

Sunday, January 26, 2025 Sunday Morning Worship Sermon  
"The Year of the Lord's Grace" Pastor Takaaki Inoue  
Leviticus 25:10~12, Luke 4:14~30

### ① 【Jewish worship】

Today we will study the first part of the mission. Jesus is always based in the town of Capharnaum on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, but this time He came to the village of Nazareth, where he was born and raised, to preach. Verse 16 says, "He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath as usual, and stood up to read the Bible." It says as usual, which means that Jesus always kept worship on the Sabbath. When the Bible is read in worship, not only the reader stands, but the audience who listens to the Bible also stands and listens. What was Jesus' reading of the Bible like? I wanted to ask. Verse 17 says, "When the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him, and he opened it, he saw a passage that reads: At that time, the Bible had not yet been made into a single book, and the Torah and prophetic books were written on parchment and made into scrolls. I once visited a Jewish synagogue in Kobe. There was a reading table in the middle, and a scroll in a shelf hollowed out of the wall, hidden by a curtain. It is still placed to resemble the shape of a scroll. The congregation does not have a Bible, so you can only hear it in the synagogue. Everyone listened intently so that they didn't miss anything. Bible readings were very important, and were read by professional readers or by guests who came to worship that day.

●St. Jerome of the 4th century said, "We eat the flesh of Christ and drink the blood of Christ in the mystery of the sacrament, but we also eat the flesh of Christ and drink the blood of Christ in the Scripture reading. We must approach the Gospel as we draw closer to Jesus Christ." He said. Those who listen to the Bible in the sky above, those who despise the Bible, will bring down the body and blood of Christ to the earth and defile it. Listen carefully.

### ② 【The year of Jubilee began by Jesus】

On this day, Jesus was given a scroll of Isaiah from the Old Testament. When I opened the scroll, chapter 61 caught my eye. When you read the Bible, there are passages that strangely catch your eye, parts that resonate with your heart, and parts that make you think that this is what you are saying. It is written in Luke 4:18~19. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. The Lord has sent me to proclaim deliverance to the captive, to restore sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, and to herald the year of the Lord's grace." When Jesus finished his reading, he rolled the scroll, returned it to the attendant, and sat down, and the eyes of all the people in the synagogue were fixed on Him. The congregation was interested in what Jesus

was going to say from here. Then Jesus said, "These words of Scripture have come true when you hear them today" (verse 21).

When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him from heaven. This was also the ordination ceremony of the Messiah. In the old days, kings, priests and prophets were anointed on their heads and appointed to their offices. The Messiah is a combination of these three. Oil is the embodiment of the Holy Spirit. The pastor is also appointed to the office with his hands on his head and praying, "Receive the Holy Spirit." There are four ministries of the Messiah. 1 "Preaching the gospel to the poor." This poverty is the poverty of the heart. 2 "To free the captive". It is to set free those who are captive to sin and evil spirits. "To tell a blind person that his or her vision will be restored." This is not only the sight of the body, but also the opening of the eyes of the mind. 4 "To set free the oppressed." Are. And these four activities can be summed up in a nutshell: "heralding the year of the Lord's grace" (verse 19). The "year of the Lord's grace" refers to the "year of Jubilee" (Leviticus 25). Jubilee means ram, and it means the year of liberation, which begins with the blowing of a horn made of ram's horns. This year came every 50 years, and in that year the migrants returned to their homes, the land sold was returned to the original owners, all the slaves were freed and freed, and the debts were canceled. The Messiah is the one who brings about this Jubilee year.

●The other day, we had a prayer meeting at the Catholic Tamazoku Cathedral. This year's ceremony was created by the ecumenical Abuse community of Bohse in northern Italy. The founder of this community, Enzo Bianchi, wrote a book called "Praying for the Word," and I happened to have it. When I opened it, it was written like this. "Jesus teaches us a new way of deepening our Bible reading, not only because He has fulfilled what is written in the Bible, but because He can always connect the Word of God with the 'today.' When Christ reads the passage in Isaiah 61, he associates it with "today," and the audience is appalled and collared in front of that "today" when they realize that these words of Isaiah centuries ago become "today" by Jesus' announcement. So must our holy reading. This prophecy has come true today."

Jesus declared, "Through me has begun this year of grace, the year of Jubilee." In fact, Jesus preached the gospel to the poor, cast out demons, healed the sick, raised the dead, and freed people from the power of sin, the power of death, and the power of the devil. Because of Jesus, this Jubilee extended not only to the Jews, but to all mankind. And it's not every 50 years, it's the year of Jubilee, wherever Jesus is, wherever he is, at any time. This year is no different. This is because Jesus is the Jubilee year. Where Christ is, there is complete forgiveness, life, and freedom. Because Christ is still with us throughout the world, it will

come true to those who read these words of Scripture for the first time today. God Himself declares that the debt has been cancelled. Because God Christ made it happen. Let's listen and believe this.

### ③ **[By knowing God, one becomes truly free]**

At first, the people of Nazareth were overjoyed. They thought that this would free them from Rome and make their lives easier. But Jesus says, "You will ask me to show you the miracles that I performed in the countryside, but in the old days the sickness was healed and the miracles were given to foreigners, not to Jews." Then the people became outraged and stood up and tried to kill Jesus. The Messiah they hoped for was a handyman-like Messiah who listened to their wishes. What are the foreigners that the people of Nazareth did not have? I think it's humility and faith in God. The people of Nazareth did not seek God, but only the things and grace that God gave them. Wouldn't it have been nice to have anyone who would give me grace? This is also true of modern Christians. Instead of seeking God, we are desperate to solve the problem at hand. Knowing God is the shortest path to happiness, but we spend all our time focusing on solving immediate problems.

There's a word for it: "mirroring." Parents are a mirror for babies to get to know themselves. Through the actions and words of the parents, the baby knows that he or she is worthy of being loved. However, those who are raised by parents who are unable to give love or in dysfunctional families do not know who they are. That comes out as an obstacle. But I want God to reflect me, not to others, and I want God to be my "mirror." In my experience, my reflection in God's mirror, in God's eyes, was a very precious and beloved self. Those who know themselves in such a way can know joy.

● There is a saint who is a 19th-century French Carmelite nun who is said to be Theresa of the Infant Jesus. When he was 4 years old, his mother died, and his sister entered the monastery in his place, and he himself entered the convent at the age of 16, but died at the age of 24 due to tuberculosis. However, after her death, her three autobiographies quickly captured the hearts of many people and made her a saint. There is a famous saying. "I realized that love includes all vocations, love is everything, love encompasses all ages and places, love is eternal. My mission is love. In the heart of the Church, the Mother, I will be love." She accepted all her weakness and smallness as a blessing from God, and lived her life loving God. His motto seems to be "to forgive people's shortcomings, to give generous love to others, to give in to others, not to blame others even if they are misunderstood, to accept criticism with patience, and to pray and do good deeds with love for those who are not good at it."

Even if you are not blessed with parents, a person who reflects himself with God as a mirror will become a person rich in love in this way. God is the parent of all people. Christ is the companion of all people. Knowing that deep love is the liberation from all slavery.