the day of vengeance on his sin has come; it is no more.

His mourning has turned to gladness.

He wears a beautiful headdress, a crown of priceless jewels—

no longer wearing the signs of repentance, sorrow, or anguish—

for Eugene, there are no more Ash Wednesdays, only Easter Sundays!

All of this has been the Lord's work for Eugene.

Why?

Because He loves him.

Because that's what this Christ, this Messiah, this anointed Jesus has been sent to do!

This Christ has faithfully done the work laid before Him—

He has brought the good news, the Gospel, of sins forgiven to the poor,

by dying on the cross in their place.

He has bound up the brokenhearted and those mourning,

by becoming one of us, standing in the midst of our hardships, pains, and death,

and He has proclaimed and preached Himself to all the world,

by sending out faithful ministers of the Word, Apostles, Prophets, and Pastors.

And because of all this, our Lord Jesus has made this Eugene an “**oak of righteousness,**”

a “**planting of the Lord**” (Isa 61:3).

And it all happened through the Word—

and twice over, at that!

By the Word splashed on him at just one week of age,

and by the Word He came to trust as a true preaching of his sins forgiven

for the sake of Christ alone, and Him crucified.

It's a good thing our Lord has more patience for His children than we do.

That He doesn't tire of saying the same thing twice.

For by this speaking of the Word,

He continues to draw sinners into His care, His freedom, His life—

sinners like Eugene,

sinners like you and me.

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit