

INTRODUCTION:

1. [Image] What has power in our world today? When the culture seems to continually spiral into greater and greater evil? When church institutions crumble? When children are murdered and abused? What can stop this rampant wickedness? What can save us from our own failures and sickness? Is anything strong enough to do resist the powers of evil. There is, and it is the power of the gospel.
2. [Need] When we see the wickedness of our time we are tempted to run to all sorts of things to save us. We are even tempted to look to ungodly leaders. We may think that Christians must compromise our convictions because the stakes are too high. We must be reminder of the secret of our power. We do not fight against flesh and blood. And we do not fight evil with the weapons of flesh and blood. Instead we have the greatest power of the universe on our side.
3. [Subject] The power of the gospel. Every setting of these three stories is meant to show us something of the gospel's power.
4. [Text] Luke 4:31-44
5. [Preview] Three places the gospel has power.

Point number 1. The Gospel has power over demons (v. 31-37). The Gospel has power over demons (v. 31-37).

Throughout Jesus' ministry He will cast out many demons.

Jesus will heal the sick.

Jesus will work tremendous miracles.

He does this partially to show that He is God.

But that is not the whole story.

Jesus is going to cast out a lot of demons.

Jesus is going to heal many people.

But in every story the point is not "Jesus has authority over demons."

That is a theological and biblical truth, but the author is trying to tell us something else.

Otherwise why else would they tell story after story of healing?

Why would the gospel writers arrange the stories in a different order?
I believe it is because each story has its own unique significance.
Otherwise why mention so many of them?

Let's look at the passage, Verse 31 **"And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, 32 and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority."**

Jesus leaves Nazareth and goes to another small city.
And once again he teaches on the Sabbath in the synagogue.

These stories all center around Jesus proclaiming the gospel.
Each of these three stories takes place near a synagogue.
Each of these stories has to do with Jesus' teaching.
Verse 43 closes the chapter as a summary that Jesus is preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God.

They are astonished by Jesus' teaching.
Not just because He has authority.
But because **"His word possessed authority."**
Luke particularly wants us to see that it is not only Jesus who has authority,
But **"His word."**
And His word is the proclamation of the gospel.
Jesus has authority not just because of who He is,
but also because of what He preaches.

So this particular story is not just about the authority and power of Jesus.
It is also about the power of the gospel
And the power of the good news of the Kingdom of God.

And first Jesus wants us to understand the gospel has power over demons.
And not just demons and the demon possessed.
He has power over the entire demonic realm.

Verse 33, **"And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice,**

In the middle of Jesus' teaching someone interrupts.

I usually get interrupted by a train, Jesus gets interrupted by demons.

Can you imagine that happening in the middle of service?

The demon speaks in verse 34, **"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."**

This demon acknowledges who God is.

Demons understands what Jesus's own hometown misunderstood.

The question, **"What have you to do with us?"** is not a taunt.

Instead it appears to be said out of fear and quivering!

They are begging Jesus to leave them alone.

It is a "Hey what did we do to you? Leave us alone!"

This is why they ask if Jesus has come to destroy them.

They know exactly who Jesus is and they want to be left alone.

Verse 35, **"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."**

I love that Jesus tells the demon to shut up.

And the demon is silent.

It does not speak again.

All it can do is throw the man down in protest.

But even that grand display of the demon is proved to be as powerless as a toddler's tantrum.

The man is not harmed.

Because Jesus will not allow it.

The demons hold is completely broken.

Verse 36, **"And they were all amazed and said to another, "What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits and they come out!"**

Again notice Luke emphasizes **"the word."**

The words of Jesus have power.

Jesus commands with merely His word.

He does not need elaborate shows or extravagant displays like a magician.

He just speaks and preaches.

The gospel itself has power and it can command demons to flee their strongholds.

Verse 37, **"And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region."**

Word of Jesus continues to spread throughout the countryside.

Everyone wants to talk about Jesus.

