

**Title: Jesus the Messiah**

**Summary: Messiah actually means “anointed”. This means having made a commitment to accomplish a mission during a ceremony in which oil is poured on the committers head. According to the Old Testament the Messiah’s mission was to free the people. Because Jesus did this, the word, Messiah, (or Christ) has remained a part of the name we use for Jesus. Because He is our example, we are also “anointed” to carry on His mission.**

**Key Scriptures: Exodus 40:1-4, 9-15; Matthew 18:1-11**

One of the buttons on my cell phone is called “reminders”. If there is something I really want to do and not forget about it, I can write it in my cell phone under reminders. Also I can ask it to remind me at a specific time. I’m told that if I use Siri, she will remind me of what I need to do in words. These are all helps for us when we have something specific to do.

Do you know what Messiah means? It’s actually the same meaning as Christ. The difference is just language. Mashiach is in Hebrew. Christos is the same meaning in Greek. In English we have changed Mashiach to Messiah and Christos to Christ. And in English we have changed Jeshua, His given name, to Jesus. When we say Jesus Christ we are saying names Jesus never heard while He was on earth.

I always thought that Christ or Messiah meant something like “the divine one” or “the blessed one” or “the chosen one” or even “God’s Son.” But it doesn’t. It means anointed one. Anointed means having had oil applied, especially fragrant oil, in a special ceremony.

Why ever is a reference to oil attached so closely to Jesus’ name? Our first reading describes an oil ceremony used by Moses around 1500 BC to install his brother Aaron as priest. Moses anointed Aaron and from then on Aaron and his descendants were priests of Israel. Being a priest meant that Aaron would carry out a number of duties that were believed to honor God.

The thing for us to remember is that being anointed meant someone was tasked to do something. From that moment on, the person had a mission to do and the ceremony served to write the duty into the person's heart and memory. This was something like putting a reminder into a cell phone that reminded the anointed of their duty every day for the rest of their life.

Accepting anointment was like making a binding promise to God and people to do something. Pastor Joyce and I were not anointed with oil but we were ordained with laying on of hands. This means we made a promise to support you spiritually in every way we can.

Anointing had another dimension besides giving a person a task. It also asked others to accept them in doing their task. Today when a doctor puts a medical diploma on an office wall, it means he or she has promised to help the sick; and also, it requests that patients accept the person's medical advice.

In the Old Testament, kings and priests were often anointed to give credibility and authority to their roles. When the word, Messiah, was used as a name, it often referred to someone who could help with national emergencies. When Israel was conquered and paying tribute, a Messiah was hoped for who would drive out invaders and establish the Israelite nation as an independent theocracy. Or at least that was what was thought wished for.

When Jesus began His ministry and began doing miracles and preaching with authority, almost everyone in Israel assumed He would do just that. He would lead a rebellion that would drive out the Romans. He would become a king of freed Israel. And he would rule as a representative of God on earth.

Jesus did not come to be a national king or to lead a theocracy. When He died by execution with the Romans still in control, many questioned whether He was a Messiah at all. This was made worse because Jesus was not anointed with oil. Rather he was baptized with water. So his early followers had to convince people that He was God's answer to Israel's prayers for deliverance and that He did not need physical oil to give Him authority. His authority came directly from God. It was a hard sell, but this

understanding prevailed and Jesus became known as the anointed one, the Messiah, the Christ.

Here is what Jesus showed us in His role of Messiah. He came with a mission. A number of specific things to do. He had to show people what the true nature of God was like. To do this He had to reveal that He knew God and could speak with authority. He had to convince some people to continue His mission when He was not there, no matter what resistance they encountered. He did this with miracles and by spending 3 years living and traveling on foot with His disciples. He needed to teach people how God wanted them to live with one another. He did this with sermons, parables, and by example. He needed to create a basis for healthy relationship between people and God. He did that by dying to secure forgiveness for peoples' sins and allowing them to be adopted into God's family. He had to convince people that physical death was not the end of our existence; rather, it was the beginning of eternity in heaven with God. He did this by being resurrected from death and letting a large number of people see Him. All this had to be accomplished in His lifetime. It was for this that He was spiritually anointed by God, His Father.

This leaves us with the question of what we are spiritually anointed for.

We are spiritually anointed here on earth to do something. What we do matters. We have been sent to do it. That is why we are here.

We are here at God's bidding and God has spiritually anointed us to do certain things. We have free will. So we don't have to do them. But, if we don't, we are missing our purpose. And, if we miss it, we will be less prepared for the next life, less useful in the next life, and be more limited in the next life.

***Here are the basics. We are to accept Jesus, God's anointed one, as God's Son. We are also to accept Jesus' mission, which is to reveal God, get our sins out of our way, and start us on an everlasting relationship with God. That is the faith part. Then, we are to start living like and acting like Jesus taught us. That is the action part. That is what we are spiritually anointed to do.***

It is never too late to accept Jesus and start an everlasting relationship with God. We talk about deathbed conversions. Jesus told a whole parable about workers in a vineyard to say late comers get the same wages as early starters. But late comers have not had time to do the action parts of what Human beings are spiritually ordained to do. They are less prepared, less useful, and more limited in the next life.

Back to us. We have accepted Jesus in faith and we are growing by living and acting like Jesus taught us.

Here is something specific and concrete we are spiritually ordained to do. We are tasked to spread our faith, Jesus' good news of God's love and offer and plan for everyone. This is not easy in a skeptical world deafened by appeals by sellers and politicians. It can be very difficult within a family. Children may harden their hearts against parents and resist what they say. We are not all great speakers, always knowing just what to say that will convince someone to seek a new path.

Here is where church comes in. By acting as a group, we can pool our resources and our experiences and our abilities to tell the good news in a better way than most of us could do alone. We are planning an evangelistic outreach next August 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> at the band stand behind the library. We hope for music, testimony, proclamation, and inviting hospitality. Details will follow as we plan over the next weeks. If you are interested in the planning phase, please let us pastors or members of Council know.

***Here is something specific and concrete we all can do. We can be enthusiastic and joyful about our faith. That will show through even if we are not gifted in music or speaking. We can act like we really like and support one another as we live and act like Jesus taught. That will show through like a light in darkness. And we can pray for God's blessing in August. And we can mark our calendars and be there.***

Jesus is called the anointed one, the Messiah. He did what He was sent to do. He revealed, taught, died, and was resurrected to bring all who are willing back to God. His life teaches us to accept our anointment, to live in relationship with God and share His good news with others.

Amen.