

Luke 4:31-44

Intro

This morning I want to deal with demons, deliverance and healing in keeping with the text in front of us. I say that because these are huge areas and we simply can't cover everything today. I'm trusting by the conclusion of Luke we will have a more complete understanding.

As Christians the spirit we are most interested in and conscious of is the Holy, Spirit. But there will be no doubt in your minds that God the Holy Spirit, is not the only spirit, or 'force'. At work in every person, all the time, and in particular today through the influence of media, movie and internet, though more often than not in fictitious form, shows a battle between the forces of evil and the forces of good.

In reality we understand in all things there is the presence and influence for evil, or for God.

And literally, our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Eph. 6:12).

But make no mistake it is through and in humans the devil and demonic forces are at work. Whilst we must always be careful of finding the devil in every circumstance, demons under every rock, or seek to glorify or sensationalise the topic, we must be careful at the same time to not minimise the reality of actual forces that are at work, rather to recognise these for what they are. The conversation about the devil and demons and dark forces is an uncomfortable one, even today at points will be heavy, but one we must have.

So what do we currently believe about the devil and demons, about healing, about Gods place in all that, about the role the church has in confronting forces of evil and dealing with demons? Why do you believe what you believe about the devil and demons? Do we even believe there are dark forces at work, right now, in the world, or do we prefer not to think about this too much? We cannot overemphasise the work of demons, but nor should we underestimate their influence.¹

Everywhere you and I go, everything you and I involve ourselves in, though it may not be immediately obvious, there is a spiritual battle going on, there are dark forces at

¹ C. S. Lewis's note at the start of *The Screwtape Letters* in which he delineates the most common errors when discussing demons: *There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.* [Do We Really Believe in Demons? \(thegospelcoalition.org\)](http://thegospelcoalition.org)

work, there are demons influencing people and *occasionally* possessing people, but through the power and salvation of Christ there is deliverance from these.

So I do want to say at the outset, if you are born again, that is you believe Jesus Christ as your Saviour and are committed to a life that follows him...you are delivered, you will not and cannot be demon possessed.

1. "No condemnation...", Rom. 8:1
2. "he has delivered you from darkness and brought you..." Col. 1:13
3. "by his death he" (has broken) "the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil Heb. 2:14-15
4. "...I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom. 8:37-39

Certainly be influenced by Satan, tempted by Satan but not possessed as in your life taken over by demon possession, whilst you remain in Christ.

Luke's being teaching us about the person of Christ, starting here in 4:31 and going on through chapter 5, Luke shows us the power of Jesus Christ. Namely, power over demons and disease. So even though at times this will be quite heavy *the Lord is here*, we can preach about such matters with absolute confidence, without any fear or anxiety because Jesus, was not just any man. This was not a man confused about who he was. Jesus is the son of God who has absolute power and authority over all things, everyone and everything.

(READ) ³¹ Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath he taught the people. ³² They were amazed at his teaching, because his words had authority. ³³ In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an impure spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, ³⁴ "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!" 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. ³⁶ 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!" ³⁷ And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area. ³⁸ 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. ³⁹ So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them. 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. 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. ⁴² At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. ⁴³ 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." ⁴⁴ And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

There's a lot going on these verses, but Luke gives us several miracles of Jesus – not Jesus' first miracles – but certainly the 1st from Luke. Miracles, that leave us in no doubt who Christ is and the power Christ had and *the power Christ has*. So what is it Luke wants us to see in the miracles before us in what might be a typical day's work for Jesus. I want to suggest it is *Jesus' preaching – the authority of the word of God; Jesus' power over demons; Jesus' healing of disease; Jesus' compassion for people and Jesus' Mission*. And we may ask at the end what then is a typical day for us? Let's take the 1st of these...

Jesus' Preaching

³¹ Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath he taught the people. ³² They were amazed at his teaching, because his words had authority.

Capernaum, on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, was a strategic location because of the number of people that would travel through to other cities, like Jerusalem and Damascus. So this was where Jesus set up his base for ministry. On this Sabbath day Jesus is preaching and teaching the word of God in the local church service...

...and Luke records that the people's response was they were "*amazed at his teaching*" ...actually the better word here is dumbfounded, jaw dropping, wow! So why were they amazed?