But what do we do today about demons?

We might acknowledge that Jesus and the gospel have power over them in 1st century Israel, but what about today?

In our modern world we have little time for demons except for in our horror movies.

I believe in the existence of demons.

I believe that demons are still active in the world today.

I don't mean in far off places, I mean here in our community.

I see no Bible verse that says demons are gone from our world.

In fact I don't know how you can make sense of our world without it.

When we think demons, we think demonic possession and exorcism.

But today demons can kill steal and destroy without all of that.

They don't need to.

Today, there are wolves who masquerade as shepherds, they distort the Bible and their power in order to sexually abuse men, women, and children. Is that not demonic?

Today, in Ukraine there are civilians intentionally targeted and bombed. Women are raped, killed, then their children are stolen from them. All so old men can look at a map and see their territory increase. Is that not demonic?

Today, there are men who beat their wives and children. Is that not demonic?

In our world there are pedophiles, sex traffickers, those who turn children into soldiers, serial killers, racists, false prophets, genocides, and holocausts. Are these not demonic?

There is so much evil in the world.

I am not saying all these people are possessed by demons.

But I am saying I believe demons are real.

And I truly believe more than we know is demonic.

1 Peter 5:8 **"Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."**

Ephesians 6:11 tells us that the devil schemes against us.

1 Timothy 3:7 tells us that he sets snares to trap us.

Hebrews 2:14 tells us he has the power of death.

And Revelation 2:10 tells us he can send Christians to prison.

It is the powers of sin, darkness, and demons trying to destroy God's creation.

And yet,

Jesus already beat the devil himself in the wilderness.

There is nothing that the gospel cannot conquer.

There is nothing that the gospel cannot redeem.

The demon possessed are not destroyed, but set free to worship Jesus.

The Bible does not give us a handbook to get rid of demons,
It gives us Jesus and the gospel.
And the gospel conquers evil on its own.
It does not need our help or expertise.

We do not have to run to the rulers of the world to save us.
We do not have to use the pragmatic strategies of the world to grow the
Kingdom of God.
We only need the gospel and the power of Jesus.

The power Jesus shows is not simply to free the possessed.
It is the power that the gospel has over all evil.
Over every last demonic power and stronghold.
One day it will all be cast out of our world and into the lake of fire.
Hell is not a place demons run, it is a place they are punished.

So, know that there is truly demonic evil in the world.
But it is nothing we have to fear or be anxious about.
It is nothing we have to obsess over.
We don't have to pour over news trying to track the movements of the
enemy on a map like this is World War II.
It is something we can know the gospel conquers.
So as you behold the wickedness of the world.
As you see the demonic throw it's captives to the ground,
Know that the gospel wins.
The gospel can set free every captive.
The gospel will conquer every demonic stronghold.
Have hope.

[Transition] The gospel has power over demons and all evil. But what can
the gospel do other than replace evil? What does the gospel do for us?

Point number 2: **The gospel has power to heal (v. 38-41). The gospel
has power to heal (v. 38-41).**

The essence of the Gospel is to heal and restore.
Salvation always involves the raising of the dead.
We are born again and given new life.
With the locusts of sin have destroyed in us, Jesus heals and makes new.
Jesus heals so often in his ministry,
and part of the reason he does so is to show us that the gospel has the
power to restore us and heal us.
All of us, including our physical bodies.
We are not just offered salvation when we die, but now while we live.

Let's look at verse 38, **"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."**

Luke assumes that we know who Simon is because he doesn't introduce him.

This is Simon Peter's mother-in-law.

This may have been Peter's first interaction with Jesus.

Jesus stands up after teaching and proclaiming the gospel and then continues gospel work by entering into Simon's house.

Simon's mother-in-law has a high fever.

We don't know what kind of infection or sickness she had.

We only know that they couldn't do anything about it.

And so they plead to Jesus asking him to help.

And what does Jesus do?

