

Luke 7:31-44 – The powerful Jesus who frees people

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Main Point – Jesus has authority over disease, demons & the truth, turn to him for freedom

After today, I'll be attending a 4-day leadership development program, then I'll be away on long-service leave until Oct 19th. You'll have a few others preaching over the next 6 weeks, in Luke's Gospel - Al Green next week, Andy, then Vincent/ Cape who did the preaching training I ran earlier this year, and then Neil Chambers will preach 3 Sundays in October (Pete Sorrenson after 5pm camp though]. It was in March that we were last in Luke ch4, and today we return to that, but before I begin, let's **pray**.

My youngest brother, **Devin**, is now a strong Christian.
But in his mid-teens, he'd walked away from God and the church.
He struggled with severe depression, and had no desire to live.

Medications and several counsellors seemed unable to help.

My family ended up going to a church in Adeliade where they offered to pray for his healing, trusting that God could answer their prayers.

And my brother Devin was prayed for, and he says, on that day in 2001 he became a Christian. He was healed immediately of his depression, and he felt things leave his body. He believes they were demons.-----

Maybe that's confronting for you.

But in Jesus's name, and by the power of Jesus, my brother was healed.

Healed bodily, and spiritually.----- And I praise God.-----

SLIDE – that's him with the long hair a year later.-----

Please don't hear me saying all mental health problems are spiritual or demonic, they are not.

And nor are all sick people healed miraculously like this.

But my brother's story is a real-life example for me, of Jesus' power to free people.-----

Today in God's word, we see Jesus' power & authority.

And I hope we will all turn to him for the freedom we need.-----

As I mentioned, it was 6 months ago when we covered the first part of Luke ch4.

So(**SLIDE**) let's remind ourselves of the **context** of our passage today.

30 yr old Jesus' arrival on the public scene started with his baptism in Luke 3.

The Holy Spirit(**SLIDE**-3.22) descended on him in the form of a dove, and God the Father spoke from heaven: 'You are my beloved Son, with you I am well pleased'.

Jesus didn't give into the devil's tempting in the wilderness.

Jesus has left Judea and returned north to **Galilee (SLIDE)**, 'in the power of the Spirit', **4.14**.

He's teaching in synagogues, becoming popular & praised by everyone.

But in his hometown of Nazareth, in their Jewish synagogue, he reads Isaiah 61(**SLIDE**) and declares that this Scripture & prophecy is fulfilled.

Jesus is saying, he is the promised Spirit-filled Servant of the Lord, and Saviour.

He's the one who'll preach the good news and set the oppressed free.-----

And we see this lived out in our passage.-----

In **v22** people are amazed at his gracious words

But Jesus knows the people from his hometown reject him.

And in **v29** they try to throw him off a cliff & kill him.

But with power, Jesus just walks on through the murderous mob.-----

That gives the background to our passage v31, and brings us to **my first point, Jesus' Power and Person.(SLIDE)**

Our passage covers 24hrs in the life of Jesus in Capernaum, Galilee.(**SLIDE**)

There's several episodes in this 24 hour period, and the first three are all about Jesus' power and who he is.-----

He is again teaching in the synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath, when Jews would gather to hear God's word and pray.

And people are astonished at Jesus' teaching, 'because his message had authority'; the word can mean 'power'.

Clearly Jesus' preaching was stand-out different.

Wouldn't it have been amazing to hear the Son of God preach?

We'll come back to his preaching.-----

But 'in the synagogue was a man with an unclean **demonic spirit**'.

The synagogue for Jews was like our church gathering, and not the place you'd expect to see a demon-possessed person.

The man with a demon cries out loudly, 'Leave us alone! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth?'

I assume demonic evil spirits are unseen fallen angels who've rebelled with Satan against God.[Matt 25.41; Rev 12.7-9]

They oppose God and his rule.

They work to harm and lead God's people astray, like Satan did in Gen 3.----

Satan and his demons want to lead people to suffer, sin and rebel against God.----

But this demon, speaking through the man asks, 'Have you come to destroy us?'

