



Amazing Authority

Luke Series # 12

Luke 4:31-44

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My soul finds rest in God alone,
My Rock and my salvation,
A fortress strong against my foes,
And I will not be shaken.
Though lips may bless and hearts may
curse,
And lies like arrows pierce me,
I'll fix my heart on righteousness,
I'll look to Him who hears me.

(Chorus)
O praise Him, hallelujah,
My Delight and my Reward;
Everlasting, never failing,
My Redeemer, my God.

Find rest, my soul, in God alone
Amid the world's temptations;
When evil seeks to take a hold
I'll cling to my salvation.
Though riches come and riches go,
Don't set your heart upon them;
The fields of hope in which I sow
Are harvested in heaven.

I'll set my gaze on God alone,
And trust in Him completely;
With every day pour out my soul,
And He will prove His mercy.
Though life is but a fleeting breath,
A sigh too brief to measure,
My King has crushed the curse of death
And I am His forever.

(My Soul Finds Rest Psalm 62 by Aaron Keyes & Stuart Townsend)

Father, we do praise You! Help us fix our gaze on You alone and trust in You completely. You are our rock and fortress against our foes, so we can say we will not be shaken. God, our souls today long to find rest in You. I pray that through Your Word You will affirm that within us today. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Turn to the Gospel of Luke 4:31-44. We've been singing truths of extreme, radical—you could even say illogical—dependence and trust. We've sung about sleep-depriving, gut-wrenching trials, pain, stress and difficulties. These songs are saying that in the face of things that are just awful, my soul will rest.

We're saying extreme things like, "My soul finds rest in God alone." Just by singing that we're saying there's no back-up plan. My soul's not resting in anything else but God alone. We're singing things like, "Though lips may bless and hearts may curse..." You've felt that, I'm sure. To your face people are saying kind things—"lips

may bless—but in their hearts they are cursing; behind your backs they’re saying things that are like arrows piercing us.

We sang, “Though we passed through tribulation, all will be well. Though in living and in dying, all will be well.” What is it about our God that makes us be able to sing those things? God has given us promises, but are we sure? I think sometimes it’s easy for us to come together on a Sunday morning and sing,

Though we pass through tribulation, all will be well...
We expect a bright tomorrow; all will be well
Faith can sing through days of sorrow, all is well...

(All Must Be Well by Matthew Smith)

When dark trials come and my heart is filled
With the weight of doubt, I will praise Him still...

(I Will Praise Him Still by Fernando Ortega)

But when we’re alone our hearts cry out, “God? Are You sure? Are You sure that all is going to be well?”

I stood up here about a year ago and opened my sermon by giving you a glimpse into some circumstances in my life. I said that in about a two-month span, my wife and I had two friends about our age who lost their dads to unexpected health causes—a stroke, a heart attack—right about the same time we as a church learned of Ross’s cancer and about the same time I learned of my father’s leukemia.

It’s that kind of thing that we sing about. We say, “I will trust You. You are my rock, You are my fortress...” but I think sometimes we doubt. So what I want us to look at is what is it about our God that makes us able to say these things? Last week we looked at a sermon from Jesus where He’s preaching the good news and saying, “I’m the Messiah. I’ve come to preach the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, liberty to those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19). So Jesus is saying, “I am here. I am the Messiah. I have come to rescue this fallen world.”

The natural question that follows, though, for us as skeptics is, “It’s easy for You to say that, Jesus, but how do I know I can trust You? It’s one thing to make that claim but how do I know I can really believe You?” So that’s where Luke takes us today—giving us a glimpse into the way Jesus was demonstrating His full authority—His amazing authority—which makes His gospel promise something to be believed. It

makes us be able to sing that although trials come in this life, “I will praise You still because I can trust You.” So here’s how Luke is going to affirm in our minds that Jesus can be trusted.

One more thing before we get into our passage as an example of this. I was a camp counselor the summer after my sophomore year of college at a Christian camp. Every week different kids would come. Some weeks it would be high school, some middle school, some elementary. It was an elementary week that stands out in my mind very vividly. I had about eight fourth and fifth graders in my cabin.

One night I was awakened by a cry. The only thing worse than one crying fourth grader would have been eight, so I hurried over to that boy and said, “What’s wrong?” He said, “I’m scared.” I said, “Let’s go sit on the step and talk about it before we wake everyone else up.” So we went out and sat right outside the door and I asked, “What’s wrong?” He said, “I’m scared.” I said, “Of what?” He responded, “Of Satan.” I said, “What about Satan?” And he said, “He’s going to get me.”

Being a 19-year-old college kid, I thought, “Okay. You’ve had a bad dream. You’re going to be fine.” So I said, “Well, God will protect you.” I’m saying these things just to get his mind off of it. But in the middle of that he cries out again. He says, “Oh!” and he points. (I’m not making this up.) I said, “What?” He said, “There he is. There are two red eyes staring at me.” At that point I’m still feeling like, nah, I don’t think so—but I did turn and look and my level of fear started to rise a little bit. But I didn’t see anything and was still pretty skeptical. He had a bad dream that’s still very vivid in his mind.

