

# Coffee to Go | Third Sunday After Epiphany | Year C

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Epiphany, God's revelation, Jesus Christ, Gospel of Luke, Spirit of the Lord, Mission Initiatives, economic justice, social reform, Community of Christ

## SPEAKERS

Blake Smith, Karin Peter

### Karin Peter 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go where we center ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter, and I'm here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. So in this third Sunday after Epiphany, the season after Epiphany. We are still acknowledging that Epiphany is a period of time where we celebrate or observe God's revelation, or God has made known God's light through Jesus Christ for all the world, not just Jews, not just early Christians. So, the season after Epiphany lasts until January. Last from January 7 until Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. During this time, we continue to look at the light and love of God as it's revealed in Jesus Christ, or as we learned last week, as we reflect it in the world as followers of Jesus Christ. So this Sunday, we are in church, which seems like a good place to be. Maybe on Sunday only, what we might call Sunday school class would have been on a Saturday, because Jesus was Jewish, and he was hanging out in the synagogue. And this is what transpired on that particular day.

### Blake Smith 01:49

Reading, excuse me, reading from the Gospel of Luke, the fourth chapter, the 14th through the 21st verse.

Then Jesus, in the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about Him spread through all the surrounding region. He began to teach in their synagogues, and was praised by everyone. When He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom, he stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written. 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who were oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

So why does this matter? Because it was the shortest sermon ever. That's why. No, and we're all for those. Well, why? Why won't some of our speakers just unroll it, read it and sit down? No, it matters. It

matters, especially to us in Community of Christ, because it is a critical text that is a foundation for our Mission Initiatives as a people. I mean, it is this. 'Christ's mission, our mission,' that we talk about. This is Christ's mission statement. We're at the beginning of Jesus ministry, and he's reading out of the Hebrew Scriptures, which was his heritage. He's reading from Isaiah, and then speaks that this has been fulfilled. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, not something that's going to come in the future. It's now. The time is now, and it's a call to action. There are so many issues in that time and in this time, poverty, illness, captivity, oppression, debt, and all of these things are due, you know, to the systems and the persons with power. They're economic, civic, religious, all those things that exploit the poor and marginalized while benefiting the rich. It is something that we are in the midst of now as a nation in the US, and this is a call to action. It's no, he's not pulling any punches here. The scripture does tell us that, you know, as he begins to speak, he's praised by all the people, but then his beginning right out of the gate. This mission statement is a call to economic justice and social reform. And we might wonder, how are they going to react? It's kind of, you know, we're I think back, when I hear this, I think back to the 12-year-old and the temple in Jerusalem, and you know, everybody's just in awe of his wisdom, and he's apparently a great orator. And so he stands up, and they're, they've heard things about him, and they're just anticipating what he's going to say. And so in the moment, they're caught up in the excitement of that. And, oh my goodness, you know, we're in his presence, and I'm thinking probably they're, after that, when they think about it a little bit, they might begin to say, well, well wait a minute. Wait a minute. Did he just ask us to do what I think he did?

**Karin Peter** 05:34

Well, this is one of those things, Blake, where we could go, 'stay tuned, because next week...', and then we're going to find out exactly how they reacted.

**Blake Smith** 05:43

Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. So some questions we might ask ourselves in this week are, Have I ever felt the Spirit of the Lord upon me, and what might we term a sense of call. So have you had that sense of call? When have you felt the Spirit upon you?

**Karin Peter** 06:12

I have, and the one that first came to mind was, I was in Escatawpa, Mississippi, actually, and had an experience in the congregation there that I would say I felt the spirit of the Lord upon me. Yeah, absolutely, yeah.

**Blake Smith** 06:28

Another question would be, how would I react if I went to church one day and encountered this kind of call? So, sitting in church, that's an interesting place to consider having that kind of experience. So, would you be on board, or would you be dismissive if you heard that kind of call? And finally, what current social, economic or political issues are you passionate about, and how do you act on this passion? Yeah, just some things to think about.

**Karin Peter** 07:07

Yeah, I'm acting on it. That's the key, isn't it? So, when we talk about experiencing this passage this week, one of the first things I think we can do to in, to live in it, is to inform ourselves. Because you

mentioned the mission initiatives. So, I would encourage everybody, Community of Christ or not, to go to cofchrist.org, and under About Us, scroll down to Mission Initiatives. And then, as you read those, ask yourself, what speaks to me in these? Is it compassionate ministry? Is it evangelism? Is it justice and peacemaking? Because those mission initiatives are based solely in this particular scripture, Invite People to Christ, Abolish Poverty, End Needless Suffering, and Pursue Peace On and For the Earth. So those, those live here and let's live in those what is speaking to me this week.

**Blake Smith** 08:13

So those Mission Initiatives are not just meant to go on banners. [No], they look pretty in our churches.

**Karin Peter** 08:19

They are calls to action?

**Blake Smith** 08:21

Yes, absolutely. Well, our blessing today comes from a Polish writer by the name of Anna Kaminska, and it is, "Those Who Carry," you may need to listen to this a couple of times. I know I had to read through it a couple of times to just catch the power and depth in this blessing.

**Karin Peter** 08:40

So one of the things about this writer is she lived through German occupation in World War Two. So that's just keep that as context.

**Blake Smith** 08:51

Very, very helpful context. So here it is...

"Those who carry grand pianos to the 10th floor, wardrobes and coffins, the old man with a bundle of wood hobbling toward the horizon, the lady with a hump of nettles, the mad woman pushing her baby carriage full of empty vodka bottles, they will all be raised up like a seagulls feather, like a dry leaf, like an eggshell, a scrap of newspaper on the street. Blessed are those who carry, for they shall be raised." Well, thanks for joining us here this week at Coffee to Go. We invite you as always, to join us next time for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition you.