Even the demons know the day of judgment is coming, it's just a matter of when.

But notice what is said about Who Jesus is – 'the Holy One of God.'

The demons know the truth about Jesus'.

Holy One speaks of Jesus being the sinless one, but also the one set apart for God's special purposes.

They know Jesus has the Holy Spirit (3.22;4.18 **SLIDE**), empowering him to proclaim release, and set captives free.-----

Coming back to the passage and **v35**, look at how Jesus responds to the demon:

With Rebuke – 'Be silent and come out of him'.

Having been commanded to come out, the demon does so, without hurting the man.----

This tells us Jesus doesn't just have authority in his teaching & over the truth, Jesus has authority over evil spirits.

Jesus didn't even have to fight.

The man is freed from demonic oppression.----

What power! What authority Jesus has; even over dark spiritual forces.

Which the witnesses declare in **v36**.-----

Jesus has control and he is in control, as he frees the man from evil bondage.-----

This power of the Lord Jesus is an almighty and divine power; the power of God himself.-----

If you've grown up in church we can be so familiar with this we fail to notice the gravity of this reality.

We fail to see the momentous power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We should pause and marvel at this;----- at him.-----

But being amazed by Jesus isn't enough, nor is knowing the truth about him.

For the **demons know who he is**.

In **v41**, Jesus rebukes and casts out more demons from people, with raw authority.

And he muzzles the demons, not allowing them to speak because they know who he is.

'You are the Son of God'.

'He is the **'Messiah'** – the Christ, the promised King who'll free God's people.

[see 1.32; 2.10]

But Jesus doesn't want people to misunderstand his purpose, he's not come to free them from their present Roman oppressors.

He will free us from our bondage to sin and Satan.-----

Christ will free his people from disobedience, disease, death, demonic forces.

If not in this life, certainly in the next.

But merely **knowing the truth about Jesus wont save you** from judgement, just like it doesn't save the demons.----

It's about a personal relationship of faith and trust.

Even the demons know God is real and Jesus is Lord, and they tremble in fear (James 2.19), – for it'll mean their judgement one day.-----

So please don't think if you know that Jesus is God's Son, who died and rose again to forgive sins, that that's enough.

You have to rely on him to save you.-----

Have you?-----

The demons knew their days were numbered.

The days of people rebelling are numbered too.

You can either stop your rebellion now by repenting of your sin, confessing it to God and asking for his forgiveness through JC.

Or Jesus will end your rebellion by demonstrating his holiness in your condemnation.

The wise person repents.

The wise person turns to Jesus.-----

Be wise. Come to Christ while you can.

Before it's too late & you die in your sin, and face God's judgement, please repent and rely on Jesus.-----

I want to make a few **comments on evil spirits**.-----

Some people only accept rational, scientific explanations for things, and reject the supernatural and miraculous.

That will not do. The word of God contradicts that.-----

Some want to reject that there are evil spirits.

We cannot read about demons here and think they were just psychological conditions.

Nor should we accuse everyone with certain mental health conditions of being demon-possessed.

When we lack insight, we must be very careful about jumping to conclusions.-----

Jesus could clearly distinguish between suffering caused by disease, and others caused by demonic forces.

I've known many people & missionaries from animistic & pagan cultures who are very aware of the actions of evil spirits.

And I and others have seen Jesus set those oppressed by evil free.-----

Jesus still sets people free from evil.-----

At **my last church at Donvale**, a Christian woman was married to a Hindu man who worshipped idols.

When at home she kept seeing evil red eyes looking at her.

A creepy, uneasy feeling, and evil eyes appearing.

She asked me to come and pray for her, their children and home, for protection.

I did go, and did pray.

And I didn't go in my own strength.

But I prayed and asked for God's mercy and protection.

I told any evil presence to leave in the mighty name of Jesus.

