

The Authority Of Jesus

Luke 4:31-44

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In today's story in the life of Christ in the Gospel of Luke, he moves from the synagogue in Nazareth, where Jesus had been brought up and rejected by his local people, to a synagogue in Capernaum. Nazareth sets about 20 miles southwest of Capernaum. Capernaum is northeast on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. So Jesus is leaving Nazareth and going to Capernaum, which becomes His headquarters for His Galilean ministry. This is the fully engaged, public ministry of our Lord, which began in the region of Galilee and had headquartered in Capernaum.

What we have in our text today is four sections, which is 24 hours in the life of Jesus. If you ever thought it would be cool to hang out with Jesus for the day, we'll do that in our story. Our story begins in the morning in the synagogue in Capernaum, and it ends the next morning when Jesus goes into the desert around there, where He spends time alone with His Father in heaven.

in His authority in doctrine or teaching, in His authority over demons and in His authority over disease.

First, we'll look at His authority in His doctrine, verses 31-32. "Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority." So Jesus was moving His base of operations from Nazareth, where they rejected Him, to Capernaum, where they would receive Him. And He went on the Sabbath days into the synagogue.

Capernaum, a city of Galilee, was the home of Peter, James, John and Andrew, because it was right there on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is not actually a sea; it's a freshwater lake. It is about 13 miles long and 8 miles wide. It is in a beautiful valley below sea level. Nazareth is 1,150 feet above sea level, and Capernaum, at the Sea of Galilee, is 680 feet below sea level. So Jesus went from way up in the mountains of Nazareth down to the seashore of the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus is now teaching in their synagogues. Notice verse 32: "They were astonished." The word "astonished" in the Greek means "to strike out of" or "to be struck out of yourself." The modern term would be "blown away" or "It blew my mind!" A hippie would say, "Cool!" or "Groovy!" So they were totally blown away with Jesus' doctrine or teaching, "for His word was with authority."

Why were they blown away at Jesus' words? Number one, He spoke the truth. The Bible says "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6-7). So Jesus always spoke the truth of God's Word, and He spoke it in love. So His teaching was amazing.

Second, Jesus spoke in parables. Luke's Gospel, we'll discover, is the Gospel that contains more parables than any other Gospel. We'll see the parable of the good Samaritan, of the prodigal son, the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. All these parables are found in the Gospel of Luke. So Jesus was a storytelling teacher.

The word "parable" comes from the Greek word "parabole," which means "to lay alongside." A parable is a story laid alongside spiritual truth to illuminate the spiritual truth and shed light on it. Jesus was telling parables, which were earthly stories with a heavenly meaning. And His teaching was blowing them away.

Third, which is the crux of the text, Jesus spoke with authority and not as the scribes. In Mark 1:22, which is a record of the same episode, it says, "And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The scribes quoted authorities in their teaching, but Jesus was the authority Himself.

Let me give you some examples. When Jesus gave His sermon on the mount, He said, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder.'" So the rabbis were quoting from the Decalogue from one of the Ten Commandments. "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matthew 5:21-22). So anger in your heart toward another is committing murder.

That's why it blew their minds. "What?! You mean it's not just the action? It's also the attitude of the heart?!" Yes. It's kind of hard to drive the freeways of California and not murder someone. God looks at our heart and not just at our actions.

But when Jesus says, "You shall not murder," He's not saying you can't step on a bug. I've got a gopher in my yard right now. If I can kill that gopher—sorry. I'm going to kill that gopher. It's "You shall not murder." It's not "You shall not kill." It's talking about homicide.

I had some guru guy come up to me in the airport one time. He tried to pin a flower on me and wanted me to give him a donation to a Hindu organization. I said, "No; I'm a Christian, a born-again believer in Jesus."

He said, "Well, do you eat meat?"

I said, "Yeah!" with a smile of pleasure on my face. "A double-double with extra onions. Mustard with the spread. Extra-toasted bun. Let's go to In-N-Out right now!"

He looked at me and said, "Thou shalt not kill!" and turned and ran away.

It's not, "Thou shalt not kill." It's okay to eat a hamburger if the Lord leads you to do that. Rather, "You shall not murder."

Another example of Jesus' authoritative teaching, unlike the scribes, is found in Matthew 5:27-28. "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I

say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Jesus is the authority. It’s not just the action; it’s the heart attitude. You can sin in your own mind when you entertain thoughts that are not pleasing to God.

But Jesus didn’t speak like the scribes. They quoted other scribes, but Jesus spoke with authority. “But I say to you...”

