

Our Lord's Power Over Demons and Disease

Luke 4:31-44

Luke 4:31-44: 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.

Background Notes

After our Lord's rejection at Nazareth, He went down to Capernaum, a town on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. As far as the record goes, Jesus never returned to Nazareth after He was rejected there. The Lord will not force Himself on anyone, then or today.

Matthew's Gospel tells us that the Lord did not just visit Capernaum - He made this village His new hometown. Matthew 4:13 - "And in leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea." If you visit the ruins of Capernaum today you will see the remains of the 1st century village, including the foundation of the dwelling that most archeologists believe is Peter's house. They discovered that a 4th century Byzantine church was built over a 1st century house that had Christian symbols on its walls. So this house most likely was Peter's home, and possibly the early Christians met there.

In the Lord's announcement of His Messiah-ship at Nazareth, He read from Isaiah 61:1-2, and He stopped His quotation in the middle of verse 2. He did not quote the last part of the verse which speaks about the last days and the vengeance of God, which will not come until the end times and the second coming of Christ. The Lord told the people in the synagogue at Nazareth that the part of the prophecy that He quoted was being fulfilled in their day. From the scroll of Isaiah He read, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord"* (Luke 4:18-19).

We see this Scripture being fulfilled in Capernaum. The Lord preached and taught the good news with authority. He brought release and freedom to those who were demon-possessed and downtrodden, and He brought healing to the sick and diseased.

Verse 38 makes it clear that Peter was married, since he had a mother-in-law. In 1 Corinthians 9:3-5 we read that Peter was married. In the first section of 1 Corinthians 9, the apostle Paul was arguing for the "rights of apostles," including the right to marry, and he used Peter as an example: *"My defense to those who examine me is this, Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas (Peter)?"* The apostle Paul went on to say that he had given up certain rights in order to be more effective in the ministry, but clearly we see here that Peter was married. Anyone who tries to teach some kind of "celibate priesthood" certainly cannot appeal to the marital status of Peter! Peter was definitely a married man.

Doctrinal Points

1. As the great Creator, Jesus could cast out any and all demons.

In verses 33-37 tell us that Jesus cast an unclean spirit out of a demon-possessed man in the synagogue at Capernaum. We learn a number of significant facts about demons from this event.

1) Demons can be present in religious places, such as synagogues.

There are certainly many churches today where demons are present -- churches that do not honor the Person and work of Christ.

2) Different demons have different characteristics.

In this case, the demon was an "unclean" demon -- that is, an evil spirit causes morally unclean thoughts and actions. This does not mean, by the way, that everyone who occasionally has a morally unclean thought is demon-possessed! No! Demons that have certain characteristics can cause specific other problems. In 1 Timothy 4 we read of "doctrines of demons." This kind of evil spirit is involved with spreading false doctrine through false teachers. We read of a "deaf and

dumb” spirit in Mark 9, so demons can cause disabilities. We read of the “spirit of infirmity” in Luke 13. Demons can cause illness -- but again, don’t get the idea that every time a person has a disability or is sick, it’s caused by a demon! Notice in verses 40-41 that sickness and disease are clearly distinguished from demonic possession: *“And when the sun was setting all those who had any that were sick and various diseases brought them to Him and He laid His hands on everyone of them and healed them. And demons also came out of many crying out and saying ‘You are the Christ the Son of God’.”*

3) Demons recognize who Jesus is.

The unclean demon used the voice of the man who was possessed, and shouted, *“I know who you are, the Holy One of God”* (v34). Also verse 41: *“And demons also came out of many, crying out, and saying, ‘You are the Christ the Son of God’.”* So demons know the truth about Jesus. James 2:19 says, *“You believe that there is one God, you do well. Even the demons believe and tremble.”* Why did Jesus rebuke the demons and tell them to be quiet? The reason was that the Lord did not want testimony about Him from demons.

4) Demons are under the sovereign control of God and therefore must submit to the authority of Christ. And that’s our first doctrinal point: As the great Creator, Jesus could cast out any and all demons. All evil spirits are subject to Jesus Christ, because He created them. Colossians 1:16 says, *“For by Him [Christ) all things were created, that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible or invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.”*

Demons were not created as evil spirits -- they were created as holy angels. However, the demons chose to rebel against God at the time of Satan’s rebellion, and thus they chose to become evil spirits. However, because they were created by the eternal Son of God, they must submit to the authority of Christ! As the great Creator, Jesus could cast out any and all demons.

2. As the Great Physician, Jesus could heal any and all diseases.

Peter’s mother-in-law, who had a high fever, was not the only person Jesus healed at Capernaum on this occasion. He healed any and all the people who came to Him with various sicknesses and diseases. Verse 40: *“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.”*

The Lord is the Great Physician. He could heal then -- and He can heal today. Any and all diseases! However, the Lord may choose not to heal every sickness of every believer today. Every person who was sick in Israel wasn’t healed during our Lord’s ministry. This healing time in Capernaum was a demonstration that the Lord **could** heal any and all diseases.

There are many reasons why the Lord may choose not to heal a sick person today. Be careful not to jump to the conclusion, when a believer is not healed in answer to prayer, that they didn't have enough faith, or that their friends who prayed for them didn't have enough faith. No! There are many reasons why the Lord may choose not to heal a specific believer. For example, Christians can bring glory to God through a life of suffering, and Christians can bring glory to God in the way they handle suffering. So the Lord can heal all sickness and disease -- but He may choose not to heal on some occasions, depending on the particular situation. However, the point of this passage is that, as the Great Physician, Jesus could heal any and all diseases.

Practical Application

Have a quiet time to stay focused.

Verses 42-44, *“And when it was day He departed and went into a deserted place. The crowd saw Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from leaving them, but He said to them ‘I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.’ And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.”*

The people of Capernaum wanted the Lord to stay there and do more miracles, but the Lord kept his focus on His overall mission: *“I must preach the Gospel of God to other cities also because for this purpose I have been sent.”* Notice that **the focus of our Lord's ministry was on preaching the good news, not on healing and doing miracles!** And His purpose was to preach the good news throughout Israel -- not just at Capernaum.

How did the Lord, as Son of Man, stay focused on His purpose and His overall mission of preaching the kingdom of God, without getting side-tracked by meeting the many physical needs of so many people all around Him? I think His key to staying focused was going to a “quiet place.” Verse 42: *“Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place.”* Mark 1:35 says that He went out while it was still dark and prayed. That quiet time, that time alone with the Father, kept our Lord focused on His main mission, in the midst of the many needs surrounding Him.

We too, have to get alone with the Lord each day to stay focused on what the Lord has called us to do. Do you have a quiet time each day – a time when you read God's Word and pray? How can the Lord direct us if there is no communication time with Him? To stay focused, have a quiet time!