

Luke 4.31-44 Proclaiming To Renew Part B WWC 01.28.24

Good morning, the Lord bless you and give you peace. Our consideration this morning follows Jesus on His ministry tour in Galilee. He has escaped the dangers of Nazareth and has made His way down to a city in Galilee named Capernaum. For those of you who are drawn to the literary devices that the biblical authors use, just note here how Luke clarifies to Theophilus, the person to whom this letter is entitled, what Capernaum he was speaking about. A city in Galilee, he says to Theophilus. And Luke notes that Jesus went down to Capernaum. One commentator notes that Nazareth was about 1800 feet above Capernaum. (Capernaum is extinct and is believed to be on the “imperial road from the Mediterranean Sea to Transjordan and Damascus.” (Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke NICNT* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997] 222)) In this text as another commentator (William Hendriksen, *Luke NTC*) has noted, you may find it interesting the details that would have been expected for a physician, like Luke, to make. In **verse 35** Luke notes that the expelled demon did the man no harm. In **verse 38** and **39** Luke not only notes that Peter’s mother-in-law had a high fever and when she was healed was immediately serving. I don’t know about you but when I have had a high fever, it takes my body a little bit to get its strength back even after the fever had broken. These things, of course, are not the main concern, I simply raise them so that you can include in your meditation of scripture the consideration of people’s personalities as they come through their writing.

The greatest concern Luke has, of course, is reminding us that Jesus is accomplishing all that He said was fulfilled in Him in **Isaiah 61:1-2**, as Jesus’ recitation of it in **Luke 4:18-19**. ***Essentially the message last week was that Jesus fulfills the promises of God to renew, restore, and recreate, through proclamation, all that is captured and broken by sin.*** What should have been clear to all is how Jesus identified Himself as that fulfillment. We noted in a previous message the Old Testament connections in the narrative of Christ’s testing. The disciple Steven underscores those connections in Acts chapter 7 and rebukes the religious leaders for their blindness to the clarity of scripture regarding the Christ. He would fulfill miracles for the people of God. He would lead the people of God. He would teach the people of God the Words of God. We have a saying for this kind of blindness, do you remember it? You can’t see the forest for the trees. I like the Spanish version too; you can’t see the field for the grass. That is what was happening to the people in the time of Christ. They had such a myopic perspective of what Christ would do and what He would be like that they didn’t recognize Him when He came. Luke is broadening the scope of the reader’s perspective on Jesus Christ so that Jesus can be observed clearly in the pages of Luke’s history.

As we dive into this text this morning, I want to consider the astounding claim that Jesus and the Bible make, the astonishment and amazement people had when they encountered Jesus and His preaching and miracles, the human and the glorious reality of the Christian experience.

.I. The Astounding Claim. In this point I am simply stepping back and observing the greater narrative we have already seen. I said a moment ago that Christ’s statement taken from Isaiah, and the tenor of scripture in general given its overtly redemptive focus, is that ***Jesus fulfills the promises of God to restore, renew, and recreate through proclamation all that is captured and broken by sin.*** If we consider that the scriptures define all the evil that is present in this world, be it moral evil or the evil of catastrophe, or the evil of struggle psychologically, physically, socially, or the brokenness of this world so that there is disease, need, and death, as symptoms of sin, then we are struck by the breadth of Christ’s redemptive purposes. (Lamb and Lion together (Isaiah 65:25) **Have you considered that the Christian message is not just a**

message of individual restoration to God through the forgiveness of sin we receive by faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ? Christ *redeems a people and redeems the place* where the people dwell. We ought not discount that people like you and me, people like Theophilus to whom the book is written, people who had their own worldviews, now clinging to a framework that centers of Jesus Christ. There is no religion or worldview that does this or seeks to do this. They may have snippets of the message of the Kingdom of God, but there is no power to see and embrace the **totality** of it because Christ is not the centerpiece of their message, as it is in Christianity.

My friends, does your worldview satisfy every need of every person in the world in the present, in the past, and in the future? Our worldviews can only touch on the present and what we hope might happen. None of them deal with the union and harmony under one banner with those who have already been and those who will be, and the healing and renewal of our dwelling place, a new heaven and new earth. And here we have Jesus speaking and acting with such authority that worldviews, like that of His hometown friends, are so shattered that they try to silence Jesus through death, or like that of Capernaum, so amazed that they are scared that if Jesus leaves, they can never experience His power again. ***Please get this, the Christian hope is in its own realm. Nothing compares to it in glory, experience, and hope.***

The astounding claim that Jesus and the Bible make, and second, the astonishment and amazement people had when they encountered Jesus and His preaching and miracles.

