

## Luke 4C

- As Jesus begins to enter into His ministry, He will travel from city to city, encountering scoffers, enemies, demons, and crowds of enthusiastic supporters
  - In each town He will do a variety of miracles and signs
  - He will teach the scripture with authority in a way that amazes audiences and prompts questions about where did His authority come from
  - And He will rebuke unrighteousness and call out sin
- But all of this begs the question...what was His purpose in spending His time this way
  - His ultimate purpose in coming to Earth was established even before He was born
  - He had come to be the sacrifice
  - He had come to die
  - So why the time beforehand? Why move around and teach this way and do the miracles?
  - Chap 4 begins to help us understand God's purpose in giving His Son the ministry He had on Earth

[Luke 4:31](#) ¶ And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbath;

[Luke 4:32](#) and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority.

[Luke 4:33](#) In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice,

[Luke 4:34](#) "Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

[Luke 4:35](#) But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of *the people*, he came out of him without doing him any harm.

[Luke 4:36](#) And amazement came upon them all, and they *began* talking with one another saying, "What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out."

[Luke 4:37](#) And the report about Him was spreading into every locality in the surrounding district.

- As I mentioned last time, Jesus has begun His ministry in the area of the Galilee
  - Apparently, He moves freely between the numerous towns in the region
  - Here He is seen returning to Capernaum, as He mentioned having been there earlier when he taught in Nazareth
    - Luke specifically mentions that He went down to Capernaum
    - Capernaum sits on the coast of the Sea of Galilee about 20 miles northeast from Nazareth, which sits in the hills of the wilderness
    - So Jesus descends in altitude from about 1,200 feet above to about 700 feet below
  - And as He enters Capernaum, He immediately begins to accomplish those things written about Him in the Isaiah passage He read in Nazareth
- Like in Nazareth, Jesus finds His first audience in a synagogue
  - On the Sabbath He teaches and the people are impressed by His teaching
    - As I read this simple description of Jesus' teaching, I have to admit being a little jealous
    - I would love to have heard what He taught that so amazed them
      - My guess is He took them through the OT passages they had heard taught so many times before, probably according to the teaching of the day
      - And when Jesus taught, He opened them up with the power of the Father by His Holy Spirit, Jesus revealed their true meaning and the crowds were amazed
    - I find it interesting that whatever He taught, they didn't react with skepticism
      - Certainly He was revealing new ideas through the scripture, otherwise why would they be impressed?
      - But if the information was so new, why didn't they cling to their tradition rather than accepting the new ideas presented by Christ?

- I imagine that the power and truth of Jesus' teaching was self-evident
  - Although they might have been predisposed to accept their traditional teaching, the overwhelming truth of what Jesus spoke cut through the tradition and made an impact
  - Or perhaps many in the crowd had been so poorly taught before that they never paid much attention in times past when those passages had been expounded
    - So Jesus' version was the first time they found the truth so interesting that they actually paid attention
    - Either way, it was compelling and drew them in
- While we haven't seen Jesus in the flesh, we also can experience the same thing as these people in Capernaum
  - Before His departure from Earth, Jesus told His followers that they would receive the Helper, the HS who would teach them all things
  - The presence of the HS in all believers is the way by which the truth of the scripture become plain to us all today
    - If we devote ourselves to the study of scripture, we can have the same ah ha experiences that Jesus provided to this crowd in Capernaum
    - It won't come quickly and it will require a devoted effort, but that is like any relationship
      - To spend time with our Father and with our Lord is the way we grow that relationship
      - And we spend time with them through the Word of God – whether in self study or in organized studies
- But we also must be prepared to hear remarkable things – things that may not agree with the conventional wisdom concerning the passages we study
  - Just as Jesus brought fresh and unfamiliar explanations from the scripture, we may find that when we sit for instructions from the HS – whether by ourselves or under teachers – that conventional wisdom may be challenged
  - Just as it was in Jesus day

- So much teaching on the scripture of that day had been corrupted by men who read the Word through unbelieving eyes
  - So that when Jesus corrected those errors in His day, it caught the crowd off guard and they were surprised by His teaching
- But if you were listening carefully to my words, then you should have immediately sense a danger sign
  - Because anytime someone presents a new and unfamiliar interpretation of scripture claiming that the conventional wisdom should be dismissed, we need to be careful and discerning
    - The claim to having new revelation is a common feature of false teachers
    - There is a fine but important line between bringing HS-inspired enlightening on a passage of scripture and teaching a false view of the Word
    - As Peter taught:

[2Pet. 1:20](#) But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation,

[2Pet. 1:21](#) for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

- So how do we know the difference?
  - In Jesus day, why were the people willing to accept His radical reinterpretation of the scriptures, considering how long they have been interpreted differently?
  - And today, when someone brings new teaching from familiar scriptures, how do we know whether to accept it
- The answer to the that question, both then and now, is the same
  - There are three principle tests we should apply, as were likely applied even to Jesus teaching
  - First, is the interpretation consistent with or at least not in contradiction to all related scripture

- Since all scripture is from God, then we know we should see no contradiction in interpretation because God does not change His mind or tell one thing one day and an opposite thing on another day
  - But we're not talking about pulling out one isolated verse to argue against another isolated verse
  - The danger here is that we can fall into Bible bingo, where we call upon individual verses in a game of one upsmanship - which often results in one passage after another being misinterpreted and misused
- The real key is to be so familiar with scripture generally that you have a foundation of truth from which to determine if a new interpretation is from the Lord or not

[Acts 17:10](#) ¶ The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

[Acts 17:11](#) Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see* whether these things were so.