For his name, and trusting in his name is still powerful.-----
 And praise be to God, that sister in Christ, had no more evil encounters in her home.----
 We should be very careful [1Pet 5.8], but we don't need to fear evil.
 For a Christian who has the HS cannot be possessed by an evil spirit.-----
 And our Saviour is still has authority and power over evil.-----
 The Armour of God passage in **Eph 6** teaches us,(**SLIDE**) that our real battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the powers of darkness & evil.
 So whether you battle sin, temptation, or face evil of some kind, know that Jesus is greater, Jesus is stronger.
 Rely on him and pray to him – pray in the Spirit on all occasions.(**SLIDE**)
 And one day Christ will return in victory, to set us free from temptation, even the presence of sin, and from all evil and the suffering it brings.
 Full and forever freedom is coming.-----
 So trust in the power of Christ, brothers and sisters.
 Tell yourself, and teach your children to fear no evil, but trust in the all-powerful Christ.-----

We continue to think about **Jesus' Power and Person**,(**SLIDE**) as we look at his **physical healings**.

A new scene starts in **v38**.

Jesus has left the synagogue, gone to Simon Peter's house, and Luke, who's a medical doctor (Col 4.14), describes her symptoms more specifically.

She was suffering from a high fever.

Jesus discerns the difference between suffering from disease and demons.

Look at how Jesus responds – **v39**, he rebukes the fever, and it left her.

This highlights Jesus power & authority over sickness, over the bacteria or virus that caused it.

Sickness came into the world as a result of human sin, and now we all live in a fallen world, where suffering and sickness afflicts us all. Some more than others.

But Jesus is showing people then, and now, that He is stronger, and he can save us from it.-----

God, by his common grace, heals many sicknesses through our immunity, through doctors and medicines; and in answer to prayer.

And I pray that when we recover from sickness, that like Peter's mother in-law, we'll be moved to serve others too.

Serve the Lord and his people with the strength God gives.-----

Jesus freed that suffering woman from her sickness.

We see that in **v40** as well.

After sunset, so after the Sabbath has finished, people are bringing to Jesus 'anyone sick with various diseases.

And he laid his hands on them and healed them.

His words are powerful to heal. His touch is powerful to heal.

In Luke 7 we'll see him heal by the power of his will, and from a distance.

He can do that 'cos Jesus is God.-----

Jesus brings release, he brings freedom.-----

It doesn't mean every person will be healed now in this life though.

So many of you know that – as you live with chronic illness.-----

The freedom Jesus brings, will often not be experienced until we are with him in glory and in the new life to come.-----[Rev 21.4; 22.2]

And I pray you can hang-in there, waiting for that with sure hope.-----

But some claim every disease, every person can be **healed now**.

Writer Thabiti **Anyabwile** helpfully says,(**SLIDE**)

I often wonder why people who claim to have healing powers and gifts do not simply go to hospitals and heal the sick. Why must they rent stadiums, sell tickets, and have cameras filming them? There is something demonic about that. If you have the ability to heal but you use it as a means for building a name for yourself or [making] money, then you are not doing the Lord's work.

When Jesus healed there was no fakery. Satan always has counterfeits, but Jesus is the real deal. He is the Son of God, the King of Kings, and has authority in his teaching, authority over demons and authority over physical existence.-----

Now I know that God can answer his people's prayers in miraculous ways.

But he does not always answer us when we want, or the ways we ask (James 5.14-16; Phil 2.23; 2 Tim 4.20).

Peter Adam, in his great book, **Prayerfulness**,(**SLIDE**) says, ...

When we pray we can certainly ask God for things he hasn't promised.

When you are sick, pray for physical healing. If you need a job, pray for that. It is good to pray for that.

The answer might be no, not yet, or here is something better instead.-----

We are God's servants not his master.

He is in control, we are not. But he is trustworthy.-----

And **prayer** helps us trust God, and keep focused on the Lord & what matters.-----

Jesus is committed to prayer as well.

After a very busy 24 hours, of teaching in the synagogue, healing many with diseases and demons, it is interesting that Jesus then goes off on his own.