"his words had authority" ...an authority in his preaching they had never before experienced...

People that gathered in the synagogues were very familiar with OT scripture and would be used to the same religious, legalistic teaching, day in and day out. I've heard it compared to eating week old re-heated porridge, unpalatable!

But Jesus brought something new and different, his preaching was direct, insightful, it was powerful, and it was truthful. So it's no surprise that when Jesus starts preaching, people are wowed, and are on the edge of their seats Why were the people so amazed?

Because his preaching had the power of Gods spirit upon it, quickening hope to the hearts of those listening. Now think for a moment about what is to happen in the synagogue, here's what Bible scholar David Gooding, says, "*In the fight for man's deliverance from the power of Satan the first and foremost tactic is the proclamation of the supremely and absolutely authoritative Word of God.*"²

That is to say the primary "tactic" for resisting and protection from the devil and demons is the authority of the word of God.

² [Jesus' Authority over Demons, Part 1 \(gty.org\)](http://www.gty.org)

Jesus' Power Over Demons

³³ *In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an impure spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, ³⁴ "Go away! (Gk- "Ha") 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!"*

2 weeks ago we saw Jesus tempted for 40 days in the wilderness by the devil himself and now we see him faced with the Devils demon workers.

Let me pause here and address a couple of things: *What are demons?*

³ Demons are created personal beings, but they are fallen angels, and along with Satan are cast out of heaven (Rev. 12:7-8) and incapable of reconciliation with God (2 Peter 2:4; Rev. 20:10)⁴

They are powerful spirits, how many, many! But unlike God are not omnipresent, omniscient, or omnipotent⁵ (see Mark 5:13; Matt. 24:36; Rom. 8:38).

The Bible explains that the Devil and demons thrive in environments such as spiritual darkness, deception, and death⁶.

And I'm sure we'd all agree there are clear and obvious signs of forces of darkness at work as truth becomes something increasingly relative, some would say...post-truth.⁷

Demons have the power to:

Physically afflict people (Mark 9:17, 22)

Terrorize humans (1 Sam. 16:14–15; 18:10; 19:9; Acts 19:13–16; 2 Cor. 12:7)

Initiate false worship (1 Cor. 10:20–21)

Encourage idolatry (Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37)

Control a person's thoughts and actions

What is demon possession?

The kind of demon possession we read of here in Luke is an extreme form of inhabitation by a demon (or "s") and in those they inhabit cause the most bizarre of manifestations. Think of the demon-possessed man in Luke 8:26-39 (*v.30 "many demons had gone into him"*) For most of his life the demon had caused him to run around naked, he'd broken chains, Jesus commanded the legion of demons into the pigs...bizarre!

Demons know the word of God, they know Christ, and they know where to make their 'home' in a person. They are shrewd, cunning and convincing. But there is a difference between *possession* and *demonic influence*. *Demon influence* is precisely that. Influence. It is an enticement to tempt you and 'encourage' you into sinful behaviour...

Now, not every person who is not born again is demon-possessed. However, every person who is not born again is under the influence of Satan and his demons. In fact, everyone is subject to the influence of Satan and his evil temptations.

³ The scriptural testimony is plain—the devil and his servants, the false prophet and beast from the sea, will be in the lake of fire eternally (Rev. 20:9–10). One can surmise that the devil's other servants, the demons, will face the same fate - [10 Things You Should Know about Demons and Satan | Crossway Articles](#)

⁴ Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J.

⁵ That is everywhere-present, all-knowing and all-powerful.

⁶ Eph. 6:12; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; John 8:44

⁷ ...proliferation of unashamed sin, devaluation of human life, and societal attempts to suppress biblical truth.

"...it is evident (1 John 3:10) who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother"

Any love, devotion and primary affection that is not for God, is for that which opposes him. I want us to note that Jesus' major opponents in his ministry are not people, persee, they consist of the spiritual forces of evil. Hence, there will 23 occasions we will talk about demons in Luke's gospel. So it's no surprise that Jesus' first miracle is a demon deliverance.

Back to text now... I want us to note where Jesus is when faced with this demon-possessed man? (v.33) *"In the synagogue"...*

A little bit like a mobile phone ringing in a service, the man makes a commotion, crying out at the top of his lungs... *"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!"*

The demon/s knows who Jesus is! And we can see the presence of Jesus makes the demon/s nervous...because they know, they are eternally damned, 1 John 3:8 *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*⁸ and Jesus' imminent journey to the cross is another step closer to that eternal damnation.

