

Daniel Waldschmidt – Isaiah 61:1-3

**Isaiah 61:1-3 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, 2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.**

**Matthew 3:13-17** <sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.<sup>14</sup> But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" <sup>15</sup> Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. <sup>16</sup> As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. <sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

We are in the season of the church year called Epiphany. "Epiphany" comes from a Greek word "epifaino" (επιφαίνω) which means "to shine." When we think about Epiphany, first of all we think about the Wise Men who followed the shining star to the baby Jesus. But epiphany can also mean "a revelation," like "I've had an epiphany!" A revelation is something I didn't know before, but it has been revealed. It revealed many things when Jesus was baptized and so along with the story of the Wise Men, the story of the baptism of Jesus is associated with Epiphany because there at Jesus' baptism God revealed things to us. First of all God revealed at Jesus' Baptism that Jesus is the Son of God. God spoke from heaven and said, "This is my Son whom I love, with him I am well pleased." Another thing that was clearly revealed at Jesus' baptism was that God is Triune. At Jesus' baptism we see all three persons of the Trinity. God the Father speaks from heaven. God the Son is being baptized in the water. And God the Holy Spirit is also seen at Jesus baptism. In our Gospel it says: "**At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.**" (Matthew 3:16) "To alight" means to come down and rest on him. So at Jesus Baptism the Holy Spirit came down and remained on Jesus.

This was predicted many years before in the book of Isaiah where before Jesus was even born Jesus spoke and said, **"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me" (Isaiah 61:1).**

Several times in the Old Testament, the Spirit of the LORD would come upon people to give them power. For example, the Spirit of the LORD several times came upon Samson and gave him super human physical strength (Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14) so that he could defend the LORD's people. In the Old Testament, when the Spirit of the LORD comes upon someone, it's always to give the strength to do the job that the LORD had given them to do.

Now Jesus had been given an important job to do, the job of saving us from our sins. And the Holy Spirit came powerfully upon Jesus to him strength for that task. It said in our second lesson today that **"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power."** Now of course we know that Jesus is all powerful already because Jesus is God and God is all powerful. But remember that Jesus is in his state of humiliation, he's not using all of the strength that he has as God. And so the Holy Spirit gives him power in his human nature to carry out the task that the LORD had given him to do, to save the world from their sins.

So at his baptism Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. **"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me." (Isaiah 61:1).** Today our theme is that the LORD was Anointed at His Baptism.

To anoint means to pour oil on someone's head. It sounds a little bit strange to us, but anointing someone was their way in the Old Testament saying that this person has been given a special job to do. For example they would anoint kings, to show that God has given this person the special job of being a king. In 1 Samuel 16:13 we read: **"So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed David [to be king] ... and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David."** They would also anoint priests who had the special job of making sacrifices. They would also anoint prophets who had the special job of speaking God's word. Well, Jesus is our prophet. He speaks God's word to us. He's our priest. He made the ultimate sacrifice to God for our sins. And he is also our King. When he was baptized, he was anointed to show that he has those three special jobs to do: prophet, priest and King.

Now the Hebrew word for "to anoint" is "mashach" and the Hebrew word for the anointed one is "Mashiach." That's where we get our English word

"Messiah." The Greek word for "to anoint, or pour oil on the head" is "chrio" (χρίω) and the Greek word the anointed one is "Christos" (χριστός). That's where we get our English word "Christ." So Messiah and Christ both mean anointed one. Our Lord was anointed at his baptism.

The fact that he was anointed means that he had been given a special job to do. Isaiah talks about what the Messiah's special job was: **"the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor."** (Isaiah 61:1) Here we see that Jesus was anointed to be our prophet, the one who speaks God's word to us. Jesus was anointed to proclaim or to preach good news to the poor. I don't always think about Jesus as a preacher, but he certainly was. In Matthew 4:17 it says: **"From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.'"** In Luke 4, it says that Jesus preached at the synagogue in Nazareth and he preached on Isaiah 61. The very words of our lesson. In Luke 4 it says: **He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and 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 proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." [f] 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 He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."**

Jesus says that our passage from Isaiah is about him. He is the one who fulfills these words. Jesus is the one who brings **"freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,"** (Isaiah 61:1). The LORD was anointed at his baptism not only to be our prophet, but also to be our priest. A priest makes sacrifices to God. Christ made the ultimate sacrifice when he sacrificed himself on the cross. We were captives in the gloomy dungeon of sin and if we would not have been released from that dungeon, then we would be caught in the prison of hell forever. But Jesus' sacrifice on the cross released us from the dungeon of sin and hell. Because of Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary, there is **"freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,"** (Isaiah 61:1)."

