

Almighty Astounding Authority

Luke 4:31-44 ³¹ Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. ³² And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority. 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, 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!" 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. 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." ³⁷ And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region. 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. ³⁹ So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them. 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. 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. 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; 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." ⁴⁴ And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

A man is sick and goes to visit his doctor. The doctor prescribes medicine and asks him to come back in a month. In one month the man returns to the doctor.

"I'm still sick," he says, "the medicine didn't work."

"Did you take it all every day?" The doctor asks.

"No," says the man, "I took it two days and it did not work so I quit."

"You must take it every day for a month only then will you see the results."

We treat God's word like this man treated his doctor's medicine. We use it occasionally, when we feel like it, and then claim that it has no power, no effect on our life.

Our text shows us quite clearly God's word has power and it has power to change our life. It has power to cast out sin. It has power to banish demons and to heal all diseases. Sometimes its effect is instant like we see in our text. Otherwise times the word of the Lord works slowly over time. Either way the word has authority.

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

It is easy to astonish people with entertainment, fireworks, and circuses. But none of that is why the people are amazed. Jesus astonishes them purely with His preaching.

I feel a little sorry for the Pharisees and Rabbi's of Jesus day. To spend your life trying to teach the people only to have Jesus come along and astonish them. Only a little bit though because they should have rejoiced in the power of the word that was among them, instead of being jealous.

Luke 4:36 "What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out."

With nothing other than His word He commands the spirits and the diseases and at a simple word from Jesus they must depart. No armies or government is backing him up. He speaks and they depart.

We are always trying to use words to change other people. It is really exasperating because it rarely works. We try to change our spouses. We try to change our children. We get on Facebook and try to convince everyone else that our point of view is right. It does not work because our words do not have authority. Yet here is one who with a simple word heals, and changes life. His word is authority and that is astonishing to us.

It is easy to imagine an Israelite wife thinking in astonishment, "I have been trying to change my husband my whole life with words and shouting. Here Jesus with a single word effects real change."

Jesus word has authority.

This is the thing that is really sad about many liberal churches. They have given up on forgiveness and salvation and only care about changing the world. Yet they have also abandoned the one thing that can effect real change, the Word of Jesus.

Jesus word has authority, that is why Jesus says

Luke 4:43 I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also

Because it is the preaching of this word that casts out demons and diseases, that heals and forgives. He must preach it to other cities in Galilee and He must preach it to you also. This is the same word with the same authority that you receive on Sunday mornings when we read the scriptures. My sermons can not compare to the authority of Jesus but His word is here with that same authority to effect your life.

The authority to cast out demons

In Africa they are very concerned about demons. I think I have told you before about one pastor who showed a video in the villages of the word of God casting out demons. He told me afterwards that it is

hard to convince Africans to trust Christ until they know that He has the power to protect them from demons.

It is good that African's understand and properly fear Satan and his activities, but they do tend to blame them forever. Whenever anything bad happens it isn't me, rather the devil made me do it. I don't need to repent I need an exorcism.

We are less likely to think "the devil made me do it," and take responsibly for our own actions but We have a tendency, to really downplay the existence of demons and act as though they can't hurt us.

Remember what Satan told God in the book of Job.

Job 1:7 ⁷ And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it."

Satan is no less active today than he was in the time of Job. In fact the Bible says he is more active

Revelation 12:12 Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.

We have a tendency not to worry or care about Satan, even though we should but we do know firsthand the dangers of our own sinful flesh and what power it has over us.

James 1:14 ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

Satan and demons or our own sinful flesh, it is not one or the other but both. God's word has the authority to change them both, to cast out demon and sinful desire.

Luther in his explanation of baptism reminds us how the word of God daily casts out our sinful flesh through the waters of our baptism.

It means that the old Adam in us should be drowned by daily contrition and repentance and die with all sins and evil desires. It also means that a new man should daily appear and arise, who lives eternally before God in righteousness and purity.

Where is this written?

Saint Paul says in the sixth chapter of Romans, "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

God's power is not diminished because it is two thousand years since Christ. His power has the same power to cast out demons and our own sinful flesh as it had then.

The authority to heal diseases

Jesus word has the authority to heal our diseases as well.

It still has the authority to heal our physical ailments. And Jesus does heal us a lot more often than we realize.

James 5:14-15 ¹⁴ **Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.** ¹⁵ **And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.**

Through James God gives us a specific promise. The word will heal. One way or another the Lord will heal him. One way or another the Lord will raise him up. Either the disease will be gone, or the person will die and be healed of all disease and raised up again to live with Christ in heaven. One way or another the word will heal.

But notice how James points us at the end to the more important truth, not the healing of our body but the healing of our spirit.

“if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”

Ultimately to be healed means to be taken out of this life. As long as we live in this world we continue in sickness, sickness of body and soul. But the promise of Christ is the forgiveness of sins that cleanses our spirit and lifts us up to God. The forgiveness that heals our sin.

Jesus says, “I must preach the kingdom,” to you also. He brings to you His word of power. The word that has authority to cast out demons and sinful flesh. The word that has authority to heal diseases and change our life. The word that has the power to forgive sins and deliver us from this sinful earth into His heavenly kingdom. Amen