

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, January 23rd, 2022, Third Sunday after Epiphany
Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10, Psalm 19, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a, Luke 4:14-21

Jesus today reads from the prophet Isaiah, and that he is the one that the Spirit of the Lord is upon, and he is anointed to bring good news to the poor, release of the captives, sight to the blind and to free the oppressed.

Am I the only one? That this feels similar to both the Beatitudes and the Magnificat?

This seems to be a type of beginning. This before we get to Pentecost, we have several new beginnings. I've mentioned the Beatitudes and Magnificat, but we have also come through Christmas, Epiphany, the Baptism of our Lord, and last week the wedding feast at Cana.

This started with Mary the mother of Jesus before he was born with the Magnificat and continues with Jesus himself. It may be so much new beginnings as reminding us of what we are about, that every day is a new beginning of sorts. That we need to hear the message over and over again.

And as I have said before, the blessings given to Jesus are not just for him but for us as well.

That we too in some way and not alone have been anointed to bring good news to the poor, release of the captives, sight to the blind and to free the oppressed.

This may be a new beginning, but Herbert O'Driscoll in his commentary on this passage has given me new insight perhaps.....

At Epiphany, the gift of gold is to indicate we with Jesus are to take on the role of kings to gather the kin or family together, but O'Driscoll uses the word *liberator* to talk about Jesus and by extension our role as well. That we are to liberate people from poverty, captivity, blindness and oppression.

So, is this a challenge for us to be both gatherer and bringer of peace and liberator?

But maybe they are connected.

I like the metaphor of the banquet for the Kingdom of God, so the passage in Psalm 23: *You prepare a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me,*

Is combining the two words.....

That we are to welcome at the Banquet table and take on in a sense the problems of those who we bring to the table, those on the margins. Their problems are our problems, and to welcome them at the table is to take our part in liberating them from poverty, captivity, blindness and oppression.

Then again, we may be coming to the table with issues of our own, and we may need to be reminded that we belong at the table and that we can be liberated or at least supported in community as well.

Amen