

Healthy Habits: Vision
Luke 4:14-21
January 8, 2017

Focus: Healthy Habits = Healthy people who know where they are going.

2017 is here and we are eight days in already! How in the world did this happen so fast and again another new year??? I remember as a kid looking forward to the New Year. Watching Dick Clark and the ball drop on New Year's Eve was a highlight – and I couldn't wait until I was old enough to stay up. Then it became a party and a time to spend with friends and enjoy before the end of the holidays. And now ... it's just another year. I struggle to stay up that late and in fact a few years I've just gone to bed and not bothered to even watch the clock turn twelve. When you've been through so many years, what's one more.

And yet, even as I say that I'm acutely aware of the power of time slipping away. Have a child and watch them grow so quickly and you know that time flies by. And our faith too can stress the importance of living each moment and being conscious of the time we've been given. Each new day is a reminder of the Creation and what God did for us at the beginning. Our sermon series in September on IF we discussed how God gives us each day as an IF possibility to live with him. So during the next five weeks, Healthy Habits will give us a chance to examine how we can take 2017 and make it precious in God's sight. Today we look at vision; at the beginning of the year, where are we going over the next 357 days?

HEALTHY PEOPLE KNOW WHERE THEY ARE GOING.

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. (Proverbs 29:18 KJV)

In our scripture today, Jesus knows exactly where he is going. We just celebrated Christmas and he's been born and escaped to Egypt and returned to Galilee. He's now fully grown and he's encountered John and been baptized in the Jordan river, been tempted and prepared in the Wilderness and now he begins his ministry in his hometown of Nazareth. READ Luke 4:14-21.

Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region. ¹⁵ He taught regularly in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. ¹⁶ When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. ¹⁷ The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written:

***¹⁸ "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me,
for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released,
that the blind will see,
that the oppressed will be set free,***

¹⁹ and that the time of the LORD's favor has come."

²⁰ He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. ²¹ Then he began to speak to them. "The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!"

Our scripture begins this morning with Jesus returning from his time away in the wilderness and it says he was, ***filled with the Holy Spirit's power.*** Now while each of our gospels has a different angle on Jesus'

birth, it is very interesting that in some way they all discuss the power of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' life. In Luke when the angel speaks to Mary, the Holy Spirit is present in the conception. When John the Baptists' father prophesies about his son and then his cousin Jesus, Luke is very clear that he is filled with the Holy Spirit. In Matthew when Joseph has the visions in his dreams and takes Mary as his wife, the Holy Spirit is guiding those decisions and today in Jesus' first act in ministry, the Holy Spirit is there from the very beginning. ... **filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region.** And this scripture is a reminder to us that yes, while we just celebrated Jesus' birth, we can not forget his words to us when he ascends into heaven – **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.** Luke, the writer of Acts, is clear that while the Holy Spirit is present for the beginning of Jesus' ministry, because we are believers, the Holy Spirit is very present with us each and every day. And so as we begin a new year, this is an important reminder to us – the Holy Spirit is present with us and we too are filled with the Spirit's power. Jesus doesn't want us to look upon this as, 'just another year.' But instead to look upon this as another year of opportunity with the power of the Holy Spirit as our guide. I also believe this passage reminds us and gives us power to walk each day in a different way. To not see the drab of another cold winter morning, but to grasp the Holy Spirit power we've been given and take our day with God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDES OUR VISION.

Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region. (Luke 4:14 NLT)

Maybe you say you haven't felt the Holy Spirit. You aren't Jesus – of course he had the Spirit. But in a way, he just did it. He came out of the baptism and temptation in the wilderness and went about mission and grabbed the Holy Spirit. John Wesley once said to a preacher who doubted he had faith, "preach faith until you have faith." John Wesley, the founder of our church, was saying live this. Find the scripture that is your nugget or life guidance and live it. And the Holy Spirit is already with you. Jesus promised that and said to us that the Holy Spirit is our guidance and our counselor and our comfort.

