

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY January 24, 2010

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY Almighty and everlasting God, open our eyes and hearts, we pray, so that when you speak, we hear You and follow; we pray through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE EPISTLE LESSON 1 Corinthians 12:12–31a

(Though individually members, we are all one body in Christ.)

12 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

14 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

31 But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.

THE GOSPEL LESSON Luke 4:16–30

(Jesus opens a scroll to read and fulfills its words in His person and work.)

16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. 17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: **18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."**

20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, 21 and he began by saying to them, **"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."**

22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked. 23 Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'"

INTRO - In 1984 my wife and I were asleep in bed on a Saturday night, Sunday morning. We lived in FL in our very first house. The house only cost \$43,000.00 but it was all we could afford. One night as the thunderstorm struck we discovered something. The water dripping right on the back of my neck at 3:00 am. woke me and let me know we needed a new roof. But by this time we had been in the house for a year and a half and we also knew we needed a new air conditioner, some more room, and some more new carpet. Only, spending all our money on the house we didn't have the money. We could have gone to a bank, but the interest rates in those days was about 13%. My dad had some savings. He loved us. He wanted to share his blessings with us. We borrowed the money for the house repairs from him at a reduced interest rate.

I. Today is Alaska Mission for Christ Sunday. Alaska Mission for Christ is the mission arm of our Alaska LCMS churches. The AMC helps us share our blessings with others.

A. When we do mission work we are following Jesus' call to share our blessings with others.

1. God the Father, according to His plans, sent His Son into the world because we were trapped in sin, like people in Haiti trapped in rubble. He suffered for the sins of the whole world, died on the cross, rose again and has defeated sin and death. Jesus offers eternal life in heaven to the whole world when people believe that Jesus is their savior.

2. God's people are to share the blessings of God's love with others.

a. Jesus called us to "Go make disciples of all nations."

B. He calls us saying, "You shall be my witnesses to the ends of the earth."

B. The LCMS churches in Alaska formed the AMC in the late 1980's to do the work we can't do as a congregation of getting the good news of Jesus to the people of Alaska.

1. There are places and times it is difficult for our workers and churches to reach.

2. The motto of the Alaska Mission for Christ is "sharing Christ in the last Frontier."

3. The workers of the AMC help us to share the love and blessings we have in Jesus in Alaska. The last 2 Saturdays we even interviewed new missionaries.

II. But, imagine for a moment things didn't work out the way I said with my Dad.

Imagine we had the need, and my dad loved us and wanted to help, but he didn't have the savings. Without the money to loan, he could not have helped us.

A. Imagine, we are called to share good news, but we've forgotten it, or lost it, or misplaced it. How can we share it? That's what happened in our lesson for today.

1. These people knew the prophecies and were waiting for the Messiah. They had heard of Jesus' miracles. That's why they packed the synagogue. In fact the Jews also had the call to share God's love with

others.

2. You see, Jesus told the people He was the Messiah they were looking for. Taking the scroll of Isaiah from the synagogue leader, he read a prophecy about the Messiah, and then told the people, "**Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.**"

3. They had the Messiah they were looking for, the Messiah they were supposed to share, right their in their place of worship.

B. But, somehow they lost the Messiah of God they were looking for as quickly as they had Him in their midst.

1. Verse 22 says, **22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.**

2. They were amazed that someone they knew spoke so graciously. They had heard He performed miracles. But, they knew him, so they asked, *"Is it true? Isn't this Joseph's son? He just claimed to be the Messiah. How can it be?"*

3. No wonder Jesus responded as he did. **23 Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'**"

4. Jesus knew that He had revealed Himself to them as the Messiah they were looking for, the Messiah they were to share. But, in their questioning, their doubt, their hard hearts, they had lost the Messiah they were looking for.

5. If they had lost him, how could they share him?

III. My dad was a frugal man, perhaps the most careful with his money of anyone I ever knew. But, if he had not been careful, he would not have had the money to share.

This year we are looking at how God calls us to live. But, instead of telling us what to do, today's lesson warns us what not to do. Don't lose the treasure you wait for.

A. These people in Nazareth had been waiting for the gift from God and lost it. What makes us think we can't lose the Messiah ourselves. It happens.

1. The possessions of this world can seem more real than the treasures of God, and people can forsake God for the things of this world.

2. Religious people can focus on themselves, and on their efforts. We can trust ourselves, rather than the mercy and love of God.

3. In times of trouble people can think God has forgotten them, and lose the love of God they need.

4. It happened to the people in Nazareth, for a while at least, and it can happen to us. In fact, if you look at the American Christian Church you can see that people are losing their faith and love for Jesus on a regular basis.

5. If we lose Him, how can we share Him?

B. Jesus shows the Jews where to find Him. He reads the Bible to them.

1. **18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."**

2. The Bible pointed the Jews to Jesus. It points us to the fact that we are

prisoners of our sin, that we can be blind to God's love, that we can have God's favor and blessings right in front of us and miss it.

3. The Scriptures point to our need, and they point to God's answer, the Messiah, Jesus our Savior, the most precious gift we have ever received.

C. If we want to keep the precious good news of God's love in Jesus, Jesus's example is a help.

1. Reading God's word and reminding ourselves of our sin, of the problems we cause ourselves, shows our need.

2. Using God's Word and reminding ourselves of our only hope, points us to our Savior.

3. Keeping ourselves in God's word not only shows our sin, and shows God's love, but through His Word God keeps our faith strong. It's a way to care for our precious gift!

CONCLUSION - In all honesty, my dad did not love his money, but he knew it was important and valuable. So, he was careful and managed it well. When he had the opportunity to show love by sharing his resources, it was there. God does call us to share His love with the whole world. But, to share God's love, we need to possess it in faith. God gives himself to you today in worship and His word. Cherish the gift, so you can share it. If we cherish it, we want to share it. The AMC can help us go places we can't go on our own.