

1. Jesus Surprises With the Authority of His Teaching

- a. Where is Capernaum?
 - i. Major Jewish town in Galilee
 - ii. This is historical, not a parable
- b. It was His authority in His teaching that amazed them
 - i. "were astonished" – imperfect
 1. This word, "astonished", is the same word used of Jesus' parents in 2:48 when they found 12 year old Jesus in the Temple with the teachers
 2. It is the discovery or confrontation with something that one does not expect, surprising and confusing, overwhelming
 - ii. They were astonished b/c His Word "was having" authority
 1. What was it that revealed "authority"?
 2. Most likely it was the fact that Jesus did not rely upon tradition or other rabbis to explain Scripture, but spoke directly and independently of other teachers
 3. Jesus' teaching was so authoritative that they were surprised and shocked, confused as to how He could speak in such a way
 - iii. His Word alone was sufficient "Truly I say to you..."
 1. Usually teachers would quote previous rabbis and depend upon rabbinical tradition, but Jesus did not
 2. Luke emphasizes the Word of God often and here reveals Jesus as the preacher of God's Word with authority that derives from His own person, by right
- c. He was teaching on the Sabbaths
 - i. "was teaching" - imperfect
 - ii. "sabbaths" is plural, indicating along with the imperfect tenses that Jesus was a common teacher at the synagogue in Capernaum
 1. We must not read this pericope as a mere day removed from the Nazareth narrative, but rather being fuller in time and significance
 - iii. It was in this context of habitual, or successive, teaching that this demon-possessed man encounters Jesus

2. Jesus Confronts Evil and Throws it Down Decisively!

- a. This is the first miracle listed in Luke
 - i. Why here? Why this miracle?
 - ii. Luke is showing how Jesus fulfills Isaiah 61 - He has authority over all things to liberate them by the authority of His command alone
 1. The spiritual realm here
 2. The physical realm next (Peter's Mom-in-law)
 3. The natural world (fish)
- b. Here is a battle between the good Son of God and the forces of evil
 - i. "unclean spirit demon"
 1. this is an evil spirit of uncleanness, that is morally unclean most likely
 2. that which would make one unfit for the Temple worship and approaching God without fear of destruction
 - ii. Thus, Jesus is revealing that His messianic ministry is about overthrowing evil, that which makes one unclean and unfit for the LORD
- c. The Confrontation Begins With the Demon:
 - i. it cries out in a loud voice!
 1. the text denotes an emotional outcry
 2. a scream of terror if you will
 3. Luke is showing that this demon is scared of Jesus
 4. This shows us that this battle is not really a battle in the sense of an unknown outcome, but rather a confrontation of a superior power coming in and overwhelming a much lesser power

- ii. it asks Jesus a question of His intent:
 1. "what are you going to do with us?"
 2. "are you going to destroy us?"
 - a. These questions tell us something about Jesus, His power, His authority, His mission, and His end-game in regards to spiritual forces of evil
 - b. They also show us that Jesus is completely against that which brings destruction and harm to humanity, those made in God's image
 - c. The plural "us" also indicates, not a plurality of demons in this man (since "demon" and "spirit" is singular), but rather that Jesus is opposed to and authoritative over all spiritual forces of uncleanness
 - d. The plural may also indicate that the demon is still claiming possession of the man whom he is oppressing
 - i. If so, he is claiming that if Jesus destroys him, then he will have to destroy the man as well
 - ii. We are to appreciate, then, that Jesus has the authority to free the man unhurt, as Luke emphasizes, showing total authority over evil
- iii. it confesses its knowledge of Jesus
 1. "I know who you are!"
 2. "You are the Holy One of God"
 - a. it is common in the NT for demons to know who Jesus is before anyone else
 - b. "holy" contrasted with "unclean"
 - c. opposed to it as God is opposed to sin
 - d. This is, ironically later, the same conclusion that Peter eventually draws in John 6:69
- iv. Note that Jesus hasn't spoken a word to this demon, yet
 1. His presence is more than enough to threaten this force of evil
 2. Just the presence of Jesus strikes holy fear into the spiritual enemies of God
 - a. This is a point not to be missed!
 - b. This demon of uncleanness is in severe angst in the presence of the Holy One of God, bearing the Holy Spirit, ready to exercise His righteous power of liberation to the chosen ones of God
 - i. Evil is going down and the bringer of justice has arrived!
 - ii. "Go! Run! You tell all the other curs that I'm coming! You tell 'em I'm coming and Hell's coming with Me!" (*Tombstone* the movie)
- d. Jesus Responds to the Demon:
 - i. He uses only His Word!
 1. This is different than exorcists or shaman, who must use incantations, rituals, potions, etc.
 - a. Any "healing" or "exorcism" that requires learned techniques (acupuncture, yoga, therapeutic touch), incantations (shamanism), or objects to manipulate spiritual energy (rocks, crystals, pyramids, etc.) are not of Christ
 - b. In fact, Jesus emphasizes the lack of doing any of these for the most difficult demons (some required prayer, the lack of doing, and relying upon God's power alone without mediation of any kind from man but dependence, Mark 9:29)
 2. Jesus' Word is so authoritative that the demon must submit
 3. In fact, there is a Hebraic understanding of the word "rebuke" which defines the terms as evil being called into submission (Fitzmeyer)
 - ii. Jesus' authoritative word over this demon proves that He is the Messiah, the bearer of the Holy Spirit, and the liberator of humanity's plight under evil oppression and curse
 - iii. Two commands:
 1. Shut up!
 2. Come out of him!
- e. Result of Jesus' Commands:
 - i. The demon threw the man down

