

Jesus left Nazareth where He was rejected and moved twenty miles east to Capernaum on the northern shores of Galilee. Nazareth was in the hills 1200 feet above sea level. Capernaum was on the northern shore of Galilee at 686 feet below sea level. It was a busy little town with a Roman garrison because there was a port and the main east west road, the Via Maris, ran through the town. This was where Matthew taxed the trade that passed through. The town manufactured grinding stones from the local basalt rock, farmed, and fished the lake. The synagogue ruins that remain to this day are on top of the earlier synagogue where Jesus preached. One block away was the home of Peter, where Jesus headquartered for most of His three years of ministry.

<sup>31</sup> *And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath,* Luke 4:31 The synagogue ruler invited Jesus to preach on the Scripture reading that Sabbath. Picture these laborers, stone masons, fishermen, farmers, the elders of the congregation, and a few people of wealth gathered in anticipation of the message from this man of whom people said miracles were performed. They would have sung the psalms, recited the blessings, had prayers, and then the reading of the Law and Prophets.

<sup>32</sup> *and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority.* Luke 4:32 We don't know what text Jesus was preaching on, but His teaching astonished those in attendance. What was it that caused them to be so amazed? We know from Jewish literature that rabbis of that day taught in quotations of sages who had gone before. It was a way to show humility and pass on their wisdom. It was all memorized quotes. There was little life in it. By contrast, Jesus' teaching was fresh and new. He even contradicted some of the respected sayings (Matthew 5:21, 22<sup>i</sup>, 27, 28<sup>ii</sup>). He taught from the Word explaining it with other passages like He did in Nazareth, only it was in ways the people had not heard before. That is because the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him (4:18<sup>iii</sup>). It wasn't man's teaching. It came from the Spirit of the living God. It was fresh and alive and for them at that moment. You could call it prophetic. There was an urgency to hear each word because the words came with the power of the Spirit and authority.

When the Word is proclaimed and explained with conviction under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, hungry hearts are moved, and minds are challenged. It invites changes and encourages us to be wholly devoted to God, to love Him more than ever before, to surrender all that holds us back and serve whenever and wherever He calls. We leave with a thought from the Word burning in our hearts (Luke 24:32<sup>iv</sup>).

Preachers can stir emotions, but that is passing. You can leave an emotional service excited and uplifted and not be able to relate what was said or be aware of any need to change a thing. There is no lasting fruit. But when the Spirit brings home the Word, you know exactly what God was speaking to your heart. That is what happened in Nazareth and Capernaum, only the response was completely different. The Nazarenes rejected the conviction and those in Capernaum embraced it at first. They knew God had spoken and they were astonished.

<sup>33</sup> *And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice,* Luke 4:33 What? People with unclean spirits come to church? They sure do! They are sent to disrupt and distract. Jesus taught that there will be weeds among the wheat until the harvest (Matthew 13:30<sup>v</sup>). In the account of Colton in *Heaven Is for Real*, he asked his daddy why some people at church didn't have light. We are not to decide who does and who doesn't. That is for the Lord at the final judgment. This demon made his presence in the synagogue obvious.

<sup>34</sup> *“Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”* Luke 4:34 He cried out asking whether it was the

time of judgment. "James declared that demons 'believe...and shudder' (*phrissousin*—literally, *they bristle like a frightened cat* [[James 2:19<sup>vi</sup>](#)])." (Hughes, Kent R. - Preaching the Word – Luke, Volume I: That You May Know the Truth.) These demons had been in the heavenly realm and recognize the Son of God. In several different accounts they recognize Jesus and fear He has come to judge them (Luke 8:28<sup>vii</sup>). This demon is inadvertently telling those assembled the title of Jesus in the spiritual realm. The angel Gabriel announced to Mary that her baby is the holy Son of God (1:35<sup>viii</sup>). In the Old Testament the Holy One is a title for God (2 Kings 19:22<sup>ix</sup>; Job 6:10<sup>x</sup>; Proverbs 9:10<sup>xi</sup>). The apostles refer to Jesus as the Holy One spoken of in the Old Testament prophecies (Acts 2:27<sup>xii</sup>).

