

03/23/25 - Luke 4:31-44 - "The Year of Jubilee is Now!"

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[0 : 00] Please turn to Luke 4, 31 through 44. And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and he was teaching them on the Sabbath,! And they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority.

And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, 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. 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. 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 came out. They come out. And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region. 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. And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she rose and began to serve them.

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 hand on every one of them and healed them. And the 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. 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. 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. And he was preaching in the synagogue of Judea.

[2 : 04] This is God's word. Thanks be to God. Well, as we approach the text today, we're reminded of a powerful moment just a few verses earlier than where we started the passage today. I'm talking about the moments that Jesus was handed the scroll of Isaiah Isaiah, and he read from Isaiah 61 in the synagogue. And if we remember from last week, he declared, 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, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

And he rolled the scroll up and sat back down, and he did his mic drop. Today, this scripture, he says, has been fulfilled in your hearing.

So, to those of you who were present for last week's sermon, you would have discovered that Jesus Christ is not presenting Himself here as a liberator of social activism, as our modern culture portrays Him to be. But rather, it's different. He is a liberator, yes, but not of social activism, but that of people who are bankrupt from sin, enslaved by sin, weighed down by sin's effects.

And last week, we heard those words. We heard it all. I'm not going to preach the same sermon.

You can just go back and listen. But the question sort of lingers as He escaped the attempt of murder from the people cornering Him upon the cliff because wrath was filled within them. The question comes today, did Jesus Christ mean it? Was it just a powerful moment in a sermon? Or is He actually able to deliver upon those promises? Praise the Lord for Luke, the physician, takes a doctor to make things right.

[4 : 53] That's why Rick is a pastor here. I'm just kidding. And we get a bonus because his wife is a doctor too, so if Rick's slacking, we got Esther. But Luke doesn't have to leave us guessing. The doctor doesn't leave us guessing. In the very next scenes that we just read today, Jesus heads to Capernaum.

And there, we don't just hear about the scroll of Isaiah 61. We see it unfolding in magnificent proportions here. Jesus lives it out. He begins to provide good news to the captives, to set the captives free. The sick are healed, the oppressed are lifted. It begins. And what we see as the main point folds in is that Jesus Christ's authority doesn't just declare freedom, it delivers it.

And so, playing on last week, the sermon titled, Is the Year of Jubilee Is Now? The Year of Jubilee Is Now. And we're going to be walking through these four scenes that serve as living proof of Isaiah 61 being fulfilled in real time, starting in Capernaum. Let's pray as we dive in.

Lord, we praise you. We honor you. And we desire for you to speak to us today.

That if there is a sharpness within the sermon, may it only be from the knife that is found in your word, that cuts to the heart, that kills our sin, and help us to be sanctified and you glorified through the preaching of your word. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

[7 : 09] Amen. And so, the first section, as we see Isaiah 61 unfold, we see it happen accordingly. In Capernaum, the people weren't just impressed. Like, this guy is a great orator. He's handling the word. He's preaching the good news. Then they weren't just impressed. They were stunned.

We don't have any idea what Jesus was saying. Luke doesn't think that that was necessarily important to include. But what he does include is their reaction to his teaching. Because Jesus didn't teach like the scribes. His words carried weight. They possessed authority. I've never seen it before. This is astonished. This is a common word used throughout many of the gospel writers. And it's a word that is used to describe a specific response to the words of Jesus Christ. They were astonished. In fact, if we go back to Luke 2, verse 48, when Joseph and Mary lost the Son of God, we remember that incident, and they found Him in the temple, it says that Mary was astonished to find Him there. And I think that that accurately gives off the sense of how they were astonished, what they were feeling, what they were experiencing, and that it wasn't just surprise, but also a sense of relief and astonishment. What a relief it was to find Jesus Christ, the Son of God, after leaving Him behind. What a relief of amazement it served for all to hear Him preach and to be astonished.

