

Pastor Geoffrey R. Boyle
The Third Sunday after the Epiphany
27 January 2013
Grace-Trinity Lutheran Churches, Wichita
Lk 4:16-30

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

There was a Man.
Ordinary. Plain. Familiar and gentle.

He spoke—but not of things ordinary.
It was short, even abrupt, and they marveled.
When He finished He sat down.

The words were enough.
But they weren't enough for them.
They wanted more than the Word.
They wanted action, proof, power.

So He gave them more words—words they didn't like so much.
These were cutting words.
Hard words.
Words that revealed the hidden and the forsaken.
Words that spoke the truth that had been covered.
These were offensive words.

That's not what they wanted.
Not more words; and especially not those words.
They wanted bigger and stronger and better.
They wanted to be entertained and dazzled and impressed.
They wanted miraculous and magnificent *works*—not words.

But the speaking Man just had words for them.
At first simple, abrupt, promising words.
Then more and cutting words.
But all in all, just words.

Now these words did something to them they didn't like.
Though they wanted *works* and got only *words*, they didn't realize that the *words worked*.
They did something.
They brought fear and hate, anger and murder.
These words would either kill Him or them;
and so the people chose Him.

But not yet.
It wasn't His hour.
The man makes it out, slipping through their hands—*for now*.

The Man who came with words is Jesus.

As John says in his Gospel,

“He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him.” (Jn 1:11)

In today’s Gospel, Jesus came to His own in Nazareth,

“where He had been brought up” (Lk 4:16),

and **“when they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath.**

And they rose up and drove Him out of the town

and brought Him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built,

so that they could throw Him down the cliff.” (Lk 4:28-29)

He read from the Prophet Isaiah and promised them that in Him these *words* are fulfilled.

He promised the Spirit of God, that once hovered over the face of the deep, now rests upon Him.

He promised that He is the anointed, the Messiah, the Christ.

He promised to proclaim the Gospel, the good news to the poor,

liberty to the captives,

sight to the blind,

freedom to the oppressed,

and a time of favor and peace with God.

He promised them something they thought was too good to be true.

They had had enough promises, enough words—they wanted proof—

“For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom” (1 Cor 1:22).

“Is not this Joseph’s son?”

He’s just one of us.

Ordinary. Plain. Simple.

And all He has are words.

No magic or power or splendor or majesty to attract us to Him (Isa 53:2).

And how often we find ourselves in this same synagogue.

Sick of words.

When it comes to the faith, we’d rather have the miraculous and the spectacular, than *just words*.

But take a minute and consider what words this Jesus comes with.

For a second, ignore your watch.

Ignore your eyes.

Ignore, just for a moment, the world around you.

And listen to the words.

Freedom, sight, liberty, peace.

And all these come from another word: *forgiven*.

Jesus, who is the Word incarnate, comes with the word of forgiveness.

As Paul said earlier,

“For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,

but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.”

(1 Cor 1:22-23)

This Crucified Jesus comes to speak you free and forgiven.

And so here you are again.

Once you heard words and were filled with anger.

But now you are filled with words;

and you hear this speaking Man in a different way than before.

Now you don't come out of the hall with stones in your hands.

You sit.

With mouths still gaping wide at what He said.

At his words.

Now you are so grasped by His first words—

words of freedom, peace, liberty, and sight—

that His second words fell flat on your deaf ears.

Now you are mesmerized by His promise.

That shocking promise of a world so otherworldly coming from a mouth so plain and ordinary.

So human and regular—how does such majesty come forth.

And if what He's said is true, it's true *for me*.

He said it *to me*.

I am the poor and the captive, the blind and the oppressed.

I am the one in need of our Lord's favor—

and here He says it's all for me!

For that, let us adore Him.

Let us adore this Man who comes with words.

Who speaks and things happen.

The sun and moon, the earth and sky—all were set in place by His word.

And you—your sins, your captivity, your blindness—

all if it, all of you, were also changed at His Word.

“I forgive you all your sins.”

It accomplishes what it says.

His Word *works*.

And you are free.

Adore this Christ.

For He has come to you.

He stands today in your synagogue.

In your gathering.

Before your eyes, and in the hearing of your ears.

What seems so ordinary, just words, is given and shed for you for the forgiveness of all your sin.

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