You'll notice next there's nothing particularly flash about what Jesus says, but it is that Jesus said it, it is his authority.

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.*

With 6 words...Jesus commands the demon to come out of the man, leaving him *unaffected* in any way - an important detail for Luke the doctor. It means the effects and tendencies of evil are completely overcome by the authority of the power and name of Jesus...

*Eowyn⁹ and her husband David have served in Berlin in a church-planting missionary since 2001. Eowyn writes, "after a few months on "our" mission field—a post-communist, dead, atheistic region—my family and I were reeling from shock. Not culture-shock, it was the shock of coming face to face with demonic forces beyond our comprehension. Numerous strange events transpired: urine poured into their stroller, blood splattered on the door, much sickness, poor sleep, and sensing an evil presence in their bedroom. They thought they were imagining things then nightmares began to torment their 2-year old son. For months he'd wake up screaming, and 6 months later he was finally able to verbalize what he'd been dreaming about. He described vividly a dream about a woman with black hair, red eyes wearing only underwear, forcing him to eat rotten fruit from a basket. His nightmare was X-rated, not at all typical for a toddler."*¹⁰

The devil is real, demons are real, they are at work in the world, if you are a genuine believer you will not have a demon (2 Cor. 6:15), you do not have to fear demons.

⁸ See also Matt. 25:14; Rev. 20:10

⁹ A-O-Wyn

¹⁰ Adapted from: [Dealing with Demons \(thegospelcoalition.org\)](http://thegospelcoalition.org)

Whilst they hate God, they hate the truth, they're afraid of you they can't stand you because (if) you stand for truth! But, *genuine* believers are subject to temptation and dark influences.

The bible says James 4:7 *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* 1 Peter 5:8, 9 *Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him*

So we must be conscious of their work and vigilant regarding their influence.

We don't know what happened to the demon...but look at the reaction...

³⁶ *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!"* ³⁷ *And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.*

What Jesus has just done is not lost on the crowd (v.36), *what words, what authority, what power, words, authority and power they've never witnessed ever before.* ESV says *"What is this word?"*

Think of Jesus in the boat with the disciples (Luke 8:22-25) the storm comes, they wake him up, 'don't you care Jesus that we're going to drown, "stop it" Jesus says, what happens next? He rebukes the storm it stops; they ask each other (v.25) who is this?¹¹

Who is Jesus?

The irony is that they were asking this, but the demons knew who Jesus was/is. James 2:19 *"even the demons believe and shudder"*

Luke's readers, including us, are left pondering the question the crowd has raised. Who is our Jesus?

Jesus has both authority and power. Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. As I said earlier it's no wonder news spreads throughout the region.*

That's the first miracle in Luke, now we move to Jesus' next miracle, a healing...

Jesus' Healing of Disease

³⁸ *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.* ³⁹ *So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them*

Jesus had quite possibly received an invitation to head back to Simon Peter's house for lunch after synagogue, but when they get there they don't find a curry on the pot or a steak on the BBQ, no they find Simon's mother-in-law, sick, Luke says *"high fever"*, so very sick, probably lying down since Jesus needed to bend down

¹¹ Jesus also asks "where is your faith" 8:25

Do you see what happens next? The power was such in v.35 the man was free of the demon without injury. The power of Christ was such in v. 39 she was instantly fever free.

We know it takes time to recover from a serious infection, a migraine headache or the flu...head full of rocks. Do you notice this is not a case of Jesus saying oh I'm sorry I'll hope you'll be better soon? No this is, she is very sick 1 second then very well the next, miracle! Power of Jesus!!

Fever free! So much so she was immediately on her feet again, back cooking the curry, quietly serving away, as if what had happened to her was just, well, normal...¹²

Let's move onto the 3rd miracle, at least the 3rd set of miracles, plural, in Vv. 40-41, take a look there. It's a scene that beautifully portrays the compassion of our Lord...

Jesus' Compassion

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. 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.