All the scribes are preaching, do this and do that. Jesus preaches freedom, good news to the poor, relief to the poor. And it carried authority. Authority isn't inerrantly bad, regardless of what anyone else might say. Authority is actually a beautiful thing. It is a beautiful thing when it's godly authority. Our culture often sees authority as abusive, oppressive. But the answer to bad authority isn't just discarding all authority, but it's actually embracing good authority. Good authority ought to be desired. As a pastor, my authority doesn't come with a title, Pastor Brent's, as if that somehow inherits authority. It doesn't. Or from a platform, because I'm up on this stage with a cool piece of wood that I have the Bible open on, okay, well, no, that doesn't bring authority and position. Even the congregational vote, when I was brought on as a pastor, doesn't give me authority. Martin Lloyd-Jones says, Jesus' words nourished, they liberated, they lifted people up. And this is what it means to proclaim good news to the poor, the poor in spirit, the spiritually bankrupt, not just economically poor, but the spiritually humble, the ones who are desperate for hope. Good news to the poor. Sinclair Ferguson says, Christ is never more glorious in our eyes than when we see ourselves as poor, as needy, and Him as all sufficient. You see, true authority as seen in Jesus doesn't crush.

[11 : 44] It restores. It silences evil. It lifts the broken. It stirs astonishment in the humble, bringing relief. When it's rooted in God's Word, authority becomes not a burden, but a blessing, and that it is. We see in the second section, Isaiah 61, continuing to unfold. We see liberty to the liberty to the captives in verse 33 to 37 in the very synagogue where people are astonished. They're relieved. They're seeing authoritative teaching profoundly different from the scribes. And we find a man who decided to come to church that morning, and he was possessed by an unclean spirit. Now, what irony, right? A demon went to church.

I mean, our culture tells us that demons are the things lurking in the dark alleyways.

They're things that when you turn the light off in the basement, you run up and you run away from the invisible thing that your mind has conjured up. Hiding in the basement, I do that. I'm sorry. Sometimes I scream, and I'm just kidding. I've gotten better as I yield to Christ and rest in His promises against those conjured up things in the basement. Amen. Sanctification in real time. We think of demons in all these weird ways, mysterious ways, depicted in horror films and things like that. But this one showed up to church. What was this demon doing at church on this day?

[13 : 44] Well, he stood up. He said, what have you to do with us as like a representation of all demons? Jesus of Nazareth, have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.

And now, I've heard interesting things about this scenario. But I think context is really important, especially culturally speaking. Because this was not a confession of the demon. And no, this isn't turning into a message of, why can we not confess that Jesus is Lord if a demon can confess it? I don't think that's why Luke is putting that in. We see critical words within context here of authority. And so, we have to understand this in light of this revealed, profound, astonished authority. This was not a confession from a demon. It was a power play. Authority was being challenged. A demon was trying to gain authority. How? By naming Jesus. And it was a common belief of that era. William Lane, a commentator, says, the exact knowledge of another's name was believed to bring mastery over them. But Jesus doesn't play games like that. He doesn't play games. He rebukes the demon with a word, be silent and come out of him. Liberty to the captives. No spectacle.

No drama. No drama. Just raw, divine authority. You see, Satan doesn't mind coming to church.

[15 : 43] In fact, he prefers coming to church if it keeps people distracted, keeps problems occurring within a congregation, stirring division, hardening hearts, binding sinners completely to their sin.

Thomas Watson says, the devil comes to church but not with good intents. He steals the word from men's hearts. And now, let's be clear about something. Demons are not your everyday little depicted cartoons with the red cape, with the red pitchfork, with the red horns, with the little sly smile across his face.

They're not anything like that. They are fallen angels, and they do exist. These fallen angels rage against God and rage against God's people. They hate what God is doing in the world, and they hate Steel Valley Church and every church that proclaims this authoritative good news.

We see in verse 36, they were all amazed. Astonishment goes to amazement. What is this word? For with authority here again and power, he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out. This spread across the surrounding region.

[17 : 20] Liberty to the captives. You see, this is liberation. This is a preview of what his kingdom brings.

