



Daily Reflections

January 23, 2022

Scripture

Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-30

Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all. He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring glad tidings to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

Our Scripture Reflection

Our Gospel reading today from St. Luke contains two beginnings: The actual beginning of the Gospel itself and the beginning of Our Lord's public ministry in His hometown synagogue at Nazareth. Both beginnings offer the believer hope. St. Luke teaches us through His well-researched and well-organized Gospel that Jesus really and truly IS the way for us. He and He alone offers true and everlasting life to those who are humble enough to believe and follow Him.

Food for your Journey

Tim Keller says, "One of the things that we learn as we grow in the faith is that the gospel is not just the ABC of the faith, it's the A to Z of the faith." You never get finished with the gospel and then move on to the profound stuff. The gospel is the really profound stuff.—Sermon by J. Ligon Duncan, "Jesus: The great revelation of God: Part 1," fpcjackson.org, March 18, 1998. Retrieved April 7, 2018.

There's a reason Jesus said "You shall be my witnesses," and not "You shall be my marketers." Almost no one in America could fail to recognize that marketing -- both its language and culture -- has become an epidemic. And that, more unfortunately, it has become a significant means of "promoting" the church and the gospel in American Christianity, with billboards, soundbites, slogans and come-ons. The language and practice of marketing so saturates the Christian world, it is difficult to remember a time when it was not so fashionable.

Should it surprise us that in this church-marketing era, members demand more and more from their churches, and if churches don't deliver, they take their spiritual business elsewhere? Have we ever seen an age in which church transience was such an epidemic?

Should it surprise us that in this era, pastors increasingly think of themselves as "managers," "leaders" and "CEOs" of "dynamic and growing congregations," rather than as shepherds, teachers and servants of people who need to know God? And that preaching has become less an exposition of the gospel of Jesus' death and resurrection and more often practical lessons that offer a lot of "take-away value," presented in an efficient, friendly manner, as if we were selling cheeseburgers, fries and a shake?

How can we possibly communicate the radical, self-giving love of God to our culture if we continue to use a method that by its very nature replaces the notions of sacrificial service for an exchange of goods and services?

--Mark Galli, "Do I have a witness?," Christianity Today, October 2007. christianitytoday.com. Retrieved December 21, 2017.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, You love me so much that You entered this life as a man to suffer and die for me. I could never be found worthy of such a sacrificial gift. But Lord, You love me so much that You entrust me with Your Gospel. Help me to live Your way to the fullest even when it is neither easy nor popular to do so. Amen