.II. Astonishment and Amazement. This is the involuntary and emotive response that the people had when they found themselves hearing and experiencing Christ. It's captured in those moments when we look at each other and say, did that just happen? **The first experience that demanded their astonishment and amazement was Christ's teaching.** Of course, knowing the end of the story the last experience that demanded astonishment was Christ's resurrection and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Here Luke records (verse 32) that they were astonished at Christ's ***teaching for His words possessed authority***. It is not the authority of one who simply knows his or her subject matter, like, they are an authority in their field. There is no compelling reason to listen to those people unless we need the information. This is different. Matthew and Mark highlight this when they too consider the authority with which Jesus spoke and they include that it was different than the teaching of the scribes. When Jesus spoke, His words landed on them and did something to them as they listened. Think of a judge who has just spoken the verdict of a high-profile case, "Guilty and I remand you to no less than 20 years in such and such location." Think of the opposite reaction. Consider how the words land on someone when they are found not guilty, and the case is dismissed with prejudice. In both cases those words land on the people that are awaiting to hear the verdict for themselves or others. The strongest of people just breakdown and weep. Jesus was speaking in such a way that they were effected, not just affected, by the authority of His words.

The authority was only proven in even more of a distinguished manner when what Jesus was saying finally penetrated the defenses of a demon possessed man. The second experience that demanded their astonishment and amazement was Christ's power over devils and sickness. Luke identifies the demonic experience as one with an unclean demon, certainly to contrast what he has been trying to underscore with Jesus, that Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit. It seems unavoidable to say that whatever teaching had been going on there in the synagogue in the past, it did not inspire the response that Christ's presence and

teaching did. **Verse 34** reads quite interestingly in Greek. Translations tend to **blend literal and dynamic translations** to this response from the demon. Luke is the only one that uses this interjection in the New Testament, and in both cases with demonic encounters with Christ. It is an **exclamatory particle expressing surprise or displeasure. It can be pronounced ah! or ha! and has the sense of, “let alone!”** (Logos Greek/English Lex. of NT.). The demon has been caught off guard at the coming of Christ to this synagogue and in a moment the flood of impending judgment shackles it with fear and displeasure. **“Have you come to destroy us.”** We can’t take this outside of the context that Luke gives us. The devil, the prince of demons, was routed before Jesus when Jesus was at His weakest point as a man. How much more now that Jesus has displayed His power over the devil will not the devil’s minions not tremble at the presence of God incarnate?! Jesus rebukes the demon and commands the demon to leave, and it has to obey. After Christ’s testing in the wilderness, every encounter with demonic forces throughout the gospels distinguishes the absolute power of Christ over them, and their inability to skirt past Him. When Jesus is present in their area, they come trembling and quickly before Him. All in all, ***the point is that everyone who came to Jesus experienced His power and that power led them to a place of peace and release from the pain of their souls.***

And here there are some **very important applications** for us. **First, that demons are not all knowing. They are surprised by things as we are, which means as well that they are not omnipresent.** If they could be everywhere at all times, they would know everything that was taking place. **But remember even in the narrative above about Christ’s testing. The Spirit of God had to take Jesus to the place the devil was for the encounter to occur. Be encouraged loved ones. The devil is no match for God in character or power. So, the apostle John encourages us to consider that “he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4)**

Second, Christ’s work of aiding people through exorcising demons or healing from sickness was always and only done in the context of His work of preaching and teaching. The power of the spoken word of God, and there with Jesus, the visible Word of God, produced a confrontation with darkness through which God’s light shone and conquered. Why is this important? Well, it shows us the proper order of things. ***Healing of the soul through the preaching of the Word of God is the first and necessary healing.*** We must hear of Jesus and believe in Him for forgiveness of sins and eternal life if we will have hope. May I offer a word of caution? Beware of people who are asphyxiated on the diabolical. We are not ghost busters. We are to do the work that Jesus did in sharing the beauty of God in the face of Jesus Christ. If along the way we find ourselves encountering demonic evil, then we interact with it in the power of God alone. We don’t go around demon hunting and then speak some biblical words over that situation as if it were some fanciful incantation. That is what I mean to be asphyxiated on the diabolical. We should instead live in and speak in celebration of the glorious – Jesus Christ the righteous.

