

There are many jokes about priests especially how long they preach.  
Of course some sermons are interesting but most of the time it could be boring.

In today's story from the Gospel of Luke, Jesus preaches what could be the shortest sermon in history. He goes to the synagogue in Nazareth where he had been brought up, he is given the Scroll of Isaiah by synagogue officer, and he reads from Isaiah 61.

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring the Good News to the poor. He has sent me to announce release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty those who have been oppressed; and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

Then he sits down. When a rabbi sat down, it didn't mean they were finished. That's the position from which they taught or preached.

And Jesus sat down and said: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing".

That's it. That, is a very short sermon.

There's an old story about a couple that was walking out of church one Sunday. The wife asked the husband,

"Did you see the strange hat Mrs. O'Brien was wearing?"

"No, I didn't," replied the husband.

"Bill Smith badly needs a hair cut, doesn't he?" commented the wife.

"Sorry, but I didn't notice," her husband said.

"You know, John," said the wife impatiently, "sometimes I wonder if you get anything at all out of going to church."

People get different things out of going to church, depending, on what they expect to get when they go there.

Today's Gospel reading tells us that when Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, that he went up to Nazareth - his home town - and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom.

It was his habit, his practice, his custom, to worship there on the Sabbath day.  
Why?

I ask this question because there are many people who claim to be connected to God, who do not attend public worship on a regular basis.

Sometimes we meet people who claim that they can be Christians without attending Christ's church; and yet here we see that the most holy person this world has ever seen, attending public worship.

Now we know Jesus said the Sabbath was made for man  
- and not man for the Sabbath,  
but remember in this profound reminder  
how Jesus did not neglect the purpose of the Sabbath Day,  
how he did not neglect worship and prayer and hearing the Word,  
how it was his custom to assemble with the faithful in the synagogue  
and to do there with them very much what we are doing here today together.

I believe that Jesus went to the synagogue to hear the Word of God  
to be reminded of the Word of God  
and to be recreated by the Word of God  
this even though he was the Word of God made flesh!

People who do not go to church - or don't want to go to Church?  
Can come up with many reasons. One could say  
Isn't it that the church is full of hypocrites?

But here Jesus himself listened to the words of the Law and the Prophets from lips far inferior to his own and he urged his brothers and sisters - his followers and his disciples to do the same.

I believe that is because Jesus knew that the Word gives life no matter what container pours it out - just as water from a chipped and dented mug is as good as water from the finest crystal.

A man one day told a friend, who happens to be a churchgoer why he is not going to church any more. He said, " I have heard over a 1000 sermons during last few years and couldn't remember any of them. So, what's the point going to church."

His friend replied that over the same period he had eaten thousands of meals that had been prepared by his wife - and that he would be

hard pressed to remember a single one of them - but that wasn't about to stop him from going home for supper.

God has prepared a meal for us within the bosom of the family he has given to us.

Jesus reminded the devil when he was being tempted in the wilderness that we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Those words, God's words, are read each week in our worship service.

This is the word that keeps us going for the rest of the week most of the time. This is the word that gives us inspiration and this is the word that refreshes us. We know sometimes we do not pay much attention to the Word because maybe our minds are preoccupied or we are getting distracted.

I heard of a businessman who flies every week and familiar with the routine of the flight so much he never pays much attention to the emergency instructions before the take off.

Then one day he was on a flight. Just prior to landing the pilot interrupted to tell the passengers that they possibly had landing gear trouble. This person looked out at the approaching airport to see the fire engines assembled alongside the runway. When flight crew gave emergency instructions this time he listened carefully. As he said later: "As if our lives depended on our getting them right - because they did!"

Yes, we need to pay attention to the Word of God as if our lives depended on getting right the word of God for our lives.

The Word of God will tell us what is right and true - what leads to life - and what leads to death.

Today the scripture is fulfilled in our hearing as well.

Christ is here, here in our church on this our Sabbath Day

You either here in the church or participating virtually because you know the importance of the Word in your life.

Glory be to God for that.