Luke Lesson 12 (2019)

**“THAT IS WHY I WAS SENT”**

Luke 4:31-44

Key Verse: 4:43

“But he said, ‘I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to other towns also, because that is why I was sent.’”

In the previous passage, we learned how Jesus was rejected by his hometown people when he proclaimed himself as the promised Messiah based on the description of the Prophet Isaiah (4:18-19; Isaiah 61:1-2). One of the main reasons they rejected him was because he didn't perform miracles as they has expected he would. However, in today’s passage, we see Jesus performing many miracles in Capernaum, healing many sick people with various kinds of sicknesses, including Simon’s mother-in-law (38-39). What is more remarkable about Jesus in today’s passage is his absolute authority over demonic powers. In fact, the people in Capernaum were fascinated by Jesus’ authority. They requested him not to go away. In response to their request, Jesus said, “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to other towns also, because that is why I was sent.” (43) Let’s think about what Jesus meant when he said these words. And let us also think about what Jesus’ authority over demons and his healing of the various sicknesses reveal about him.

Look at verses 31 and 32. “Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath he taught the people. They were amazed at his teaching, because his words had authority.” Capernaum was located about 25 miles east of Jesus’ hometown, Nazareth. Verse 31 states that Jesus went down to Capernaum. Why down? It’s because Nazareth stood approximately 1,200 feet above sea level and Capernaum laid almost 700 feet below sea level (Pic#1,2). Capernaum was a beautiful town, located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee (Pic#3,4,5). In fact, Capernaum became the major hub of Jesus’ Galilean ministry.

What did Jesus do in Capernaum? He did a lot for his ministry. But we find throughout Luke’s account that Jesus gave priority to the ministry of God’s words. Look at verses 31b-32 again. “And on the Sabbath he taught the people. They were amazed at his teaching, because his words had authority.” It was Jesus’ custom to worship God the Father along with people in their synagogues wherever he went (4:16). Since Jesus became known as a great rabbi, he was invited to speak in their synagogues. And his teaching amazed people because his words had authority.

What does it mean that his words had authority? When some preacher delivers a powerful and heart-moving sermon, people would say to the preacher, *“Thank you for your powerful message.”* But the fact that Jesus’ words had authority means much more than just being powerful, persuasive or truthful. I think it means that his words are divine. Jesus said to his disciples, “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my words and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.” (Jn. 5:24-25) In fact, Jesus’ words are full of authority because his words are the words of the divine and the words of eternal life.

People were simply amazed at the authority of Jesus’ words. Yet, they couldn’t put their faith in him, recognizing him as the Son of God. Unexpectedly, however, the recognition came from a different source.

Look at verses 33-34. “In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an impure spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, ‘Go away! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!” I don’t believe that this man would have been allowed in the synagogue if people knew that he was a demon-possessed man. Apparently, this man didn’t look horrible, like the demon-possessed man in the region of the Gerasenes (Mk. 5:1-5). Obviously, a demon was hiding behind or inside this man who might have been well-dressed, religious and looked decent. And when he heard the teachings of the rabbis, he didn’t make any trouble. But as soon as he heard Jesus’ words, the demon inside him was greatly disturbed. He began to cry out at the top of his voice, “Go away! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!”

Because of this man’s screaming, everyone in the synagogue became quiet. At first, people who didn’t know that this man was demon-possessed might simply assume that the man was just acting out. After all, what this man was saying about Jesus was true because Jesus was from Nazareth. Yet, I am not sure if they were ready to acknowledge Jesus as the Holy Son of God at this point. Surely, Jesus knew that the demon’s intent was not to help, but to disturb his ministry.

So, what did Jesus do? He didn’t walk away from the synagogue. Instead, Jesus saved the man from demon-possession. Look at verse 35. “‘Be quiet!’ Jesus said sternly. ‘Come out of him!’ Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him.” Here, we see that Jesus didn’t just rebuke the demon to be quiet. Instead, he exposed the demon by commanding him to come out of the man. This could have been a great challenge for Jesus if he didn’t have the power to drive demons.

A number of years ago, we had a puppy in our house, named “Lucky.” It would often bark so loud. Even though Joy and I tried to make him quiet, it wouldn’t work. He was not afraid of any of our family members, except his trainer, Daniel. When Lucky barked, we tried to stop him by screaming at him, *“Lucky, be quiet!”* But he kept on barking. Yet, when Daniel said, *“Lucky?!”* he became so quiet.

When the demon heard Jesus’ words “Be quiet! Come out of him!”, the demon had no choice but to be quiet and come out of the man. Even though the demon threw the man down before all people, the man was not harmed at all. Thus, the man was restored to normalcy and the divine authority of Jesus’ words, particularly over the power of demons, was vividly demonstrated.

Look at verses 36-37. “All the people were amazed and said to each other, ‘What words these are! With authority and power, he gives orders to impure spirits and they come out!’ And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.” What does this event reveal about Jesus? It reveals Jesus’ divine authority as the Son of God. Yet, these people, who were eye-witnesses of Jesus’ miracle and authority, didn’t put their trust in Jesus as the Holy Son of God.

