

Drawn In: Living Out the Creative Life with God, Series by Marcia McFee

Week 1: Dream

“Gather the Supplies” Message by DD Adams

Kempton Providence U.M. Church

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The gospel lesson is from Luke, chapter 4, verses 13 through 21. “Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news about him spread throughout the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been raised. On the Sabbath, he went to the synagogue as he normally did and stood up to read. The synagogue assistant gave him the scroll from the prophet Isaiah.

The synagogue assistant unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners, and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the synagogue assistant, and sat down.

Every eye in the synagogue was fixed on him. He began to explain to them, ‘Today, this scripture has been fulfilled just as you heard it.’” This is God’s word for God’s people. Let’s pray. Lord we pray your blessing on the reading, hearing, and understanding of your word today. Open every ear today to listen as you prompt within each a new and revitalized energy. AMEN.

This series in the season of Epiphany is written so we might connect with our innate creativity, to learn to cultivate it, and to see things differently than before. We're made in the image of God, and since God is a creator, we also are co-creators with God. Our goal, as it is God's goal, is to make this world better. When God created us in His image we became the supplies He chose to use.

The thesis of this series is that God is love; it then follows that God dreams love into the future and therefore into existence, but God does it through us. With God, love has no boundaries or limitations. We can dare to dream big because God is big. And the bigger God dreams, the bigger we dream as we contribute our creativity and effort to advance a kingdom that is just and fair for all.

If you were to begin to dream, you would gather supplies within this church—"supplies" being the people. How would you make the world a better place? Perhaps you might start with this and ask yourself, "What is God's highest standard for me? Jesus tells us in Mark 12:30-31. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

The passage read today from Luke 4 tells us who Jesus came for and who He calls us to love and include. Note that there's one thing the people in this passage have in common—they're poor, they're captives, they're blind and oppressed—

they're not the powerful and the rich in the world. Think about it: Jesus brings good news to the least of these among us. They aren't influential, important or commanding or dynamic or persuasive. They're the outcasts in society.

You may have said or heard others say that all lives matter and that's true, but think again. When a house is on fire, you direct the firefighters to that particular house. You're not saying that the other houses don't matter in the neighborhood; you're saying that this one matters now because it's on fire . . .

In the passage for today, Jesus focuses directly on those who suffer injustice and oppression. He goes to the marginalized, those discarded, he goes to the poor, the deaf, and the immigrants who have no place to lay their head, those who have nothing to give to you in return.

We all need to know that God sees us and sees our pain—especially the people we read about in today's passage. We all need to know that God esteems us and looks down on us with favor—no matter how others treat us. Because when life takes a turn for the worse, it's life-changing. When you're now viewed as the poor and oppressed, fact is, ***you are*** overlooked and victimized. The purpose of the Gospel is that *we become the supplies from God that minister and provide to the poor, the sick, the blind, and the oppressed.*

The message Jesus preached in the synagogue that day wasn't a self-improvement message—it was a life—changing message. It's for those who need

to be set free to become empowered to live the life that God wants for them. To become disciples of Christ that work for justice and equality and make the world a better place for all; it's the kind of life for us that God dreams about.

It's a life that's free from being captive to a substance, a life that gives freely to the poor, a life that opens their heart and mind to seeing and hearing what Christ has said about those who have been discarded. It's about a life that wants to be part of God's supply and provide what others need; this message from Jesus in Luke 4 is all about changing our hearts and lives.

When Jesus stepped into his hometown synagogue everyone knew him, and he was praised by all. "Yea Jesus!" "You made it big!" The poor carpenter boy who's famous! They loved him! Until he began to challenge their beliefs. Jesus' preaching is much more concerned with us getting "it right" than whether you feel warm, fuzzy and happy. If preaching doesn't challenge our beliefs and the follow through of those beliefs—which will make you feel uncomfortable—the preacher probably isn't getting to the core of what we need to hear and learn.

At the close of Luke 4, Jesus challenges the people about who is on the bottom and who is on top of the social order. The Jewish people weren't on top, it was the rich and powerful, and they didn't like what they heard. They became furious, and converged on Jesus trying to force him over the cliff, but it wasn't his

time yet. Note this. *Every time, every single time* Jesus stands *on the side* of the marginalized and oppressed. Every—single—time.

One has to be open to hear the good news and allow their beliefs to be challenged. And it's true, good news can become bad news for some unless it's received into the heart. Then, it becomes good news. Listen to the timely wisdom from Oswald Chambers. "We are apt to think that everything that happens to us is to be turned into useful teaching; it is to be turned into something better than teaching, [namely] into character. We shall find that the spheres God brings us into are not meant to teach us something but to make us something."

Let's pray. Open our hearts God and raise our eyes to look at the fields and see, they're white for harvest. Even in this time of so much hate in the world. Use your supplies God. Use us to be your tools of grace to break down barriers that divide races, cultures, people, and nations. Amen.