

Sermon: January 24, 2010
“Where would Jesus be today?”

What does someone look like or act like ... when he/she is *filled with the Holy Spirit*???

Most of us would probably say ---- “I am a Christian.”

On paper ... “being a Christian” means ---- we believe in Jesus.

Some of us say ---- Jesus is the Son of God ... he is our savior ... some go so far as to say ----- if you want to be saved (i.e, get into heaven), then you need “to believe in Jesus.”

And, let’s face it ----- there are lots of so-called “Christian churches” out there.

But ... honestly ... we’re not on the same planet as many of them.

I’m probably over-stating this ... but it’s how I honestly feel:

Being a Christian ... it’s not about what you “believe.” Heck ... we can “believe” anything ...

at least, we can say we “believe” anything ...

BEING A CHRISTIAN ... it’s about WHO YOU ARE.

It’s about your soul.

About your spirit.

It’s the very essence of your humanity.

We don’t know a lot about Jesus before his baptism at the age of 30. Oh, he ran away once at the age of 12 ... and then his parents found him teaching in the temple. He was baptized ... last week we read about his “coming-out” party ... turning water into wine.

TODAY ... Jesus finally figures it out.

He’s in the temple ... and it’s time to read the Scripture. He is the “lay-reader” for the day.

He reads these prophetic words:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and to recover sight to the blind ... and to let the oppressed go free...”

He gives the scroll back ... and says to those around him:

“Today this scripture has been fulfilled.”

Jesus knows ... now ... these words are about HIM.

God’s spirit ... it’s in him.

Jesus knows: I am the one who needs to bring the good news ... I am the one chosen to lift up the poor, and to set the captives free ... to bring sight to the blind. I am THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

For the next 3 years ... Jesus shows us how to live.

For 3 years ----- he is a beacon of hope, a spark of goodness ... “filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus was humble. He was kind. He walked with dignity and respect.

WE NEED TO RE-CAPTURE THIS.

Many churches have turned Jesus into a kind-of “magic-act” and a “super-hero” ...

We often turn Jesus into a ticket to an “exclusive club” where non-believers aren’t welcome.

Well ----- this can’t happen anymore.

We need to re-capture Jesus’ humble-but-strong spirit ... a spirit and power centered in the goodness and decency he brings into the world.

Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit ... and now HE PASSES THE TORCH ONTO US.

If Jesus were alive today (and he is!) ...

If Jesus were here today (and he is!) ...

Yes, if Jesus were here today ... he wouldn’t be in front of microphones ... he wouldn’t be on television ... he wouldn’t be calling attention to himself ...

He would be walking the streets of Haiti ...
He'd be at St. Joseph's Hospital ... holding Don Schroth's hand ...
He'd be in a junior high lunch room ... sitting with the kid who has no friends ...
He might show up here ... sit in the back row ... and hold onto one of you, whose husband just died.

You and I ... we are not Jesus.
You and I ... we are often frail and broken.
You and I ... our "imperfections" too often define us.
BUT ----- WE HAVE BEEN CALLED!!@
From love-buckets to back yards to unemployment lines ... from re-hab centers to "wherever it is" that you'll
be spending your time tomorrow ... remember: THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON US.
God has "anointed" us ... to set the prisoners free and to bring sight to those who cannot see.

I'm sure we all have those times ... when we are in places where nobody else knows us.
On vacation.
In a motel ...out-of-town on business.
The Ronald McDonald House ... living there while your young child is in the hospital.
It's kind-of fun ... when we are anonymous ... to drop "little blobs of goodness" on a total stranger.

*Maybe it's the tired lady who cleans your room everyday ...
A little kid in a waiting room, wondering what's going on ...
The server in the restaurant ... and you can just tell she needs the money ... probably working
more than one job ...
You smile.
You reach-out.
You extend yourself.
And just maybe ----- leave a ridiculous TIP!@!!*

It can be fun ... being a total stranger.
No one knows you ... no expectations ... our frailties and shortcomings don't matter.
Just the moment ... extending your hand.
Letting loose a "little blob of kindness" into another person's life.
This is how "humble miracles" happen.

We are not Jesus.
But ... he is inside of us.

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me."
These words are meant for us.