

The Gospel According to
Luke

“Turn Yourself On to the Authority”
Chapter 4:31-44

Introduction

When Jesus spoke, people were “**astonished**” and “**amazed.**” You are twice told that this was because “**His word was with authority.**” Jesus *delivered* the Word of God with **authority**, and it was then *demonstrated* by God to have **authority** as demons shuddered and diseases ceased.

God’s Word should astonish and amaze *every time* you encounter it! Whether it is heard publicly, or read privately, it is delivered by God as a demonstration of His authority.

If you are not astonished and amazed... *It could be the preacher!* But even poor preaching can minister to you if it is based upon God’s Word and if the Word is read.

Maybe we need to reacquaint ourselves with the authority of God’s Word. Maybe we need to realize that it is not someone talking about God, but God talking – talking to each one of us personally and individually.

How can you reacquaint yourself with the authority in God’s Word? Our text suggests two ways. We’ll organize our thoughts around two points: #1 Learn To Respect The Authority Of God’s Word, and #2 Live To Reveal The Authority Of God’s Word.

#1 Learn To Respect
The Authority Of God’s Word
(v31-36)

Demons shuddered and diseases ceased. A little later in Luke’s Gospel, you read,

Luke 9:1 Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave **them** power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases.

Later in His ministry, Jesus would expand this to include all His future followers. In John 14:12 He said,

John 14:12 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father.”

The question that always comes is, “*Why don’t we see this happening today?*” Why don’t **we** see demons shudder? Why don’t **we** see diseases cease?

1. The first thing to notice is that Jesus did not emphasize exorcisms and healings. He was simply teaching each Sabbath in the synagogues.
2. The second thing to notice is that, even in His teaching, He was not emphasizing exorcisms and healings. He was preaching about “**the kingdom of God.**”

I’m not here to make excuses for weak preaching; or to suggest to you that God no longer heals; or to downplay the reality of demons and demonic possession. But I am telling you that the example Jesus set for us was to deliver God’s Word with authority, then trust in Him for the demonstration of its authority. Whenever we begin to seek the demonstration of the Word as a goal, we have overturned God’s method and will only come to disaster.

Let me give you two more things to bear in mind:

1. The demonstration of the Word with power over demons and disease was sometimes hindered by unbelief. In His own hometown of Nazareth, Jesus could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief (Matthew 13:58).
2. Even when there are many and mighty demonstrations of power over demons and disease, people can remain unbelievers. Jesus did tremendous things in Capernaum; but later He would rebuke the people of Capernaum for failing to believe in Him for salvation despite the many miraculous works (Matthew 11:23).

No excuses; instead, *be encouraged!* With or without the deliverance from demons and disease, you can be “astonished” and “amazed” by God’s Word as you learn to respect its authority.

Luke 4:31 Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths.

Luke 4:32 And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.

We learned in verse sixteen it was Jesus’ “custom” to go “into the synagogue on the Sabbath day.” In Capernaum He was “teaching them on the Sabbaths.” In verse forty-four you read, “He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.” Luke went to great lengths to emphasize the importance Jesus placed upon teaching God’s Word.

If people are to learn to respect the authority of God’s Word, we must teach it respectfully. Let me suggest just a few simple things:

1. The Bible should be read publicly.
2. The Bible should be presented systematically.
3. The Bible should be taught so all can understand.
4. There should be an effort to minimize distractions while it is being taught.

These points have their corresponding responsibilities from those who listen:

1. Bring a Bible!
2. Read it while it is being read and studied.
3. Read ahead and be prayer-prepared for the lesson.
4. Help to minimize distractions – both for your own sake as well as for others.

You can’t eliminate all distractions. Sometimes the devil comes to Church!

Luke 4:33 Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice,

Luke 4:34 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!"

Demons are the fallen angels who followed Satan in his rebellion against God. They can possess a person and take-over his or her faculties. This one came to confront Jesus. He spoke on behalf of his demon buddies, using the plural "us" in his questions. Demons recognize Jesus' power and deity when He is present and wonder what He is up to.

Unbelievers can be demon possessed. More often, Satan is pleased to simply hold them captive without their even knowing it. First Timothy 2:26 describes unbelievers as "taken captive by [the devil] at his will." If you are possessed, someone might notice it and you might be confronted by Jesus. If you're held captive but don't really acknowledge it... You just go merrily on your way to Hell.

Christians cannot be demon-possessed. There's a Scripture that says, "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (First John 4:4).

Jesus practiced what I call 'Easy-Exorcisms.'

Luke 4:35 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in *their* midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him.

I see that Hollywood is coming-out with a new *Exorcist* movie. It will be about two hours long; and I'm guessing it will be filled with chanting and incense and religious icons. Jesus' easy-exorcism lasted a few seconds.

If necessary, **you** can be an exorcist! It is the Spirit of God within you that overcomes the enemy, *not* your own strength or skill. There's really no gift of exorcism. More commonly you are confronting the ignorant captives rather than those possessed.