And guess what? Jesus Christ can liberate you today. Not by me. Not by some exorcist that we might think exists in the world.

But still the same. By Christ's word. Right here. The authority people marveled at earlier is now demonstrated.

It's not just read Isaiah scroll 61 verses. Jesus doesn't just teach about freedom. He gives it.

And what hope there is for those who cling to the words of Jesus Christ. Christ. And for God so loved the world that he gave his only son. That whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life.

[18 : 29] To cling to those words. What hope there is for those who cling to the words of Jesus. His authority breaks chains.

Chains of lusts that enslave hearts. Bitterness that corrodes our souls. Fear that paralyzes.

Shame that suffocates. Lies we've believed for far too long. And guilt that we can't seem to shake.

This incident of Jesus proclaiming liberty to the captives.

Those captive by sin. Shows us that no one is beyond his reach. No matter what you've done.

You're bound to sin.

Crushed by failure. Haunted by your past. Jesus came for you today. And guess what? He's here for you today. If you're not in Christ today.

[19 : 35] Believe in this message of the good news. That Jesus Christ substituted himself on your behalf. Pent of your sin. Believe in that. Come to him.

Be set free by the living, liberating, and authoritative word. Christ. Christ. We see it continue. In the third episode we see Isaiah 61 continue to unfold.

Liberty to the oppressed. And from public ministry to a private home in verse 38. Jesus enters Simon's house and heals his mother-in-law from a high fever.

Verse 39 says he stood over her and rebuked the fever. And it left her. Huh. I didn't know fevers had ears. Wow.

Fevers can't hear commands. And yet Jesus speaks and creation obeys. That's not pragmatic power.

[20 : 45] Ten steps of how to cast out demons. Well, you got to name the illness specifically. If it's the right arm, Jesus ain't going to heal it because he didn't say the left arm.

Right? No. It's not pragmatic power. It's not pragmatic power. Speaking to illnesses. It's divine power that Jesus Christ has.

That Jesus Christ has. What I'm talking about is the word of faith movement which claims to have healing power, divine power in our words.

That as God spoke, we can speak. We can speak and we possess the same power. Yet for some odd reason, the word of faith movement never empties hospitals.

They're only filling arenas. There's something profoundly off about that. Even demonic about that.

[21 : 44] No. No. Jesus possessed authority and his miracles proved his authority.

Verse 40. He laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. Everyone. No one was left out. No manipulation. He didn't need cameras rolling.

He didn't ask for a love offering afterwards and send the plate through once again. And manipulate pressure upon people. No self-promotion. Just mercy. Verse 41.

You see this. Another episode. Demons also came out of many. Can you imagine this sight?

Demons coming out of many.

It's a horror show. They're saying, you are the son of God. But again, he rebuked them. And would not allow them to speak. Again, demons tried to name him to gain control.

[22 : 46] Challenging his authority. But Jesus silences any challenger. A simple rebuke from Jesus Christ is all it took. In this day and age, incantations and all this stuff was really popular among pagans of this day.

But as Martin Luther says in a mighty fortress, just one word, one little word shall fell him. Satan.

We don't need louder prayers. We need stronger faith in Jesus Christ. Liberty to the oppressed.

And I imagine many today, maybe, we have an unusual fascination with evil.

I remember Rick touched on it a little bit. Whether like over-spiritualizing everything, like that devil's just out to get you and things like that. Or even on the other side of like seeking those things.

But just consuming entertainment that glorifies darkness. Like horror films, haunted houses, things like that. These aren't harmless thrills, church.

[23 : 58] They often celebrate the very things that Christ died to defeat. Amen. There's a disturbing overlap, actually, as I was reflecting, between the horror industry and the pornography industry.

Because both invite us to marvel at what God calls sacred being undone. One mocks life by taking it.

One mocks love. In both instances, horror and pornography, we watch Eden, the Garden of Eden unraveling.

And we call that entertainment. But what pleases God in that? We have to be careful not to entertain that.

Luke's emphasis is clear. Jesus came with authority to restore what evil has broken. And so again, don't flirt with darkness. Nor seek it.