In verses 38-41, Dr. Luke introduces Jesus’ healing of numerous people who had various kinds of sicknesses in Capernaum, including Simon’s mother-in-law. Look at verses 38-39. “Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. So, he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.” Probably, Simon invited Jesus to have lunch at his house, prepared by his mother-in-law. But when they went there, they found Simon’s mother-in-law was lying in bed, suffering from a high fever. We don’t know when she started to have this fever and what caused it. Luke, who was a medical doctor, knew that proper medical treatment would depend on the diagnosis, knowing exactly what caused the fever. But he was surprised that to Jesus, it didn’t matter. When Jesus simply rebuked the fever, it immediately left her and she became well. Wow! This truly demonstrates Jesus’ divine power and authority over sicknesses.

Look at verse 40. “At sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them.” Apparently, when people heard what happened to the demon-possessed man and to Simon’s mother-in-law, they surely hoped Jesus would also heal their loved ones who had been suffering from various kinds of sickness. The expectation was extremely high. According to Mark’s account, the whole town gathered at the door of Simon’s home in Capernaum (Mk. 1:33). What if Jesus didn’t have the ability to heal these people? Well, he might have told them to come back later since it was too late or he was too tired, then he would have secretly gone away and hid. But Jesus didn’t hesitate. Laying his hands on each one, Jesus healed them all. It wasn’t like some faith-healers whose healings are prearranged and selective. Whatever sickness they may have, Jesus healed by his simple touch.

Look at verse 41. “Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, ‘You are the Son of God!’ But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah.” (41) It’s interesting to see that when these sick people were healed, many of them were set free from demon-possession, probably because their sickness was caused by demons. This does not mean that all sickness is caused by demons. And these demons shouted, “You are the Son of God!” But Jesus rebuked them to be quiet because they knew that he was the Messiah (41).

What do all these things reveal about Jesus? These things reveal that Jesus is not just human. He is the divine, the Son of the Most High God. In fact, this Jesus can not only heal sicknesses and drive out demons, but he can also raise the dead. He is God the Messiah who was to come and save his people from their sins and bring them into this glorious kingdom through his death and resurrection.

However, it’s interesting to see that all these people who experience Jesus’ miraculous healing didn’t confess Jesus as the Son of God. Why not? It’s because experiencing miracles does not necessarily help people to know that Jesus is the Son of God deep in their hearts. It’s possible only when we accept the grace of forgiveness through the repentance of our sins and faith in Jesus. Even the demons know and shout that Jesus is the Son of God, they are not saved because they are not repentant of their sin and evil. After all, if the devil repents, he is not the devil. On the other hand, if we don’t repent of our sins and evil, we can be as evil as the devil. So, we need to repent all the time. That’s why Jesus preached from the beginning of his ministry, “The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mk. 1:15) Repentance and faith in Jesus are the prerequisite for our salvation.

Jesus also said to Nicodemus, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.” (Jn. 3:5) Salvation is a free gift to us. However, it’s the work of the triune God, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit in us when we sincerely repent and put our trust in Jesus. Repentance and faith in Jesus are not just a onetime deal. Repentance and faith are a life-long process for the completion of our salvation. That’s why John the Baptist preached by saying “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.” (Lk. 3:8)

Look at verses 42-44. “At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looing for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, ‘I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.’” Jesus surely had a very busy day. He could have been very tired and exhausted. But he got up early at daybreak and went out to a solitary place, perhaps by the beautiful seashore of Galilee. As he was walking alone in the serenity of the beautiful seashore, Jesus had communion with God the Father. Through his communion with God, he was reaffirmed that God’s will for him was to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to all people, not just people in Capernaum. So he said to the people who tried to convince him to stay in Capernaum, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.”

Let me close the sermon. In today’s passage, Jesus surely demonstrated his absolute and divine authority over all things, including demons and all kinds of sicknesses. These miraculous healings surely reveal Jesus as the Son of God, the divine. We are very impressed by Jesus’ healing power and his compassion. However, we should not demand that Jesus should heal everyone who is sick today. Even though Jesus is still and always able to heal any sickness without medicine if he desires, we also know that God, in his perfect providence in view, also allows even his most faithful servants to go through unbearable pains and sicknesses, sometimes even early death (Ro. 8:29-30).

According to James 5:14, we are told that if anyone is sick, they should call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. Anointing oil may refer to the use of medicine. The universal truth is that we all get old, sick and die someday without exception. The perfect healing of our soul and body will be completed when Jesus comes again. Jesus who suffered, died and rose from the dead is the Messiah who can complete the work of salvation in us.

And as we trust in him and his words day by day, we can surely experience the kingdom of God here and now and forever. It seems that the world is not getting any better. So many things are uncertain and confusing. What can be the best news for the people, today? It is the good news of the kingdom of God, that is the grace of forgiveness of sins and everlasting life through Jesus Christ the Messiah. According to today’s passage, nothing is more urgent than sharing the good news of the kingdom of God in our world today. When did you receive this good news personally? I received the good news of the kingdom of heaven through one-to-one Bible study in UBF. Even though I still have a long way grow, I believe that the kingdom of God is growing in me. Praise Jesus! People may appear to be fine but they are the ones who desperately need to hear this good news. However, it’s easy for us not to even try to share the good news, assuming that we live in the time when people don’t want to hear the truth but want to hear only what suit their own desires. But that’s not true. There may be people who are waiting for someone to share the good news with them. Can we pray, look around and find someone to share the gospel this week? I want us to close the sermon by reading 2 Timothy 4:1-2, “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this chare: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.”