

The 3rd Sunday after Epiphany
“Fulfilled in your hearing” Luke 4:21
January 26, 2025
Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for the 3rd Sunday after Epiphany is from our Gospel reading, Luke 4:17-21

“17 And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

**18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the
Lord.”**

20 Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

So far the text...

If you’ve ever ordered something, you most likely received a message that your order has been fulfilled. What does that mean? Well, it’s good news. The company has received your order, processed it, packaged it, and taken it to the shipper. You have a tracking number and you should be receiving your item soon.

On a spiritual level, God has given each of us responsibilities to fulfill according to our different positions in life. Martin Luther used Bible passages in the Small Catechism to list a Table of Duties for pastors, hearers of pastors, civil government, subjects to magistrates, husbands, wives, parents, children, young persons, widows, and for all in common. Luther wrote: “Let each his lesson learn with care, and all the household well shall fare.”

This week we heard our newly elected Vice-president Vance and President Trump take their oaths of office which they most diligently desire to fulfill, so help me God.

President Trump said these words:

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

What do we profess before the Triune God to fulfill as His disciples? Each of us as members of the church have solemnly answered these questions:

P Do you intend to hear the Word of God and receive the Lord's Supper faithfully?

R *I do, by the grace of God.*

P Do you intend to live according to the Word of God, and in faith, word, and deed to remain true to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, even to death?

R *I do, by the grace of God.*

P Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?

R *I do, by the grace of God.*

P Will you support the work our gracious Lord has given this congregation with your prayers and the gifts God has given you?

R *I will, with the help of God.*

Only by the grace of God, by the help of God can we answer yes I do, yes I will.

All our duties to fulfill can be summed up in a single word as

Galatians 5:14 says:

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

God's law is fulfilled with perfect love – toward God first and to our neighbor. How have we fulfilled our table of duties and responsibilities as Christians?

Scripture is also pretty clear, isn't it?

Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

And yet, there is very good news in the very next verse. For what we could never fulfill perfectly with our thoughts, words and deeds, Jesus did.

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

The closing prayer by Rev. Frank Mann at the presidential inauguration placed faith not in God but in man's goodness as he prayed:

"As we stand witness to this inauguration, we hold fast to our faith in the goodness of each of us and the possibility of change."

Goodness in each of us? The Bible is pretty clear in Psalm 14 that there is none that does good, no not one.

Then Rev. Mann's prayer really got strange.

And finally, we lift our hearts in gratitude for the beloved parents of President Trump. Without Mary and Fred Trump, this day would never be the miracle that has just begun. From their place in heaven, may they shield their son from all harm by their loving protection and give him the strength to guide our nation along the path that will make America great again."

President's parents don't have powers of protection. None of us are God. Scripture was fulfilled in Jesus alone – not in any other man or woman.

According to this prayer, our duties in heaven are to shield our sons and daughters from all harm by our protection? How falsely misleading this was to so many people who heard this. Test the spirits! 1 John 4:1. There is hearing and seeing but there is not understanding and perceiving as the prophecy of Isaiah continues to be fulfilled in our time. Matthew 13 says:

Matthew 13:14

And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive;

In our Gospel, the Jews who heard Jesus in the Synagogue in Nazareth did not understand and perceive. "Is this not Joseph's son?" They said. The Jews thought they were saved because of their nationality as God's chosen people. Yet Jesus sees into their hearts, and shows them that they need to humble themselves and trust in Him who has come to give sight to their spiritual blindness. They need to see Jesus as the Savior!

The Jews aren't saved because they are Jews. Jesus gave them two quick examples that infuriated them. There were lots of Jewish widows who needed help, but God sent Elijah

to a Gentile widow in Zaraphath. And there were many lepers in Israel when Elisha was prophet, but God sent him to Naaman the Syrian.

The Jews in the synagogue were so upset with Jesus' direct revealing of their unbelief that they tried to throw Jesus over the hill. So John wrote:

John 1:11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

2 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

For Jesus came to fulfill what no man could ever do – keep the Law perfectly.

Matthew 5:17

17 “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

This is the pure Gospel of which Jesus came to proclaim. In your hearing it is fulfilled Jesus said. The Savior is here in the flesh giving spiritual sight to the blind to see Him as the Savior...giving liberty to the captives in sin in the kingdom of the devil.

How did Jesus do this? By fulfilling all the Scripture spoken of Him. On the night when He was betrayed, Jesus said:

John 13:18

18 “I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.’

Though they tried to accuse Him of sin, they couldn't as Scripture prophesied.

John 15:25

25 But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, ‘They hated Me without a cause.’

And finally to fulfill Scripture Jesus willingly allowed Himself to be crucified.

John 19:24

“Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,” that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says:

“They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.”

At His death, the Scripture was fulfilled:

John 19:36-37

36 For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, “Not one of His bones shall be broken.” 37 And again another Scripture says, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”

But most joyfully, Scripture was fulfilled by His resurrection – proof of the fulfillment of our salvation!

Luke 24

40 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. 41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, “Have you any food here?” 42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. 43 And He took it and ate in their presence. 44 Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.”

God’s Word continues to be fulfilled in our hearing – by Word and Sacraments.

Romans 8:3-4

3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

As our sins are pardoned in the absolution, washed in our baptism, forgiven in the Lord’s Supper, God fulfills His righteous requirement in us! At Jesus baptism, we heard the good news that He took upon Himself our sins to fulfill all righteousness.

15 But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him. Matthew 3:15

Indeed we proclaim the acceptable year of our Lord. For He has forgiven us and accepted us by faith in Jesus!

In the Year of Jubilee, every 50 years, debts were cancelled, land returned, slaves released. It foreshadowed the debts that Jesus paid to set us free – our debt of sin, our enslavement under the devil's reign. Jesus announces that the fulfillment has come! Liberty for all enslaved by sin! Debt of sin cancelled! Good News proclaimed! The year of Jubilee for all! For you and me! Fulfilled at Jesus coming! Fulfilled by His death and resurrection! And it is fulfilled in you through faith in Him, as you receive complete pardon and live your lives to His glory! Amen

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)