

And now, may the words of my lips and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, for You are our Strength and our Redeemer. Amen

Last week, I shared some of thoughts regarding Jesus' first public sign at the Wedding at Cana, as it is recorded in John's gospel. I also mentioned that there seems to be an ever-widening circle of 'epiphany-type experiences' taking place within the different gospel readings we have shared going back to our celebration of the Day of the Epiphany on January 5th, and right up to and through today's reading from Luke.

Today, I wish to begin by taking a journey with you back through this season of Epiphany for 2025 to recount some of these 'epiphanies.' I believe you will soon see how the events shared in each of the gospel readings over the past weeks, help us to see how Jesus was beginning to understand what his mission was all about. And how the people around him were beginning to experience his presence, his person, and his mission to bring all humankind back to God. And, to cause us to ask ourselves, what is God's will for all humankind?

At the Epiphany, which we celebrated on January 5th, the wisemen arrived to find this child who they believed to be destined to be the new "King of the Jews." The Magi came bearing gifts fit for royalty and presented these gifts to the child. Yet, these learned men probably did not fully

comprehend just how great this child would be. It would be the aged Simeon, a devout man living in the Temple, who would announce to the child's parents just how powerful his presence would be in the world.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, understood from very early on, that this child would be unique, and that he was God, present to us in human form, God living among God's own children. More about Mary, in a moment.

First, we need to look at another 'epiphany event.' The day on which Jesus was baptized by John's disciples, in the River Jordan, do you recall how the sky was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove? And, then there was the voice of the Creator which spoke to Jesus, assuring Jesus of his favour before God, the Creator. Remember that? That was our gospel reading from two weeks ago.

Well, from Luke's gospel account, I believe Jesus experienced an epiphany of his own on that day. Jesus' understanding of who he was and what the Creator was doing, was at that moment beginning to sink home for Jesus.

And then, we come to last week's gospel from John, the Wedding at Cana, and the first sign of Jesus public ministry as shared in John's gospel. The changing of water into wine. In this event, we find several more 'epiphanies.' Let me review

them for you – the wine steward finding the best wine in the jars when he sampled the contents, the servants who filled those same jars with water and who knew what Jesus' mother, Mary, had said to them, "Do what he tells you to do", and that is exactly what they did. Mary knew what Jesus was capable of doing, and she made sure there was opportunity so it could happen.

And finally, there were his disciples who watched all of this take place. At least that is how I wish to believe it happened. And the gospel tells us that "they believed in him". Ah, yet another 'epiphany' for the followers of Jesus!

Today, we come back to Luke's gospel, chapter 4, verses 14 to 21, and we find Jesus gaining renown as a teacher. He is quickly becoming known throughout the countryside and in the synagogues in many communities. In a moment, we will look at this passage from Luke. But first, we need to look at chapter 4, verses 1 through 13 of this Gospel, the story of the forty days in the wilderness and the temptation of Jesus.

In this wilderness experience, Luke tells us that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit. He is led by the Spirit to a place of solitude, a place of hunger, and a place lacking all the creature comforts which he would have been accustomed to enjoying, if he were at home in Nazareth.

In this desert place, Jesus wrestles spiritually with Satan for control of Jesus' own destiny as the Son of God. After forty days of deprivation, Satan offers Jesus three treasures - treasures which play directly into Jesus' human nature. In each attempt made by the devil, Jesus' spiritual-connection with the Creator prevails, and Satan fails.

In these verses from Luke, there are at least two more epiphanies – one on the part of Jesus, who realizes that Satan will always be there in every age to tempt each of us, working to achieve our downfall. And the second epiphany I believe is this - the realization on the part of Satan that Jesus is God, manifest in human form. In Jesus, Satan knows he has met his match. As the gospel story unfolds for us, we will find Satan and his army of evil return again and again to confront Jesus.

And now, finally we come to today's reading from Luke. Jesus has returned to his own town of Nazareth. His reputation as a speaker and as a teacher has preceded him. On the Sabbath, in the synagogue, He is invited to read from the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah. He unrolls the scroll to the portion which we know today as Isaiah, chapter 61, and begins to read, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me". After he had finished reading, he rolled up the scroll, as every eye in that space was watching him. He sat down and said this, "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

“Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Wow! Yet more epiphanies! How many more can we find?

There are more, but for now we need to understand what Jesus is saying. Jesus has stated clearly what his mission is all about. He has come from the Creator to fulfill all that Isaiah prophesized about in Isaiah 61. Jesus is the fulfillment of all of this prophecy. Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, is bringing Good News to all God’s children, all those who are oppressed, broken, impoverished, in prisons, hungry, in need of anything in nature, be it through lack of education, station in life, economic disparity, gender inequality, sickness, disability, homelessness, or whatever else is the reason. Jesus is there for all of us. We are God’s children, and it is God’s delight to give us “grace upon grace.” Remember that from last week? Grace upon grace. Here, we have yet another ‘epiphany.’

The gospel reading for today ends with Jesus’ pronouncement of his mission as being the fulfillment of the prophecy from Isaiah.

And yes, there will be more epiphanies for us to find. Of this, I am sure.

Oh, there is one more epiphany which I wish to share with you from the readings from John and Luke.

Jesus came to teach us to love and care for all God’s children, then and now. That was his mission. The social ills of his time

are the same ills we face today. We are faced daily with new epiphanies regarding how we need to respond to the needs of all humanity. For me, I know I can not do this without God's grace.

As we will see in the Gospel readings over the coming weeks, every human being is faced with a choice. A choice of bending to the will of our Creator, or going it alone. A choice of going forward with God's grace with the Holy Spirit as our guide, or, or acting alone. Going it alone, I can't envision that working out so well. Can you?

There are many epiphanies we experience throughout our lives. Epiphanies happen almost daily. And isn't it a blessing to know God's Spirit is here with us, guiding us as we discover who we are and what God is asking us to be?

Amen