The third thing that I think is important here as a point of application is that ***we cannot ignore that there is evil in this world that is personified beyond human evil.*** There is a devil. He has dominion. He has demons under him. When Jesus warns Peter of Peter’s denial of Christ, Jesus says to Peter that Satan desired to sift Peter as wheat. Satan’s power is seen in the interaction that Jesus had with Satan in the wilderness. In a moment Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and in a moment, he was able to take Jesus to the pinnacle of the Temple. We can think back to when Satan sought to make Job act

treacherously towards Jehovah, he displays power in the physical realm and psychological realm, though we know as well that Satan could do nothing before God allowed him to act. God restrains the perversion of the devil and occasionally lets us see the devil's intentions as we are on occasion confronted by pure acts of evil. There is supernatural darkness in this world and whatever secularism does to deny it, we still see it present as the depth of evil exercised by some humans is beyond natural capacity. If you don't have Christ you are outmatched by this being. You are endangered by him.

How do we recognize the devil's influence either through him or those who serve him? Jesus describes it like this in **John 7-8** when He rebukes the priest and the Pharisees and says, (8:44) **"You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."** ***Death and lies are the clearest example of the devil's and his minions' influence.***

Wherever there is a concerted and successful effort for destruction of people, wherever there is a concerted and successful effort for the depreciation of truth and celebration of lies, there the devils have been. And, understanding Christ's words in their context, it can happen in places of worship. Why was this experience so new to those who were already surrounded by God's Word? The only answer that we can give is that teaching of God's Word had been skuttled under a mountain of manmade ideas about God's Word. I say this because one of the greatest tasks presented to Jesus in His earthly ministry was restoring a proper view of the Word of God. Do you remember Jesus' most famous sermon? **"You have heard that it was said to those of old, but I say to you...but I say unto you."** How many encounters did Jesus have with religious leaders where he called them hypocrites and binders of people's consciences with laws the religious leaders wouldn't themselves follow? ***We open a door to the confusion of the evil one when we pervert the clear and primary teaching of the word of God.***

Consider **2 Corinthians 10:4-5** (ESV): **"⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ."** Can you hear the devils lies in the attacks in the communities historically considered Christian gatherings? Biblical views of gender and marriage are demonized for the canticles of today's desires. Can you hear the devil's lies in the taglines of the abortion and transgender surgery industries? If you can't hear it, look at the lives that they have destroyed. Women who are laden with guilt and pain of destroying their children, and people who now find themselves realizing their problem was not gender dysphoria when they were kids, it was childishness and mental illness. Now they have no ability to reverse the surgeries and feel the fulfillment of what their bodies were designed to do. But the devil is subtle. Those are obvious cultural sins. What of the whispers that we've all experienced? Just ask God for forgiveness later. No one will know. It's not wrong anyways. Everyone is doing it. This will make you happy. The bible is full of errors so it's really not as bad as it is made out to be. I deserve to be and act like this, and no one can take that from me.

What does **2 Corinthians** tell us? What does Jesus' example show us? ***The way we overcome is not by being more subtle in our Christian life, but more overtly Christian in our Christian life. We draw near to God.*** We bring all things, mind, will, emotions, action, into an obedient disposition to the things Christ has made clear. The way to overcome is to let the light of Christ out more in your life, not less. If I can put it this

way and not to disparage justification in anyway, the way to overcome is to become more Christian, which is another way of saying we are to pursue sanctification.

1 Thessalonians 4:3–8 (ESV): “³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. ⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.”

Romans 6:21–23 (ESV): “²¹ But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

1 Peter 5:8–11 (ESV): “⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

The astounding claim that Jesus and the Bible make, the astonishment and amazement people had when they encountered Jesus and His preaching and miracles, and the human and the glorious reality of the Christian experience.

.III. The human and the glorious reality of the Christian experience. This is really a brief point to show what happens when we experience God in Christ. Notice **verses 42**. The people sought Jesus and would have kept Jesus from leaving. You can't leave, Jesus. What will happen when you leave? Jesus again teaches them about Himself and His ministry. What Jesus had done and was doing was preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God, and He had to do so throughout Israel. You know, this is the same fear the disciples had as Jesus began telling them that He must suffer many things and go to the Father. The disciples were in deep sorrow over these things and Jesus said to them and Christ focused them on the greatest gift of the Christian experience, the Holy Spirit.

John 14:16–18 (ESV): “¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

¹⁸ “I will not leave you as orphans;”

John 14:26–27 (ESV): “²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

John 15:26–27 (ESV): “²⁶ But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.”

The glory of the Christian experience is that the Holy Spirit indwells and seals the believer. We can walk in unity with Him and be used as Jesus was used and be comforted as Jesus was comforted. There is nothing the world has to offer that can compare to that. Let us rest in Jesus and His promises, beloved. Let us leave the attractions of the world and be drawn to Him in the love of God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.