V42, Jesus early in the morning, went out to a deserted place to pray.

The parallel account in Mark 1.35 reveals it was to pray. [& Lk 5.16]-----

The Son of God takes time to speak with his Father God.-----

So how much more do we need to pray, weak as we are?-----

And if God hasn't healed you of your illness yet, keep praying you'll not give up trusting that the day is coming when Jesus will free you from it.-----

Prayer will help you keep trusting in Who Jesus is.-----

My final point is, Jesus' Purpose.(SLIDE)

In **v42**, while Jesus wanted time alone to pray with his Father, the crowds of people seek him out, seeking more miracles.

They want to be wowed & amazed in a 24/7 healing clinic.

They even try to control Jesus, and keep him from leaving them.

[The word 'keep' literally speaks of detaining/ holding onto him]

But people cannot control the all-powerful Son of God.-----

And their agenda is not his agenda.

Notice what Christ says next, **v43**.

'It is necessary for me to proclaim the good news about the kingdom of God to other towns also, because I was sent for this purpose.'

It's necessary for Jesus to preach the Gospel, because he was sent for this purpose.---

Now we know from the rest of the story, that Jesus came ultimately to die for sinners, rise again and reconcile us to the holy God.[Lk 22.19-20]

But at this time, in this period of his public ministry, his purpose is to proclaim the good news.

He's not just here to heal the diseased & demon-afflicted.

Jesus is here to proclaim the good news that God's kingdom has arrived, and it has come near in him.

Jesus is demonstrating that He is the King of God's kingdom, so people need to repent and believe.

Jesus has come to free people from bondage, and bring them into God's kingdom. Jesus has God's authority and he brings people into relationship with God and under God, as they follow him.-----

So he kept preaching the truth that is powerful to save.-----

So what should we do about it?(SLIDE)-----

In every age the preaching of the Gospel has been the means God has used to awaken people to eternal life, save sinners, and edify the saints.

Jesus came to preach the Gospel, and we remain committed to preaching the Gospel. Our mission at Bundy is to proclaim the good news of Jesus, so that people can be saved, follow Christ and live every area of life for him.

Proclaiming the good news of Jesus so that people can know him and love him.

Only a few do it up-front, but we all can in 1-1 conversations.-----

And at Bundy we are committed to praying in dependence on God our Father, like Jesus modelled and taught us.-----

So as you depend on God in prayer, **speak of Jesus** and the good that he brings.

In v37, after Jesus cast out the demon, 'news about him began to go out to every place in the vicinity'.

I pray that will be us.

That the good news about Jesus will go out from us to every place.

And to your friends.-----

Maybe even in your suffering, you can testify to Jesus' love, presence and power in sustaining you, and sustaining your hope?-----

The demons in **v41** were coming out of people shouting, 'You are the Son of God'.

I don't think we should let demons speak the truth about Jesus more than we do.-----

As I close, it was **J.C. Ryle**, who wrote that our passage in Lk 4 is:

Intended to fasten in our minds the great truth(**SLIDE**) that Christ is the appointed Healer of every evil which sin has brought into the world.

Christ is the true antidote and remedy for all soul-ruining mischief which Satan has wrought on mankind.

Christ is the universal physician to whom all the children of Adam must go to if they would be made whole.

In Him is life, and health and liberty.

This is the grand doctrine which every miracle of mercy in the Gospel is ordained and appointed to teach.... The ability of Christ to supply to the uttermost every want of human nature.-----

That is the message to tell ourselves and others.-----

Jesus has all-authority over disease, the devil and the[de-] truth.

Christ has the power to supply all we need, free us and make us whole.

The longings we have for a life without suffering, sin and sickness, disease and dark powers, Christ came to bring this.

And for all who rely on him, he will one day return to bring us into a new creation, where all that evil and suffering is done away with.

As we're brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.(**SLIDE-Rom 8.21**)

Isn't that the goated good news?-----

Let's pray.