*<sup>35</sup> But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm.* Luke 4:35 The scene was intense. The dynamic message Jesus preached was followed by a confrontation from hell. What would happen? I doubt they had ever seen anything remotely like this other world encounter. Jesus' words literally mean, "Be muzzled and get out of him!" It was a command with supreme authority that could not be resisted. The demon threw the man down and left the victim unharmed just as Jesus had commanded it to do.

*<sup>36</sup> And they were all amazed and said to one another, "What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!" <sup>37</sup> And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.* Luke 4:36-37 They were amazed after the message, but this demon had unwittingly put an exclamation point on the end of Jesus' preaching. The authority of Jesus was obvious. He had encountered Satan in the wilderness and won. By comparison, this exorcism was easy work. The religious exorcists of that day went through elaborate rituals, formulas, and quotations. Jesus needed none of that. He commanded, and it was done, just as He had done in creation (Genesis 1:3<sup>xiii</sup>). Later, on the cross, He would triumph over them all (Colossians 2:13-15<sup>xiv</sup>). And now all authority is His, both in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18-20<sup>xv</sup>). There is nothing outside the authority of Christ.

This begins the account of Jesus' teaching ministry. Wherever He went He did just what He had proclaimed in His message to Nazareth from Isaiah 61: good news to the poor, sight to the blind, liberty to the captives and the oppressed. He set this poor possessed man free, and His words were also setting free those in the synagogue that day. Those words have the power to set you and me free (John 8:31,32<sup>xvi</sup>). We can't be too far gone or broken for Jesus to transform us. His Words set the stars in space (Genesis 1:16<sup>xvii</sup>). They can transform us, if we will embrace them (8:15<sup>xviii</sup>). He has the authority to change us, but He gives us the freedom to accept or to reject His love and forgiveness (John 1:12<sup>xix</sup>). Which will you choose?

*<sup>38</sup> And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. <sup>39</sup> And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.* Luke 4:38-39 Peter's home was just a block from the synagogue. The wonder of the exorcism was fresh in their minds when they entered the house to find Peter's mother-in-law with a high fever. Luke the physician knows the degrees of fever. This was a bad one. Jesus had just cast out a demon, so they thought perhaps He could do something for her. They asked for His help.

Jesus took out a jar of aspirin... No, He did something I have never seen. He dealt with the fever the way he dealt with the demon. The same word "rebuke" is used in both cases. She didn't slowly recover, but rather jumped out of bed and began serving everyone.

What was that? We know that fevers are the body's way of battling an infection of virus or bacteria. God designed our bodies to turn up the heat to a temperature the invaders can't

survive. Did Jesus rebuke the invasion in the body? Perhaps. The demon came out of the man in the synagogue, and apparently the virus was destroyed in Peter's mother-in-law. But that doesn't explain the sudden burst of energy she had to serve everyone. That's why we just call it a miracle. Miracles don't need explanations. God can do whatever He wants with His creations, that is within the confines of His attributes. His Word has power (Isaiah 55:11<sup>xx</sup>).

It has been said that **the measure of a Christian is not how many servants he has, but how many he serves**. Peter's mother-in-law was a servant. But she could do that because she was served by the greatest Servant of all (Matthew 20:28<sup>xxi</sup>).

Some scientists have argued against a Creator by pointing to viruses and claiming a good Creator would not have made them. They don't use that argument anymore, because we have discovered that viruses keep bacteria from taking over the world. Without viruses, bacteria would go unchecked and dominate the world. A good God made viruses. We just get on the bad side of them, especially the ones that have mutated in this fallen world.

*<sup>40</sup> Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them.*

*<sup>41</sup> And demons also came out of many, crying, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.* Luke 4:40-41

When people find out that there is someone who has supernatural power to heal, you can bet there will soon be a crowd. Mental illness, sciatica, paralysis, skin disease, fever, crippled, cataracts and all other sorts of problems were brought to the door of Peter's home for Jesus to heal them. Some of us would be in that line at Peter's door. Everyone who came to Jesus was healed. He demonstrated power to make anyone whole physically, which in the Hebrew mindset declares He can do the same for the spirit in man. The God of Israel is YHWH Rapha - the God who heals (Exodus 15:26<sup>xxii</sup>). This display of wholesale healing declared Him to be one and the same. But He did not come for the body of man, for it will eventually perish. Other times He will walk among the sick and pick out one to be healed, such as at the pool of Bethesda. There were a great number of infirmed people, but Jesus went straight to the paralytic and only healed him (John 5:3-6<sup>xxiii</sup>).