Lastly, Jesus expounded on the Scriptures. One of the most fascinating things to note—and we’ll go through it in our series on Luke—is how Jesus used the Bible. We’ll see how Jesus viewed the Bible, quoted the Bible and used the Bible. Jesus always answered issues with the Scriptures. He didn’t quote Rabbi Hallel or Rabbi Shimei or Rabbi Gamaliel, but He quoted what the Bible says.

When the Bible speaks, God speaks. When you read the Bible, you’re hearing God speak. God speaks through what He has spoken. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16). That literally means that it is “God breathed.” Not only God breathed, but it means “breathed out.” So God breathed out His Word. Today God speaks through what He has spoken.

This motivates me, as a preacher, to stick as close as I can to the Bible, to the meaning of the text by its original author and to do expositional preaching. That limits my topics to the Bible itself. So when you come to Revival Christian Fellowship and you hear the Bible read, the Bible explained and the Bible applied, I can speak with authority, because it’s not me; it’s the Bible. It’s a “Thus sayeth the Lord.”

Jesus speaks through His Word. Jesus was an expository preacher. And Paul wrote to Timothy, a pastor, and said to him, “Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” or “teaching” (1 Timothy 4:13). Paul was talking about Timothy’s job as a pastor was to preach the Word.

The number one job of a pastor is the preaching of the Word of God. Paul also told Timothy, “Preach the word!” (2 Timothy 4:2). He wasn’t to preach about the Word but “Preach the word!” It’s so very important.

It’s what we need today in the church. This is why I do pastors’ conferences. We just put a book together on expository preaching that we can give to pastors to help them “Preach the word!” I believe that if the church was being fed the Word of God, it becomes healthy. And when the church is healthy, it becomes a light to the world. And when we become a light to the world, we bring glory to God. Someone once said it like this: “To give the Bible its rightful place, is to bring health to the church, light to the world and glory to God.”

I believe that the greatest need in the world today is for expositional Bible preaching. Read the Bible, explain the Bible and apply the Bible. Preach the meaning of the text—nothing more, nothing less.

The second area of Jesus' authority, verses 33-37, was His authority over demons or the demonic realm. We're also going to get a reference to demons in verse 41. Jesus is now in the synagogue in the morning. "Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud..." or "very, very loud" "...voice, saying, 'Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!'"

"But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be quiet, and come out of him!' And when the demon had thrown him in their midst..." he threw him on the ground "...it came out of him and did not hurt him. Then they were all amazed..." or "astonished" at His power over demons "...and spoke among themselves, saying, 'What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits...' or 'demons' "...and they come out.' And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region."

Demons like to go to church. Wherever God's Word is preached, demons want to distract. So Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, and the demon cries out of this man. This is what's called "demon possession." This man had a demon who lived inside him, controlled him and could speak through the man's vocal cords. That's a scary thought. In the Greek, the demon's voice was a screech of terror.

Isn't it interesting that demons actually know who Jesus is? There are a lot of Christians and liberal Christians especially who don't know who Jesus is. But the demons know. We should know Jesus like they do. But they don't believe, they don't repent, they don't get saved. Demons are unredeemable.

Jesus told the demon to "Hold your peace!" or actually it's "Be muzzled! Be quiet!" And the demon came out of the man.

What does the Bible teach about demons? Demons are basically fallen angels. In the spiritual realm, there is only God and angels. There are no ghosts—certainly not Casper the Friendly Ghost. Satan is a fallen, rebellious angel. His original name was Lucifer, which means "Son of the morning" or "Light bearer." Ezekiel describes him as a beautiful angel, who possibly was in charge of the worship of God in heaven. And one of the great mysteries in the Bible says that he was prideful and wanted to usurp his place over God's. He said, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God" (Isaiah 14:13). So he rebelled against God. This is the origin of the devil. It happened sometime in the past, probably before Genesis 1:1, when the heavens and the earth were created.

So Satan was kicked out of heaven. It's called "the fall of Lucifer." He became the devil. And other angels went with Lucifer to the earth. There was an angelic rebellion. Read about it in Isaiah 14. They fell to the earth. So we have all these fallen angels, or demons, or demonic angelic beings, which are intelligent, powerful and not to be played with.

There are two dangers when it comes to demons. One is to deny their existence, which is

pretty common, and the other is to be enamored with their existence. It's to not believe in them at all or to be too attracted to them in reading about them, thinking about them or looking for them in everyone.