Luke 4:36 Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this *is!* For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out."

They had already acknowledged Jesus' authority. Now it was further demonstrated. The exorcism was like an audio-visual presentation; it was Jesus' version of PowerPoint - only real power pointing to Him. It was a sign, a wonder, which God the Father determined should follow His Son's teaching. Signs and wonders follow teaching, and are at the Father's discretion – *not ours*.

As far as I know, we've not had to contend with demon-possessed folks publicly, at Church. I think a few have visited; but they've kept quiet. We *have* and *do* deal with those held captive by Satan. Every time someone responds to the invitation to receive Christ it is a demonstration of kingdom power; it is a miracle of eternal proportions. Our responsibility is to learn more-and-more to respect God's authority and to both deliver and receive His Word with the respect it deserves. God will do as He wills in demonstration of its power.

#2 Live To Reveal
The Authority Of God's Word
(v36-44)

The lesson in the synagogue was for living outside of the synagogue. These next verses show you some ways to live outside the Church and reveal the authority of God's Word.

First, you announce its authority:

Luke 4:37 And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

The "report" wasn't in the newspaper or on TV. It was word-of-mouth; it was person-to-person. It was people telling one another about Jesus. They went announcing what they had heard and seen.

It was customary after the synagogue service to have the Sabbath meal at around Noon. Jesus was invited home to Simon's to eat.

Luke 4:38 Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon's house. But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her.

Luke 4:39 So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them.

“Simon” is another name for Peter. His mother-in-law suffered from a high fever. When requested, He “rebuked the fever.” Some people try to compare this to His rebuking the demon, saying that all disease is the result of demons. Not true. The same wording is used to indicate that Jesus has the same authority in the realm of diseases as He does in the realm of demons. Whether it’s the *natural* or the *supernatural*, Jesus has authority and power to act.

What we learn here about Jesus’ authority is you arise to reveal it. *Get-up and serve others!* It is through your serving in the power of Jesus that His authority is revealed.

Announce and arise. It’s the response of those who respect Jesus’ authority; it is how they reveal Him to others. You see it again as the “sun was setting,” in verses forty and forty-one:

Luke 4:40 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.

Luke 4:41 And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, “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.

Why wait until “the sun was setting”? The common interpretation of the Sabbath laws was that you could neither heal nor carry a burden on the Sabbath day! If someone got hurt, you could prevent them from dying or getting worse; but it was considered work to help them any further. Many of these who were “brought” had to be carried; that, too, was work.

Why did the demons come? *They’re weird!* You’d have to ask them what they were thinking. Probably many of those who were demon possessed were brought by caring family and friends.

Religion is a terrible thing when it becomes an obstacle, rather than an opportunity, to bringing people spiritual healing and health.

The laying on of hands was something new. It was not really a Jewish practice at all. It had a two-fold effect:

1. First: It represented to onlookers that power was flowing through Jesus from His Father in heaven. When Jesus left the earth, promising we would do greater works, He wanted us to know that it was the Father working through us – not anything in ourselves.
2. Second: The laying on of hands showed a tenderness and personal caring to touch those who were so sick – many of them from communicable diseases. *No gloves!*

Jesus used many methods to heal. He was teaching us that healing comes from heaven; it cannot be manufactured by technique or learned through practice.

Announce and arise; arise and announce. What could be simpler? Yet nothing is so profound as your testimony of what Jesus has done for you and can do for others.

Luke 4:42 Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them;

Luke 4:43 but He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.”

We can certainly understand the people wanting Jesus to remain. He would be a great preventive measure – in case diseases or demons troubled them again in the future. Jesus is more than a preventive measure for us who have experienced His touch. He must be presented to others so that they, too, can be healed and helped.

Jesus was also practicing the principles He was teaching them. He, too, must *arise* and go about *announcing* to others.

The “**kingdom of God**” was Jesus’ announcement. The kingdom of God can be understood in three ways:

1. It has a *past* meaning, because God has always been overruling.
2. It has a *prophetic* meaning, because the Bible promises a literal rule of God on the earth.

3. It has a *present* meaning, as believers submit to the Lordship of Jesus over and in their lives.

Luke 4:44 And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

You might expect Luke, as a physician, to say, “*Jesus was healing the sick and exorcising demons in Galilee.*” Nope! He was “preaching in the synagogues.” He wanted the people to learn respect for the Word of God as their authority; and to live to reveal it as their authority. Any healings or exorcisms - any signs and wonders – were PowerPoint presentations to emphasize the importance of God’s Word.

Conclusion

We’re not just talking about God; God is talking! He takes His Word, as it is read, and speaks to you personally and individually.

If you are not a believer; if you have not surrendered your life to Jesus; then God has been talking to you this morning. He’s told you that you are taken captive by the devil. You’re probably not possessed; but you are oppressed and need to be released.

Those of you who know the Lord... Your Father is encouraging you to have a renewed respect for His Word. It should astonish; it should amaze. It will when you remember your first love.

Then simply arise and announce it to others as God gives opportunity.

