Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“This scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21).

1 John 4:19--5:4; Luke 4:14-22

Imagine that early in your adult life you find an envelope with your name on it lying on a table at home. Inside is a text that describes someone with your ideals. You try to live up to this description as best you can.

A year later another envelope appears on the seat of your car. Again, the message is general but represents your deepest values, so you try to be that person.

Over the years, a succession of messages arrives at varying intervals, but you realize that no new text comes until you have fulfilled the earlier one. It is like you are getting the script for your life, both specific to your situation but always open ended, leaving you to figure out how to apply each text.

The four Gospels provide our only window to the person of Jesus, but through the glass darkly of their complex theological interpretations, we find someone immersed in the Scriptures.

The parables and sayings, regarded by scholars as original to Jesus, reveal a mind formed by the imagery and ideas of the Hebrew Bible, especially the prophetic books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and show us a spirituality shaped by the Psalms and other Wisdom writings. Jesus’ life seems to unfold according to the Scriptures as he steps into the role of Isaiah’s Suffering Servant, guiding his words, prayers and

actions.

This is never clearer than in today’s reading from Luke 4, in which Jesus returns to his hometown of Nazareth to deliver his inaugural vision by reading from the scroll of Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor” (Isa 61:1).

After the reading, with all eyes and ears in the synagogue fixed on him, he then says, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” From this time on, his life, ministry and death will be defined by the Word he has just submitted to with all his heart.

We are all formed by the Word of God. What text are we living by, seeking to fulfill today? We are scripted for life, and God’s Spirit is eager to anoint us to find out who we really are.

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