[25 : 00] Nor find entertainment in it. Rejoice instead in the one who came to set us free from it.

From all evil. And we see in verse 42 something incredible unfolding.

See the proclaiming of the year of the Lord's favor. In verse 42 to 44. The people sought Him. Goes to a desolate place.

People are coming to Him. More. I got a fever too, Jesus. Sore throat. I got His hangnail.

Can't trust a hangnail. But He said, I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well.

For I was sent for this purpose. This is the first of 37 references to the kingdom of God in the gospel of Luke.

[26 : 14] And we might be able to hear the echoes of Isaiah 61 as he's saying this. As Isaiah spoke about, which is fulfilled in Christ, the year of the Lord's favor.

The Jubilee image. The widespread mercy. The widespread healing. The widespread restoration. And it closes out.

He was preaching in the synagogues of Judea. But they wanted to keep Jesus for themselves. But Jesus Christ's mission was bigger than Capernaum.

He came in to usher the kingdom of God. One of healing, mercy, restoration for all nations. Literally, Jubilee.

The Great Reset. And when we pray the Lord's Prayer and say, Your kingdom come, we're not asking for a political solution. Right? We're asking for the reign of Christ to invade our hearts and transform our lives.

[27 : 22] Your kingdom come here. Where Jesus walks. Where mercy flows. You see, Jesus Christ's kingdom was intended to spread through our lives.

Invading our hearts and spreading our lives until it's consummated at the end of all time. And if we intend the kingdom to spread in our lives, it must first rule our hearts.

And in our cultural motto of insubordination, submit to no one sort of spirit, we see marriages crumble under unyielding pride rather than being restored through humility.

We see children are trained to question all authority. That teachers are bad. That law enforcement is bad. Rather than obedience to authority. Employees mock employers rather than honoring them. Citizens disregard the government rather than taking Paul's advice to be subjected to them because he created government. Even believers scoff or ignore the church rather than finding love.

[28 : 35] If we intend the kingdom to spread in our lives, it must first rule our hearts. It's personal before it becomes corporate.

Now, let's be honest. The don't tread on me motto is not a motto of a kingdom-minded heart. It's not. I'm not talking about the amendments either.

I'm talking about the submit to no one spirit that is literally invading our culture of individualism. That spirit may win independence from all things and disconnect from all authority, but it also resists Christ's reign.

If we want the kingdom to spread through our lives, it must first rule our hearts, and so we have to ask, are we living in the year of jubilee of God's kingdom coming?

When we read from the scroll of Isaiah 61, we realize something here. That it wasn't just a slogan. It was a mission statement.

[29 : 47] Luke is reinforcing that fact today. In Capernaum, Jesus started fulfilling it. We're all still stuck in the previous verse of how did he escape that crowd?

Harry Potter's fans know the answer. Just kidding. Complete joke. But he started fulfilling it. From the synagogue to the streets.

Jesus Christ fulfilled what was foretold. Jesus Christ brought authoritative good news to the spiritually poor. He freed spiritual chains.

He healed and restored the spiritually sick and silenced the demons along the way. Anyone who wanted the challenge. And Jesus Christ made it clear.

He wouldn't stop in one town. He's going to them all. The year of the Lord's favor wasn't just a moment, but a movement, and we are still living in it today.

[30 : 52] Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is still at work. He's still saving. He still heals today. He still delivers. He's still building his kingdom.

But are we just hearing these words? Are we ready to experience what happens when Jesus Christ walks into the city of our hearts, we'll say?

Where do you find yourself in this story? Are you the poor in spirit longing for good news? Are you the captive?

Captive to something? Fear, addiction, shame, captive to sin? Are you oppressed by circumstances or burdens that are just simply too heavy to carry?

I can authoritatively say to you, according to God's word, Jesus Christ came for you. He doesn't just make promises.

[31 : 56] He keeps them. He doesn't just declare freedom. He delivers it. May he deliver you today. The year of jubilee is now.

Let's pray. Let's pray.