In our passage from Luke, He laid His hands on every one of them. *There is no record in the Old Testament Scriptures or rabbinical literature of putting hands on someone to heal them.* (I.H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 196) Divine power flowed through Jesus, though it was not necessary for Him to touch them. He could speak the word and the power would flow without physical contact (Luke 7:7<sup>xxiv</sup>). It appears that Jesus wanted the people to understand that He is the source of healing power. It was also very personal and caring. Each person that came felt His touch.

*At this signal time in the outpouring of Christ's power, all history was meant to see that his kingdom authority is not an impersonal force. It is unequaled power to be sure, but it was personally and lovingly administered in Jesus' tender hands.*- (Hughes, Kent- Preaching the Word – Luke, Volume I: That You May Know the Truth) Jesus cares about our conditions, emotional, physical, and spiritual. He intimately knows and cares for each of us. His story of the prodigal shows us the deep concern He has for each child of God (Luke 15:20<sup>xxv</sup>).

Some theologians believe that the demons were trying to master Jesus by use of His name, Son of God, which is also a title of the Messiah. It was not time to reveal that fact. Many cultures believe the use of one's name can give authority over them. Of course, it did not affect Jesus. He rebuked the demons and ordered them to be silent and they had to obey. There is a spiritual war taking place, and we need to realize that Jesus has supreme authority. He is all-

powerful, and the demons must obey His commands. Though they are organized, powerful and cunning, the One who is in us is far greater (1 John 4:4<sup>xxvi</sup>).

The sad truth is that even after feeling His healing touch and witnessing His command over the evil realm of darkness, most of the people of Capernaum would reject Him as the healer of their souls. Man will readily accept, and even go to great lengths to obtain, the physical blessings that come from God while refusing the greatest gift of all. Jesus will later declare that Capernaum would be brought down to hell, for if the works done there were done in Sodom, it would not have been destroyed (Matthew 11:23<sup>xxvii</sup>).

*<sup>42</sup> And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, <sup>43</sup> but he said to them, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose." <sup>44</sup> And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.* Luke 4:42-44 There is a little grotto overlooking the lake that is thought to be the place Jesus retreated for prayer. It is called Eremos, meaning desolate. Mark 1:35<sup>xxviii</sup> tells us that the people who sought Him were Peter and others with him. I imagine there were a few disciples and maybe a few of the towns folks who were excited about the previous day's events.

Mark also tells us the reason that Jesus went there was to pray. What a day He had just experienced. He preached, cast out a demon, healed Peter's mother-in-law, and on into the evening healed the many that came to Peter's door. After all that, He was up before dawn and off to find a quiet place to commune with His Father.

I believe it was Martin Luther who said that **the more he had to do that day, the more time he needed to spend in prayer.** Our natural thinking would be to shoot off a bullet prayer and get busy. Jesus knew the power and direction had to come from the Father. What an example He set for us here. If He needed to take that time alone, how much more do we, especially when we are extremely busy or under pressure!

Jesus' response was no doubt in response to His Father's direction (John 12:49<sup>xxix</sup>). Again, we see it as the opposite from man's normal reaction. If we have success and people are clamoring for us, we run back to the adoring crowd. Not Jesus! He had a message to proclaim. The healing was just evidence that His message was true. The priority was to get the good news of the kingdom to the other towns. That was His present purpose. People needed to know the kingdom was breaking into this world and they could enter through Jesus, the gate (John 10:9<sup>xxx</sup>).

[ Side note: Mark wrote that He went and preached throughout Galilee (Mark 1:39<sup>xxxi</sup>), while Luke here says it was Judea. Some manuscripts of Luke do say Galilee, but the earliest have Judea. In fact, He did both, though the majority of His ministry was in Galilee.]