Does Jesus say that the gospel only saves souls and can't do anything about the body?

Does Jesus say that he is too busy and has a lot to do?

No.

Verse 39, **"And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them."**

Jesus simply speaks, and the fever leaves.

The same voice that spoke the world into existence out of nothing,
the same voice that told the demon to leave,
that voice tells the fever to get out.
And the fever leaves immediately.

And she rises up and begins to serve.
That might seem strange at first.
Might seem like the poor thing just recovers from sickness and is told to
get back to work.

But it's a mini picture of how we respond to the Gospel.
In response to the Salvation and healing that Jesus brings she serves him
out of love.
Just as we having received the free gift of the Gospel should respond with
service to Jesus.

Verse 40, **"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 hands on every one of them and healed them."**

As you can imagine once Jesus heals Simon's mother, all of the sick come to see Jesus.

Everyone on death's door,
everyone who's had a headache that won't go away,
those who have some sickness that no doctors been able to diagnose,
they all come running to Jesus to be healed.

And you notice it mentions that this happens when the sun was setting.
Why would Luke mention this detail?
Because remember this is on the Sabbath.
He has just finished teaching in the synagogue.
And when the sun sets on the Sabbath everybody needs to be in their homes.

And so even though the Sun is setting and the clock is ticking before everybody's got to get home.

They are all running as fast as they can to get to Jesus to be healed. And Jesus lays his hands on every single one of them.

Jesus does not say that time is running out,
Jesus does not turn a single person away.
He spends time with every individual.
And he doesn't rush them through the line.

I was briefly on staff at a mega-church with over 10,000 of people. One of the things I would see is that sometimes after service the senior pastor would come down and let people shake his hand after service. But there was always an entourage around. The mix of the security guards and the other members on staff. And part of their job if you watch them was to keep people moving through the line. They had to make sure that nobody took too much of his time. And certainly, make sure that nobody was really needy or had some problem they wanted him to fix.

I really don't think that's how this line was with Jesus. It sounds like Jesus was with people until the last Ray of sunlight was left Because He was going to spend time with every single person. They would all get time with Jesus.

Instead touches them.
He touches many who would have been ceremonially unclean.
And his touch makes them clean.
There is no disease that Jesus cannot heal.
There is no person so dirty Jesus can't make them clean.
All of them are touched by the healing hands of Jesus.

Now I need to make an important clarification

The gospel does heal.

The gospel does restore.

The gospel does promise that all sickness will be healed.

But the gospel does not promise that this healing will come today.

The gospel doesn't promise healing will always come if you have faith.

There are those who will stand and who will proclaim loudly,

That they have the gift of healing just like Jesus.

And if you just come and believe enough, or at least give them a good donation, then they will lay hands on you and you will be healed.

That is not at all what I am claiming here this morning.

What I am saying, is that the gospel will heal you.

But the primary healing that you can experience today is spiritual healing.

That those of you who are dead in sins, through Christ can live again.

And the healing that Jesus brings through his authority and the power of the Gospel is a foretaste and a foreshadowing of the healing that all of you will get to experience one day.

There is healing in the gospel.

That healing is absolutely promised.

But we will not taste it until Jesus returns or in the resurrection.

And God can chose to heal before then.

This is why every week we gather and we pray for each other and we ask that God would heal us.

And sometimes He does.

But we pray often saying God your will not ours,

because we believe that Jesus can heal us,

we believe that Jesus will heal us,

but He might not heal us today.

Don't miss out on the Wonder and the amazing gift Jesus promises to give us because you're too impatient to wait for.

This gift of healing is worth waiting for.

Because one day all sickness will be long gone.

One day all our aches and pains will be no more.

No more long recover or slow decay.

We will all be healed and made new.

Verse 41, **"And 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."**

Jesus continues to heal and he continues to cast out the demons.

Then again we see demons acknowledge and know who Jesus is.

They know that the kingdom of God Has Come.

They know that the king the Son of God is here.