- So, when we hear scripture interpreted in a different or novel way, we should take time to consider all the Bible has to say on that topic and look for inconsistencies
  - Does this new idea fly in the face of sound teaching elsewhere?
  - Are the scriptures that the teacher is using to defend his interpretation being considered within their proper context?
  - Here's a classic example of not using context:
    - Turn to 1Cor 15:29

[1Cor. 15:29](#) ¶ Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?

- You may have heard that Mormons use this one single verse as a defense for baptizing dead relatives in the hope of ushering them into heaven
  - They teach that this passage says that we should baptize the dead

- How would we know if that's a true interpretation?
  - Based on our first rule, we look at the rest of scripture only to find no other reference to such a practice
  - This teaching must rise or fall on the interpretation of this single scripture
- So, in examining this verse we should consider the context of Paul's discussion
  - The beginning of this chapter finds Paul trying to reassure the Corinthian church that resurrection from the dead was a reality to be believed
  - The second half of the chapter deals with the same issue – a proof through analogy that a body can be buried and brought back to life, just as a plant seed does the same
  - So stuck between them is this quick reference to baptism
    - It would seem that Paul's topic is not baptism but resurrection
- And this proves to be the key to understanding this verse
  - Baptism by immersion is a picture of our old self dying with Christ and our resurrection to new life
    - The going into the water is meant to picture going into the earth dead
    - And the coming out in new life is a picture of our resurrection – to a new spirit initially and ultimately to a new body one day to come
  - So Paul asks the Corinth church why they still practice immersion Baptism if they don't believe that resurrection actually takes place
    - Paul actually leaves unspoken an implied piece of this verse
    - In referencing the baptism of the dead, he is actually shorting a phrase he has been using in several places earlier in this same letter.
      - Look at verses 12, 13, and 21

- You'll see Him reference the resurrection of the dead
- And in verse 29 he is still talking about that same event – the resurrection of the dead
  - So the complete way to read verse 29 would be:

[1Cor. 15:29](#) ¶ Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the **resurrection of the** dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?

- Essentially, Paul is using the most specific and complete term for describing baptism – the baptism for the resurrection of the dead – our baptism, in other words
  - He's not talking about a special baptism for dead people
  - He's talking about the one and only baptism that every believer should experience
    - The one that is a picture of rebirth to new life – a coming back to life from the dead – a baptism for the resurrection of the dead
- The second rule for testing new teaching is to consider if the teaching is demonstrating an accurate picture of God's character and nature
  - Remember, all scripture exists to reveal God in all His glory and to draw men to him, in humility, service and obedience
  - If the teaching doesn't generally support those broad purposes, then it should be rejected
  - Many false teachings fall quite easily when we apply this test
    - Teachings that glorify man or credit man rather than God
    - Teachings that show God to be easily manipulated or capricious in His actions or words
    - Teachings that diminish your trust and obedience in God
    - Teachings that affirm your natural desires
  - All these are false by design and run counter to the overall tenor of scripture

- Finally, the last rule is to test the message by the character of the messenger
  - The man himself should show the fruit of the Spirit – the One by whose authority he claims to teach
    - While we all should show fruit in our walk, it's especially the case that a teacher who is truly speaking in the authority of the Holy Spirit should be able to show the good work of the washing of the word in themselves
    - And this kind of familiarity requires time and diligence
    - If the man's message is from God then you can be sure that God will also be doing a work in this man as well
- And as we see verse 32, Jesus gives every indication of speaking with authority, His words passing the first two tests easily
  - Christ is teaching around the region not merely for the purpose of building up the people's knowledge
  - But more importantly, He was establishing His authority, but the power in which He spoke
  - Just as men today establish they have authority in the Holy Spirit by the power of their teaching
- Of course Christ went infinitely beyond what mere men do in establishing His authority, although the principle is the same
- And now it's time for Luke to record examples of how Christ passed the third test
  - Luke records Christ's actions in Capernaum, His miracles, which no doubt gave the audience even further reason to trust His words
- So in verse 33, Luke provides his first detailed record of Christ performing a miracle involves casting out demons
  - Christ enters the synagogue and comes upon a man possessed by an unclean demon
    - The reference to an unclean demon reflects the fact that demons by nature lead to uncleanness, unholyliness