It's the end of a long day of ministry, the sun is going down, but the needs are ramping up. There was no Instagram or Facebook but word had obviously spread quickly throughout Capernaum, and Jesus finds himself dealing with people who come to him with demons and illness. BTW, Luke carefully distinguishes between those who were just sick (v. 40) and those who were demon-possessed (v. 41).

This helps us not to assume that the Gospel writers thought all disease was caused by demons.¹³

Now what is happening here is connected to what Jesus had just said back in 4 (Luke 4:18, 19)... quoting Isa. 61:1, 2¹⁴ 'The promised Messiah is here, the power to set you free is here, healing is here, and it's through me, I am the One. I'm here Jesus says, and I will show you compassion.¹⁵ But I'll not have that advertised through Demons PR.com, Jesus would be in control of himself being known'

Henry Twells wrote a hymn I think reflects these verses accurately...

At even, ere the sun was set, the sick, O Lord, around thee lay;
O in what divers pains they met! O with what joy they went away!
2 Once more 'tis eventide, and we oppressed with various ills draw near;
what if thy form we cannot see? we know and feel that thou art here.
3 O Saviour Christ, our woes dispel; for some are sick,
and some are sad, and some have never loved thee well,
and some have lost the love they had;

¹² There is much theological debate about the place of healing miracles today. Both views affirm the possibility of God's miraculous intervention when he sovereignly chooses to act. The discussion is not between God's performing miracles or not. Rather, the disagreement is whether God gives specific people the consistent ability to heal and desires ministries to focus on healing - Bock

¹³ Liefeld, W. L. (1984). [Luke](#). In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 8, pp. 873-874). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

¹⁴ You can read all about in Lev. 25, but the year of Jubilee¹⁴ was something that occurred every 50 years. Every 50 years' land laid fallow for a year, slaves were freed and debts were cancelled, and Jesus is saying you do not have to wait for another 50 years "jubilee" is happening right now, right now!

¹⁵ Notice the consistency in Jesus' ministry and compassion for people. There is no unevenness between needs, he does what he can do as he needs to do, it's not prim and proper, not tidy, its messy...but its "why he was sent".

4 And some have found the world is vain, yet from the world they break not free; and some have friends who give them pain, yet have not sought a friend in thee; 5 And none, O Lord, have perfect rest, for none are wholly free from sin; and they who fain would serve thee best are conscious most of wrong within. 6 O Saviour Christ, thou too art man; thou hast been troubled, tempted, tried; thy kind but searching glance can scan the very wounds that shame would hide. 7 Thy touch has still its ancient power; no word from thee can fruitless fall: Hear, in this solemn morning hour, and in thy mercy heal us all.¹⁶

Jesus' compassion is for all who come, all sickness, all needs...

Jesus' Mission Referring to Vv. 42-44...

We can fully appreciate the motivation of the people to have Jesus stay with them, why wouldn't they want Jesus to stay in town and be their pastor, given all that Jesus was doing among their people. He was the most loving, compassionate, powerful man they'd ever seen. How lovely that would be but they couldn't have him all to themselves! He needed to keep moving...because his mission to heal, deliver and preach the gospel was for all people...can we see the clarity of his purpose here?! (v.43b)

We've seen the amazing power of Jesus at work in this scripture, on this typical day for Jesus, same power at work today, same Jesus...same Jesus who said near the end of his ministry *"As the father has sent me, so I send you..."* John 20:21

Preaching, evangelising, healing, delivering, showing compassion, loving people with the good news...Jesus' calling, is our calling. Our calling is not to be like boats made to sail, yet anchored, moored safely in the harbour at the dock

That calling requires us to do the things Jesus asks us to, but that calling comes with knowing we're daily confronted with real and present dark forces. Speaking truth...¹⁷post-truth. I want to suggest the warning Paul wrote to Timothy applies today...*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.* (1 Tim. 4:1)

So will we resist the devil, will we be so immersed in God and his word, will we recognise demon influence. Will we recognise the authority of Christ and his word when it comes to confronting dark forces...

Use the words of scripture for our final application...¹⁰*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.* ¹¹*Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.* ¹²*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.* ¹³*Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand* (Eph. 6:10-13)

¹⁶ Rev. Canon Henry Twells (1823–1900) was an [Anglican](#) clergyman, hymn writer and poet. His best known hymn was: [At Even, ere the Sun was Set](#) | [Hymnary.org](#)

¹⁷ So called...