I'm strangely Jesus wants them to be quiet. He does not want them to tell people who he is.

Why does Jesus tell them to be quiet?

There are plenty of different theological theories.

Let me give you mine.

I do not think Jesus tells them to be quiet because He is waiting to reveal Himself.

I think this is Jesus showing us that none of these powerful miracles were meant to drum up publicity.

Jesus is not working a complicated marketing schedule.

He came to proclaim good news.

He came to set the demon possessed free.

He came to help the sick recover.

He healed everyone who was sick because He loved them.

He would have done it even if they told no one.

In fact, John tells us at the end of his gospel that Jesus worked numerous miracles we have never heard of.

Jesus certainly is not hiding who he is.
Jesus is not denying his identity as the Messiah and the king of the Kingdom that is coming.
But the good news of the Gospel comes in human form.
It doesn't come in a press release.
Jesus doesn't just come on a bullhorn to tell everyone to bow down to Him.
He comes and he heals.
And he preaches the gospel of the Kingdom.
The gospel that heals the sick.
Sometimes the gospel does its healing work physically now,
But it will always heal later.
And for now our spiritually lives can be healed and brought to life.

[transition] So, the gospel has all of that power, but is it limited? We may have to wait for it, but is there anywhere it can't go?

Point number 3: **The gospel has power even in desolate places (v. 42-44). The gospel has power even in desolate places (v. 42-44).**

Jesus has had a very busy Sabbath.
This seems like it was all one day.
And so the next day comes and he goes to a desolate place.
Why would Jesus do this?
Because he wants to show us something about the power of the gospel.
The power of the gospel is not local but universal.
The power of the gospel is not limited but unlimited.
The scope of the gospel is not partial but complete.

Look at verse 42, **"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,"**

They don't want Jesus to leave.
We can understand that I wouldn't either.

He just preached the best sermon they'd ever heard,
he cast out demons everywhere and then healed everyone in town in one
day.
I would want him to stay forever.

What a contrast this is from last week in Nazareth.
Nazareth could not wait to throw Jesus out of town.
Capernaum is begging Jesus to stay.
And unlike Nazareth, Capernaum doesn't want Jesus to stay because they
don't care about the other towns.
Their desire does not seem to be rooted in self-centeredness but in faith.
Because of their belief and their love for Jesus
They don't want to let him go
They just want to stay with him.

"They would have kept Him from leaving."

This isn't a violent action.
They're not threatening to tie him up like Misery.
They don't want to keep Jesus captive against His will.
They just want Jesus to know that if it was up to them they never want him
to leave.

But Jesus tells them that he has to go.
And notice again what Jesus leaves them for.
Jesus does not leave them for a bigger place.

Often preachers can treat churches like stepping stones.
They might speak at a small conference or even Pastor a small church but
they really are only doing it as they wait for a bigger and better
opportunity somewhere more important.
Jesus doesn't make a stop in Nazareth and Capernaum because He's
trying to slowly build up His reputation.
Jesus doesn't start in the small places so that He can graduate to the big
place in Jerusalem.

Jesus goes there because he loves the people there he is coming to die to save the people there and to proclaim the good news of the gospel and the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus does not leave them for more important cities
Jesus leaves them for the desolate place.

Now sometimes the scriptures tell us that Jesus went to desolate places to pray.

That he goes there in order to be refreshed and renewed.

But here it seems like Jesus goes to the desolate places not to pray but to preach.

Not to be restored but to restore.

Not to rest up but to bring rest.

To bring living water to the desert.

Verse 43, **"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." 44 And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea."**

Jesus goes to the desolate places to preach to other towns as well.

Because his very purpose was to come and to preach the good news.

The good news of the kingdom of God.

Verse 43 is why I think this whole section is about the power of the Gospel.

It is about the beauty of the Gospel.

It is about The Wonder of the Gospel.

It is about the glory of the Gospel.

Gospel quite simply means good news.