What a day! And you think you have tough days. Try confronting a demon, healing your host's mother-in-law, healing every sick person in town, and then get up early to go pray. But **Jesus' strength was His reliance on the Father's strength.** What He commands us to do He can give us the strength to do. When you feel you can't go on, ask first if you are doing God's will, then ask if you are depending on your own strength or on His.

The words of Jesus came with the Spirit's power, power to command demons to leave, power to kill virus, and to heal all manner of illness. That is because Jesus heard from the Father what to do and what to say (John 5:19<sup>xxxii</sup>, 30<sup>xxxiii</sup>). He sought the Father's will. If we are to be Christ like, we need to do the same. If our words are to have life changing power, they must come from above. Will we take the time to hear from the Word and the Spirit that our words might have a lasting impact (John 15:16<sup>xxxiv</sup>)?

## Questions

- 1 How did Jesus end up in Capernaum?
- 2 How can you discern anointed preaching?
- 3 Why was the demon afraid?
- 4 What does the title Holy One imply?
- 5 Why were the people amazed two times?
- 6 What was the miracle with Peter's mother-in-law?
- 7 How do we know Jesus cares about us personally?
- 8 Why don't we need to demons?
- 9 Where did Jesus go early the next morning?
- 10 What does that teach us about the need for prayer?

---

### <sup>i</sup> **Matthew 5:21-22 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' <sup>22</sup> But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

### <sup>ii</sup> **Matthew 5:27-28 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup> But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

### <sup>iii</sup> **Luke 4:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

### <sup>iv</sup> **Luke 24:32 (ESV)**

<sup>32</sup> They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

### <sup>v</sup> **Matthew 13:30 (ESV)**

<sup>30</sup> Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."

### <sup>vi</sup> **James 2:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

### <sup>vii</sup> **Luke 8:28 (KJV)**

<sup>28</sup> When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

<sup>viii</sup> **Luke 1:35 (KJV)** <sup>35</sup> And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

<sup>ix</sup> **2 Kings 19:22 (ESV)** <sup>22</sup> "Whom have you mocked and reviled? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes to the heights? Against the Holy One of Israel!

<sup>x</sup> **Job 6:10 (ESV)** <sup>10</sup> This would be my comfort; I would even exult in pain unsparing, for I have not denied the words of the Holy One.

### <sup>xi</sup> **Proverbs 9:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

<sup>xii</sup> **Acts 2:27 (ESV)** <sup>27</sup> For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.

<sup>xiii</sup> **Genesis 1:3 (ESV)** <sup>3</sup> And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

### <sup>xiv</sup> **Colossians 2:13-15 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup> by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

---

<sup>xv</sup> **Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

<sup>xvi</sup> **John 8:31-32 (ESV)** <sup>31</sup> So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,

<sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

<sup>xvii</sup> **Genesis 1:16 (ESV)** <sup>16</sup> And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.

<sup>xviii</sup> **Luke 8:15 (ESV)** <sup>15</sup> As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

<sup>xix</sup> **John 1:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

<sup>xx</sup> **Isaiah 55:11 (ESV)** <sup>11</sup> so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

<sup>xxi</sup> **Matthew 20:28 (ESV)** <sup>28</sup> even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

<sup>xxii</sup> **Exodus 15:26 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup> saying, "If you will diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, your healer."

<sup>xxiii</sup> **John 5:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. <sup>5</sup> One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?"

<sup>xxiv</sup> **Luke 7:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed.

<sup>xxv</sup> **Luke 15:20 (ESV)** <sup>20</sup> And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

<sup>xxvi</sup> **1 John 4:4 (ESV)** <sup>4</sup> Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

<sup>xxvii</sup> **Matthew 11:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

<sup>xxviii</sup> **Mark 1:35 (ESV)** <sup>35</sup> And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

<sup>xxix</sup> **John 12:49 (ESV)** <sup>49</sup> For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.

<sup>xxx</sup> **John 10:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

<sup>xxxi</sup> **Mark 1:39 (ESV)**

<sup>39</sup> And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

<sup>xxxii</sup> **John 5:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> **John 5:30 (ESV)**

<sup>30</sup> "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> **John 15:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.