1. final attempt at destruction, hatred of man
- ii. It came out
 1. it obeyed
 2. Here is the point: the demon must obey the King of Power/Authority
- iii. It was unsuccessful in harming the man
 1. it obeyed, although maybe with discontent
 2. there is an indication that it submitted with a bad attitude because it had to
 - a. like a toddler or a teenager :)

3. Jesus' Power Scares People

- a. Round One goes to Jesus!
 - i. it wasn't even close
 - ii. The Kingdom of God has come because the Powerful King has come and is throwing down His enemies
 - iii. Matt 12:28 – "If by the Spirit of God I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come to you."
- b. The People are Amazed, Confused, Uncomfortable
 - i. This is a different word than the one used in v32
 1. This word is a compound word that is connected with the word, "bury", indicating a pressing in upon, a burial under, a fearful power that overwhelms
 2. The idea is that earlier they were surprised at His authoritative teaching and confused, but now they are "buried" by His power, fearful and intrigued
 - ii. They cannot categorize Jesus
 1. "What is this?"
 - iii. His authority is unlike any other authority they have ever seen and there is a fear about Him
 1. The same word for their "amazement" is used in 5:9 when Peter expresses his desire that Jesus "get away from me!"
 2. It is a confrontation with someone so holy, so different, so powerful and utterly unique that He makes you uncomfortable in His presence
- c. Word spread about Him in the region
 - i. literally, a "noise went out"
 - ii. the grapevine really starts now!

4. How, Then, Shall We Respond?

- a. Recognize the presence and power of evil spirits
 - i. Our culture is skeptical of the existence of demons, relegating them to myths or monsters for movies
 - ii. Demons explain the complexity and power of sin's entanglement of the soul
 1. Depression, anger, anxiety, inner numbness, immorality may be so profound and difficult because of various inter-related roots and causes
 2. There are possible physiological, moral, and demonic sources for our problems
 3. Demons, scripturally, can enslave humanity to lunacy through accusations, temptations, and deception making our emotional distress overwhelming through unbelief
 - iii. Evil personal powers may also explain great social evil
 1. Standing behind social institutions that execute ungodly or anti-Christ attitudes and behaviors are evil powers under the "god of this world"
 2. This explains how individuals who typically are under the restraint of moral law can act so grotesquely together (mob violence, genocide, racism/apartheid)
 - a. Think of the average white person in South Africa during apartheid or the Rwandan family member who one day was feeding a cousin and the next day wielding a machete against him
 3. There seems to be an evil that is more wicked as a whole than the sum of its parts and this can be explained by evil forces behind and empowering these social institutions