And throughout Luke, the gospel is equated to the kingdom of God.

Too often when we think of the Gospel we only think of it in terms of Jesus dying on the cross for our sins.

And that is the gospel that is the good news of the Kingdom.

But the gospel doesn't end there

There's much more to the gospel than that.
The gospel is the news of everything that Jesus has done and will do.
And the best way to understand what the gospel means is to look at Jesus.

And Jesus has come to proclaim the good news of the Gospel.
he came not just to die he came to preach.
And he preaches the good news of the Kingdom.
He preaches the good news that the kingdom is here to defeat evil and demons.
He preaches the good news that the gospel has come to heal and restore everything that was lost in the Garden of Eden.
And here he comes to preach that the good news of the Kingdom goes to every town even those in desolate places.
And Jesus goes out to begin to preach in every single synagogue throughout Judea.

I don't know about you but I just love this picture of Jesus being willing to go to deserted, abandoned, long-forgotten, and desolate places to bring them the gospel.

And the reason I love it is because it is a reminder that nowhere is too far away for Jesus.

There is no place that Jesus is unwilling to go.
There is no Backwater Village that Jesus does not care about.
Jesus is the shepherd who leaves the 99 cities to go after the one person in a shack up on a hill.
Jesus always goes after the lost sheep every single one.
And this attitude of Jesus does not make any sense.

If you go to a church planting training they will not tell you to follow Jesus's strategy here.

They will tell you to go and do studies.
Take surveys and find high populated areas.

Especially find an area that is exploding with people and it's growing and expanding and the churches haven't caught up yet because if you can plant a church then you're just going to grow.

But Jesus is happy to go to small fishing villages and desolate towns.

in the eyes of the world Jesus is foolish and Reckless with his love and his attention.

But Jesus has a purpose and he knows why he came.

He was sent to preach the gospel to every town, even those in desolate places.

This reminds me of children's movie The Lion King.

There's a point early in the film when Mufasa the king lion takes his young son Simba up to a high place.

He tells him to look out and see that everywhere the light touches is their Kingdom.

Is it amazes somebody at the the width and the breadth and the greatness of their Kingdom.

But Simba, being an astute lion and also being young, looks out and sees a place covered in darkness.

And he asks what about that shadowy place over there.

But his father warns him "that is beyond our borders, you must never go there."

In the kingdom of God, there is no shadowy desolate place.

The Sun Shines on it all.

The Son of God visits all of his creation.

There is no place that Darkness can hide.

There is no place that demons can flee.

The gospel goes forth everywhere.

This is why in the Kingdom to come.

When Jesus remakes the Heaven and the Earth we will need no sun.

because there will be no Darkness.

Revelation 21:23 **"And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb."**

The gospel goes to even the desolate places.

Maybe you are here this morning and you feel like you are stuck in a desolate place.

Maybe you are stuck and depression and feel like you can't get out.

Maybe there are situations in your family life that feel devoid of life.

Maybe you feel like you're just an Israelite wandering through the wilderness.

Or like Job suffering and longing for death.

Or Jonah stuck in a whale at the bottom of the sea.

Or the thief on the cross slowly dying, longing for forgiveness.

Wherever you are this morning I want you to know that the gospel goes to desolate places.

No one in this room is too far gone for Jesus.

He comes with the gospel and with the Living Water.

He comes to bring resurrection and New Life.

The Gospel goes out not just into the desolate places of the world been to the desolate places of your life.

So come to Jesus.

Come to the one who defeats evil.

Come to the one who can heal all of your infirmities.

Come to the one who will touch every place of your life and make it new.

Because this is why he came.

CONCLUSION:

1. [Summary] The gospel has power of demons. The gospel has power to heal. The gospel has power even in desolate places.
2. [Challenge] Be encouraged this morning Christian. No matter how powerful demons, sickness, the desert, or evil look. Remember the gospel is the greatest power in the universe. And it's power extends to the darkest place.