- Luke probably made this double reference because the Greek mythology allowed for evil spirits that did good things on occasion
- The man with the demon cried out with a loud voice at the sight of Christ
  - The voice recorded by Luke is actually the voice of the demon
  - The demon would use the vocal cords of the human to speak
  - The demon spoke in the plural and his words were interesting
    - The first word in verse 34 is *ea*. This has been translated to “Let us alone” but that’s probably a stretch
    - The actual meaning of *ea* is *Ha!* Like an exclamation – an indignant surprise
    - These demons are genuinely surprised to find Jesus there
  - Then the second statement (*tis leous*) is probably best translated “Why this interference” or “What do we have between us?”
  - Then they ask have you come to destroy us, since they know who He is – the Holy One
- Before going any further, we can immediately see a few interesting features about the demonic realm
  - First – need I even say it – but demons are real
    - Jesus isn’t interacting with a fake, an actor – and Luke didn’t make this story up – Demons are very real
    - Demons are the one third of the angels, the host of heaven that Revelation tells us fell with Satan
    - These are his legion, his allies, his soldiers in battle
    - Our culture either treats them as myth, placing too little importance on them or treats them as gods, placing too much importance
    - They are neither. They have real power and can bring persecution, but only up to what God will allow, since they are created beings
  - The second thing we should notice is they can and do indwell men

- They can take over the body in extreme cases and speak through the body
  - They can also impact thoughts and emotions
  - But they only have the influence over unbelievers
  - Because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world, according to 1John 4:4
- Personally, I believe there are conditions of deranged behavior that are actually the result of demonic activity in a person
  - But our unbelieving secular medical world cannot accept that possibility
  - So they attribute it to unexplained psychosis
  - This isn't to say that all mental or emotion trauma are the result of demonic activity, but I do believe it is one potential cause
- The third thing to take note of is that demons are constantly waiting for Jesus to destroy them
  - They seem to know this will happen and they have no hope of standing against Jesus
  - Here they are surprised to see someone interfering with their work, and I believe they initially assume it must be the work of another demon
  - Then they realize they are dealing with the Son of God and immediately ask if He has come to destroy them
    - They know that He will do that one day, but they don't know if this is the day
    - And they then declare that they know Who He is
  - The desperation and unmatched evil of the demonic realm is a result – in part – of their desperation to avoid the judgment that they know is coming
- The final thing to note is that the demonic realm is not omnipotent

- They didn't know that Jesus was even on earth at first – He surprised them
- They didn't know if this was His appointed time to destroy them
- And they obeyed His commands
- We should take heart to know that as real as they are, as a believer we are protected from their influence to the extent God desires
  - He may allow them some measure of success, only as a means of ultimately bringing Himself greater glory by how He defeats them in the end
  - Even Paul talks about handing over an unrepentant sinner to Satan

[1Cor. 5:5](#) *I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

- So it may happen that God will use the demonic realm to accomplish His discipline, but it's always under His control
- In fact, in our account today Jesus dispenses with the demon with merely His word – and Jesus doesn't call upon any higher power
  - The crowd takes note of this, commenting on His authority and power
  - Normally in Jewish experience, men could (if empowered by God) perform an exorcism
  - But it required that the one removing the demons invoke God's authority
- Here the crowd sees a man casting out demons by his own word
- With this miracle, Christ adds the third facet to his proof of believability, something He will do time and time again during His ministry

[Luke 4:38](#) ¶ Then He got up and *left* the synagogue, and entered Simon's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him to help her. [Luke 4:39](#) And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and waited on them.

[Luke 4:40](#) ¶ While the sun was setting, all those who had any *who were* sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on each one of them, He was healing them.

[Luke 4:41](#) Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ.

[Luke 4:42](#) ¶ When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from them.

[Luke 4:43](#) But He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.”

[Luke 4:44](#) ¶ So He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

- After teaching at the synagogue, Jesus is invited to the home of Simon
  - Luke leaves out some details, but by reading Mark and Matt, we learn this is Simon Peter, the Apostle
  - And with them are John and James
- In Peter’s house lived his wife’s mother, who was ill with a high fever
  - The disciples take Jesus to her, and he orders the fever to leave her, which it does
    - And to show us how complete the healing was, We hear that she got up and served them
    - At first, this may sound a bit harsh, to expect this woman who was moments ago suffering from illness, to begin waiting on the men
    - But the purpose of the statement was not to emphasize the servant role of woman or anything of the kind
    - It was merely a way of Luke demonstrating the completeness and suddenness of the healing
      - It was so complete and so quick and the woman was healthy enough to resume her normal duties
      - I imagine that she was very grateful and happy to return a favor to Jesus for what He did for her!
- And naturally, Jesus becomes known for healing very quickly

- The ancient world lived with disease far more than we do today
  - Death and illness were very common in everyday life, and the appearance of someone who alleviate all that was certainly big news
  - And they wanted Him to stay naturally
- But really things are much different today
  - In our own way, the world is just as sick – if not sicker
  - And healing is just as hard to come by
  - And people want healing anywhere they can find it
  - But Jesus has the power to heal, if it's His will to do so
  - Therefore, when you are not healing, there must be a reason in that as well, once we may not know entirely until we see Him face to face
  - But we can trust n His goodness nevertheless
- Finally, the chapter ends with Jesus saying that He cannot remain in that one place,
  - That He has a ministry that requires He move about
  - We will say more about that next time, but for now it's important to remember that Christ's ministry of travel was intended by the Father