- iv. All the evil and misery in this world cannot be explained by merely poor human choices, but as evil spirits aggravating, magnifying, and complicating the sin of human hearts to the abyss of unbelief.
 - 1. People get sucked into these oppressive relationships by submitting to the lies of these enemies of God and thus our trust in idolatrous desires enslave us in deep emotional and psychological bonds of unbelief
 - 2. Humanity becomes oppressed, impoverished, and blinded in darkness
 - a. Thus the promise that Jesus fulfills Isaiah 61 is GREAT NEWS!!
- b. Recognize that no power can overwhelm Him, and thus if you are in Him and belong to Him, then no power can overwhelm you!
 - i. This exorcism by Jesus shows that His authority can heal our deepest troubles in the deepest recesses of our souls
 - 1. Individually
 - 2. Corporately
 - ii. Jesus does not merely claim authority, but proves it
 - 1. Throughout the OT there is not a single example of a prophet, priest, king, etc. casting out demons
 - 2. And Jesus doesn't use any ritual, incantations, or even touch: His Word is enough
 - a. "Let it be...and it was"
 - 3. Jesus comes into our lives, not merely as a Commander, but as a Liberator and Healer
 - a. His Kingly realm comes with Kingly healing power
 - b. "The hands of the King are healing hands, and thus shall the rightful King be known" (Tolkien)
- c. Entrust yourselves to Him (stop trusting in everything else and depend upon Him alone for your freedom, your ability to see truth, for your life)
 - i. Once born again to see His Kingdom, the more and more we see His Lordship and Kingly supremacy and entrust ourselves to His rule, He heals us from our self-centeredness and idolatry that enslaved us.
 - 1. He heals our anxiety by showing the depth of His grace
 - 2. He heals our depression by showing us the depth of His love
 - 3. He liberates us from our anger by showing us the depth of His mercy
 - 4. He frees us from our lust for power, money, and sex by showing us the beauty of His person
 - ii. Submitting ourselves to the King is the way to be free for He is the Healer, Liberator, and Authority over all that would harm us
 - 1. This is hard to accept in our democratic and man-centric society
 - 2. We tend to trust ourselves as the center and origin of true good, but when we come to Christ we cannot come merely to someone who loves us (though He does!), but also to One who rules us
 - 3. We come to a King with Kingdom, not a democracy with an elected leader. Jesus is the King by nature, might, right, authority
 - iii. "And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our dependence. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one believing that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5)
 - 1. We overcome by depending upon Jesus and His authority as the Son of God
 - 2. Entrust yourself to His wisdom (not yours), His power (not yours), His holiness (not yours), His righteousness (not yours), His blood (not yours!), and His life (for yours).

Conclusion:

We proclaim that Jesus has power over all that controls us, including any emotional bonds, or even supernatural masters that have kept us in darkness and enslaved us to self-destructive thoughts, desires, and behaviors. You see, that is how the Enemy works. He works by deceiving our hearts, not merely our minds, but our hearts in unbelief of the truth of who God is and what God has said and what God has done. When we fall prey to these lies, we believe in our hearts such things as "I have a right to get what's mine!" or "There is nobody to help

me!" or "I *need* that comfort, pleasure, or accolade." It is through these lies, getting humanity to believe that something besides God is worthy of our life that we become enslaved into giving our lives to those things that ultimately destroy us through the soul's addiction to empty nothings until we starve to death. Our souls were made to feed on Christ, to learn from Him, to honor Him, to worship Him, to rest in Him, to adore Him. This is the food of the soul that nourishes us. Everything else is junk food that the Enemy deceives us to pursue until we crave it's flavor and become enslaved to that which doesn't build us up but slowly destroys.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is good news, not good advice. It is not what you need to do, but what Jesus has done. The call is to entrust yourself to Him, not to fight your own fight. You and I do not have the power, the authority, the wisdom to know truth or the ability to achieve it. He does. Jesus does. King Jesus does. He lived the life you should have lived and He laid down His life and died your death that your sins would be forgiven and God would accept you in Him. He was raised from the dead by the Spirit of God to live forever to rule you as the Sovereign King.

This is the good news that Jesus sets us free from the deepest emotional and psychological bonds that the Enemy's deceptions have wrapped us in. The power of His Word is sufficient to say "freedom" and cause it to be.. He commands spirits and they obey! They must obey, for He has all authority! He proclaims truth and it becomes light to our blinded eyes! He says "Rise!" and the spirits of the dead are filled with vigor! He says, "It is finished!" and IT IS FINISHED. What He says has power because He is the Divine King.

The Enemy has been thrown down. No weapon that is fashioned against you can prosper any longer for the Divine King has come and thrown down the Enemy with the power of His Word. The Enemy has no chance. Do not believe the lies that there is no hope for you, that there is no future for you, that you cannot be what God has called and commanded you to be. The Captain of Heaven has all authority in heaven and earth and if the Son sets you free, you shall be free!

This is the Savior to whom we come. This is the Sovereign to whom we bow. This is the King whom calls you friend...if you do what He says. So, together, let's do what He says: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me.....I am the way, the truth, and the life."