Jesus came to proclaim **"the year of the Lord's favor."** (Isaiah 61:2) In the Old Testament there was something called the Jubilee year. Every 50<sup>th</sup> year was a Jubilee year and in a Jubilee year, all slaves were set free and all

debts were cancelled. Our sin is like an enormous debt, millions and millions of dollars of debt. But because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, it is perpetually the Jubilee year. All your sins are forgiven because of Jesus; death on the cross. Of course that doesn't mean that we should go sin all we want. That would be an insult to Jesus. But Jesus death on the cross really has won you a jubilee forgiveness for all your sins. Your debt of sin has been cancelled because of Jesus priestly sacrifice on the cross.

Jesus' priestly sacrifice has taken away all your sins and in exchange Jesus has given you his perfect righteousness. In our gospel lesson Jesus said that he must be baptized in order **to fulfill all righteousness**. Jesus lived a life of perfect righteousness so that he could give it to you. That's why it says: **"They will be called oaks of righteousness," (Isaiah 61:3)**. Oaks are stable and they last for a long time. Well, because your sins have been forgiven and because you have righteousness from Jesus, you are an oak of righteousness. The life that you have from Jesus is stable, so stable that it will last forever.

The LORD was anointed at his baptism to be our prophet, our priest, and finally our Lord was anointed to be our king. **"The day of vengeance of our God."** Kings fight for their people and protect their people and our King Jesus defeated Satan for us to protect us from our enemy Satan.

Jesus our King rescued us out of the dominion of darkness and brought us into his kingdom. And in his kingdom there is great joy. **"to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, (Isaiah 61:3)**. A crown of beauty. The Bible says that we will reign with Christ in heaven. Christ our King gives us **"the oil of joy instead of mourning" (Isaiah 61:3)**. Christ's kingdom is a very joyful kingdom. Christ himself is very joyful. Our psalm for the day said about Jesus: **"God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." (Psalm 45:7)** Jesus himself is very joyful and he wants to give you joy. **"The oil of joy instead of mourning" (Isaiah 61:3)**. When people in the Old Testament would go to a party or other festive occasion, they would put on oil. These oils would make them smell nice. If you were wearing oils, it meant that you were going to a party and that you were in a good mood. In a sense we do the same thing today. We have shampoo to make our hair clean. Some guys after they shave put after-shave balm on their face. And generally you feel better after you take a shower and shampoo your hair. You feel fresh and clean. Jesus gives to us **The oil of joy instead of mourning" (Isaiah 61:3)**. Jesus your King, wants you to be joyful. Look at how many things he has done for you to make you joyful. He has canceled your debt of sin. He's

promised you that you will live forever and reign with him in heaven. We can be very joyful.

And Jesus gives us all of those blessings as we are united with him in our baptisms. Today we have been thinking about Jesus' baptism and that makes us also think about our own baptisms. The Bible says that we are baptized into Christ. That means that when we are baptized we are united to Christ. And there are a lot of blessings that come from being united to Christ. One blessing is that when God says to Jesus, "You are my Son whom I love, with you I am well pleased" he is also saying to us, "You are my son, you are my daughter whom I love, with you I am well pleased." Because you are united to Christ. We can have great joy because we are united to Christ through baptism.

Today we saw Jesus anointed at his baptism. He was anointed because he had special jobs to do. He was anointed into his job as prophet to proclaim God's words to us. He was anointed into his job as priest to make the sacrifice for our sins. He was anointed into his job as King to rule over us in justice and righteousness. When you see Jesus go into the Jordan and when you see the Spirit descend on him, you see Jesus publically stepping into his role as your Savior. Amen.