I don't believe that a Christian can have a demon living inside of them. They can oppress you. They can tempt you. They can attack you. But they cannot possess you. "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). There is nothing in the Scriptures to indicate that a child of God can be demon possessed. It's unscriptural and illogical. The Bible says that as believers, our bodies are "the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19). So the Holy Spirit isn't going to live on the top story and the demon live on the bottom story. There are no two stories in our lives; God on top and the demon on the bottom. We were justified, we're being sanctified and one day we'll be glorified. We are redeemed by the blood of Christ, and we're "sealed for the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

I want to give you another footnote here. Nowhere in the Bible, including our text, are the demons given names like "Lust," "Greed," "Hatred," "Anger," "Laziness," "Gluttony," "Drunkenness," or "Donut." Believe it or not, I ran into a guy one time who said, "I can't stop eating donuts! I must have a demon of donuts!" No, no. There is no demon of donuts. There is no demon of nicotine, of alcohol. Any old demon can tempt you to do that stuff. But the Bible says that as believers, to keep from sinning, we are to crucify the flesh, lay it aside and "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). So I don't believe a believer can have a demon.

In Colossians 2:15, Jesus on the Cross "having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it." That means that at the Cross, Jesus divested Satan's power over our lives. So Jesus has power and authority over demons.

The third area of Jesus' authority, verses 38-44, is over disease. He has authority in His doctrine, He has authority over demons—praise God for that!—and He has authority over disease. He can heal by the power of His word and deliver those who are afflicted with disease. "Now He arose from the synagogue..." So we are still following Jesus in the same day but now in the afternoon. "...and entered Simon's house." So this is after church is over in the synagogue.

So what do Christians like to do after church? They like to eat. So they go to Simon Peter's house. "But Simon's wife's mother..." or Peter's mother-in-law. So apparently Peter was married, He had a house and they asked Jesus to heal her. She "...was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. So He stood over her and rebuked the fever and it left her." Same word for "rebuked" the demons. He wouldn't let them speak. Jesus didn't want demons advertising Him. "And immediately she arose and served them."

So Jesus rebuked the demons and she was immediately healed. Take note of how Jesus heals. Peter's mother-in-law immediately rose up and ministered to them. In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul talks about Peter's wife; that other Apostles had wives and he could have a wife and take

her with him in his ministry. So Peter had a wife; you have to have a wife to have a mother-in-law.

So after the synagogue they were hungry and went to Peter's house. Peter's mother-in-law was visiting but she had a fever. Luke uses a medical term: "a great fever" in the King James translation. He uses another medical term: Jesus "stood over her." Then Jesus actually spoke to the fever, and it immediately left her.

Now in verse 40, we move to the evening in Peter's house. "When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them." So first He spoke and the fever left, and now He lays hands on them and the sick and the demonized are healed and delivered.

Verse 41, "And demons also came out of many..." It's possible that some of the sicknesses were caused by demon possession. "...crying out and saying..." Again, here's the demons speaking. "'You are the Christ, the Son of God!'" And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ."

There is an interesting pattern in the way Jesus healed in the Bible. Did you know that Jesus healed the sick? This was one of the ways He was authenticated and identified as the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus performed miracles that only God could perform.

Let me list some of the ways He healed. He healed by His words—in verse 39, He spoke; He healed with His touch—in verse 40, He touched the people who were brought to Him; He healed instantly—in verse 39, she immediately rose up; He healed totally—in verse 39, she was able to minister to them; Jesus healed everyone—in verse 40, He healed all who came to Him; and Jesus healed undeniably, so that when He healed it was evident and clear.

When someone was blind and Jesus healed them, there was no denying they could see and there was no denying a miracle had happened. "I was blind; now I see" (John 9:25). When Jesus cleansed the leprous man, instantly his skin was renewed and he was cleansed. When Jesus healed the lame man, he immediately walked—no progression, no time to recoup his strength, just instantly, totally, immediately healed on the spot.

Jesus also raised people from the dead. How's that for authenticating His power?! He stood at the grave of Lazarus. He had been dead four days. That's called "super dead." When Jesus said, "Take away the stone," Lazarus' sister, Martha, said, "Lord, by this time there is a stench." But Jesus said, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:39-40). So they rolled away the stone and Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth!" (John 11:43). And Lazarus came forth. When Jesus calls you from the grave, you come out of the grave.

It's a picture of what He's going to do at the rapture when "the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). What a

blessing that will be.