And being filled with the power of the Spirit, Jesus walks into the synagogue and reads the scripture. Now it was the custom in Jesus' day for the men to stand and read a portion of the scripture and then one or several of them would sit down and explain it, basically, give a short sermon. And so this is exactly how Jesus begins his ministry. He reads from Isaiah and gives his vision and mission for ministry in the process.

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I love that at the end, he sits down and simply says, "Today it has been fulfilled in your presence." This is Jesus' mic drop moment. He's being very clear about who he is and where he is going. No need for more discussion or a short sermon ... yo this is who I am, and I will do these things. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me (another very clear intention that the Holy Spirit's power is guiding) and then he [the Lord] has

anointed me and sent me. And then the next 20 chapters will be Jesus living out this vision statement. He knows he has been anointed by God, he knows the power of the Holy Spirit is with him and he is very clear that he has been sent for this ministry. Now with this word 'sent', apostello in Greek, it is used, especially with Jesus or his followers it is a sending by God's authority for mission. Over and over again, Jesus will use this exact word to describe how he has been sent by the father. And then in Luke every time he sends the disciples to do ministry it too is this word. When he sends the disciples two by two, when he appoints the 70 and sends them out and in the last chapter at the resurrection Jesus sends the disciples out. So when Jesus reads this passage and lives it out in his life, death and resurrection – we now are sent. He sends us into the world to be his people, to make a difference and to live his example. This scripture hits us directly, because he sends us.

This scripture is the reminder at the beginning of a new year that we are all sent with a mission and vision. Jesus was clear, he knew he was to bring the Good News, freedom for the oppressed and release for the captives. And throughout the gospel of Luke, we see Jesus over and over again with the poor, the rejected, the oppressed and the outcast ministering and bringing new life and Good News. As he was sent, he lived his vision in the world. And he was extremely focused in his ministry. He stresses who he is and why he's come.

JESUS SENDS US INTO 2017.

The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released... (Luke 4:18 NLT)

Where will you live God's vision in the next 12 months? What brings you passion and energy and you are being sent to fulfill? Where's your mic drop moment?

A few years ago the hottest thing in business leadership books was to develop a personal mission and vision statement. The idea being that if you knew your vision and mission you could be more productive and effective at work. In IF, Mark Batterson talked about the power of a life goal list. So what is your faith mission and vision? Where will you go with God? And this scripture is also very clear that this is not a resolution to begin the new year, this is a sending from God and you are indeed filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus had a life goal. He just preached it in the synagogue and then lived it throughout his life. Jesus lived his life with the mission to free the oppressed. Is your mission to work with the poor and oppressed in our society. To jump into a mission trip to Sierra Leone, to work with those trapped in the sex trade and work to free them from their oppression. To join the food pantry or clothing connection to bring Good News to those suffering in the Harrisburg area. Bring Good News to the children and students by volunteering in one of those areas. ... And he also walked to the cross and resurrection to free our lives from sin. He came to save us and desires us to live with his freedom. Maybe this year you are being called to grow your faith to live your faith in new and unique ways. Jump into a small group because you recognize that you are called to build your relationship.

WHERE WILL YOU GO? _____

Then he began to speak to them. "The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!"
(Luke 4:21 NLT)

And after his mic drop moment, when it is normally the time in the synagogue to give a short explanation or sermon on the scripture, Jesus has just a few words for that ancient audience and us.

²¹ ***Then he began to speak to them. “The Scripture you’ve just heard has been fulfilled this very day!”***
Other translations say, ***Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your presence.*** How’s that for a sermon huh – 9 words? All he needs to say is, ***Today this has been fulfilled.*** Jesus’ presence and ministry is instantaneous and immediate. Jesus is teaching us that our time is today. Not tomorrow, or when my kids graduate, or when I’m retired, or I already did that, I’m retired. ***Today this scripture has been fulfilled.*** Today God wants to send you. Today you have a vision that God needs you to live in this world. 2017 has the power to be filled with the Holy Spirit if we, Jesus’ followers, live it.