So Jesus raised people from the dead. There was the widow of Nain whose son was on the way to be buried when Jesus raised him from the dead. There was Jairus' twelve-year-old daughter who had died a few hours before. "Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "'Talitha Cumi,' which is translated, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise'" (Mark 5:41). Then He gave her back to her parents.

That's power! That's authority! That's Jesus, my Savior. That's our Lord. That's the one who died on the Cross for our sins, rose from the dead, is now seated at the right hand of God the Father and is coming again to reign over the earth. He's Jesus Christ. I read these stories about the authority and power of Jesus Christ and my heart thrills.

I want to point out that God has not guaranteed that we, as Christians, will be healed of our physical infirmities. But Jesus still does heal broken bodies. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). But He hasn't promised or guaranteed in the Bible that if you're a Christian and you have enough faith, you'll have perfect health.

There's a false gospel that's been around for many, many years, sometimes called "the word of faith," or "positive confession" or the "health-and-wealth gospel" that wants you healthy and wealthy. It is based on a false interpretation of Scripture; that healing is in the atonement, thus guaranteed for all Christians. So if you are a Christian, you should never be sick. That's not Biblical. It sells books, it packs out churches, it makes the preacher popular, it's a palatable message people want to hear, but it's not Biblical. Jesus said, "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Every one of us will get older, regardless of the tummy tucks, face lifts, losing weight, workouts, eating health food, not going to In-N-Out, doing everything you can. Sooner or later you will go "the way of all flesh" (1 Kings 2:2). Every one of us will die, if the Lord tarries.

But one day our bodies will be free of sickness, free of weakness, free of back cramps. That will happen when we go to heaven and get brand-new bodies. And not until. But in the meantime, the Lord can heal me if He wants to. I believe He can. We should pray and trust the Lord. But if He doesn't heal me now, He'll heal me then.

In 2 Corinthians 5:1, Paul says, "We know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Our bodies are likened unto tents. I spent three months in a tent in 1972. When I got out of that tent, I never wanted to go tent camping again. I don't do tents; it cured me. I remember after that the first time I got into a house. "Ah, running water! I can stand up! A bed! This is so cool!"

Our bodies are tents, and mine is leaning right now. The stakes are starting to pull out of the ground and the tent is flapping in the wind. It's about ready to blow away. But I have "a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." What a glorious prospect for the believer!

So don't be deceived by the health-and-wealth, prosperity preachers, who teach you, "If you only had enough faith! It's your lack of faith. You should have perfect health." No, no. We're one day going to get sick and die. It's inevitable, because our bodies are unredeemed until we are glorified. We've been justified, we're being sanctified and then we'll be glorified. So don't be deceived by the false teachers about the healing of the Lord.

Verses 42-44 is our wrap-up. "Now when it was day..." This is the next morning. We have 24 hours, all day, of Jesus teaching, preaching, healing and delivering people from demonic power. "...He departed and went into a deserted place." Luke doesn't tell us why, but Mark does in chapter 1, verses 35. He went to pray. So after a long, busy day—when I would have turned my alarm off, or at least hit "Snooze"—Jesus got up early, before the sun, and went to pray. "And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; but He said to them, 'I must..." Here's one of the "musts" of Christ. "...preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.' And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee."

Many times people think that the whole reason Christ came was to heal us physically. As important as Christ's sympathetic and compassionate healing ministry was, His number one purpose for coming was to preach the Gospel. You can heal someone's body, but when they die in their sins, they'll go to hell for all eternity. If their soul is saved, they'll eventually go to heaven and have a new body for all eternity.

So Jesus said the priority for which He was sent was to preach. Jesus was called to preach. The Greek word is "kérussó," which means "to herald" or "to proclaim." What was He heralding? The kingdom of God. What is the kingdom of God? God's rule over the whole universe, God's rule over us as individuals when we are born again and we submit to Him and God's rule on the earth when He comes back in the Second Coming and He sets up His kingdom for 1,000 years as "King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15). That then flows into the eternal state.

Jesus Christ is King. Jesus is Lord and Jesus is the authority. So my question to you is, "Have you submitted to the King?" Every person's heart, figuratively speaking, has a little throne in it. Picture a little throne in your heart. On that throne is either self, ego or Christ. You must dethrone self from off the throne of your heart and submit to Christ, to His authority over your life. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Number one, He brings salvation; number two, He brings abundant life. But you must say, "Lord, reign on the throne of my heart. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Come in to stay. Come in today."

Who's sitting on the throne of your heart right now? You or God?