So eventually I said, “Well, you’re going to be okay. Can we go back to bed?” (I was tired.) He said, “No. I’m scared that the devil’s going to get me.” At that moment I said something—I don’t know why I said it and really had no basis to say it, but I looked at him and said, “I won’t let the devil get you. I will protect you from the devil.” That was enough for him but little did he know I probably couldn’t have done much. But I was there and I made this promise to him basically just to make him feel better.

Is that all Jesus is doing here? Is He just saying these things that He can’t really back up? If it actually came to this, does He really have the authority and the right to make these kind of claims? So that’s what Luke is going to affirm for us here in the rest of this chapter. Look at verses 31-32.

And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, ^{and} they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority.

Last week we saw that this is exactly what He does at Nazareth. He's preaching there in the synagogue on the Sabbath and they are astonished because His word possessed authority. This is unlike anyone they have ever heard preach; unlike anyone they had ever heard speak or teach. Not just someone standing up and quoting previous rabbis, quoting previous comments—or even just talking about the Word of God. Jesus IS the Word of God. “*In the beginning was the Word...*” John says, “*...and the Word became flesh*” (John 1:1, 14).

So the Son of God—the Word of God—is speaking here and He possesses authority. As they listen to this they are astounded and astonished. We're going to see four scenes as we look at the amazing authority of Jesus.

Scene 1 – Jesus' Amazing Authority Over Demons

Jesus is here in the synagogue and He's teaching. We don't know what He's teaching; it's not recorded for us here. But I don't think it would be a stretch to think maybe Jesus is teaching the same thing He was teaching in Nazareth. So in our minds we're picturing Jesus as He's saying, “I'm here to bring liberty to the oppressed, liberty to the captives.” And look what it says in 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.

Sometimes we'll hear a baby cry or someone say “Amen” or something like that in the middle of our services; but mostly they're pretty quiet. Picture yourself there in Capernaum. You're sitting quietly and listening to Jesus—and now there's this shout. At the beginning of verse 34 it says, “Ha!” This isn't like ha-ha, like something funny. This is a shout of anger—a scream of surprise. So Jesus is in the synagogue and this shout comes, and this demon speaks through a man saying,

“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.”

Most of us would be terrified; the kind of fear that just makes you tense up and wait. I don't know what it is about us that makes us think it's going to help but we tense up when we hear this. Again, put yourself in this scene. You're sitting here,

listening to Someone Who has amazing authority in the way He speaks. Jesus says, “I’m going to bring liberty to the captives, liberty to the oppressed” (Luke 4:18). And here stands a guy who is captive and oppressed. Then this demon speaks through this man saying, “*What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?*”

Now there’s this test. Jesus has been saying powerful things—but can He back it up? Does He have the right and the authority to say the things He’s been saying? Look at 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.

Many of you have heard this story but think about it again. Jesus is here and He’s preaching, and this demon talks through this man saying, “*What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?*” There’s no battle described for us here. There’s no fight. There’s no dualism that’s even hinted at—where it’s good versus evil and we’re not really sure who’s going to win. “Can Jesus come through the struggle on top?” No, Jesus just says, “*Be silent and come out of him!*”

This is amazing authority. Just with His word—just with His word, the Son of God says, “Don’t talk and get out!” Look at verses 36-37:

And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!” And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

They don’t say, “Ah, I bet that guy wasn’t really possessed. I bet he was just having a bad dream. This probably isn’t much.” No, they know. They are astonished; they are amazed as they see Jesus saying amazing things and then backing it up just with His word: “Be quiet and get out.” Then the reports of this begin to spread everywhere.

That’s end of Scene 1, Jesus demonstrating full authority over the demons.

Scene 2 – Jesus’ Amazing Authority Over Illness

After the synagogue meeting, Jesus goes to Peter’s house—He goes to care group after church. Look at verses 38-39:

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

So now Jesus leaves the synagogue. He just cast out this demon and He goes to Peter's house. He gets there and Peter's mother-in-law is ill. Remember, Luke's a doctor and he describes this as a "high fever." Not just a normal kind of fever—she's very ill. They're asking, "Jesus, is there anything You can do?" As Jesus stands over her He rebukes the fever, "Get out of her." This same word rebuke is used in verse 35 when He commanded the demon to leave.

That's difficult to get our minds around. It's one thing for Jesus to speak to and be able to command a spirit. But now this inanimate object of an illness? Jesus stands over this woman and rebukes the fever and says, "Get out of her." He heals her just with His word. He doesn't just pray over her and say, "God, please heal this woman," and then look at her and say, "I believe God has healed you but you need to rest and in a few days you will be well. You're not going to die." That would have been amazing.

But that's not all that happens here. He doesn't just remove the illness—He also restores her to full health. Look what it says. "*Immediately she rose and began to serve them.*" This can only be attributed to God. Only God can demonstrate the kind of authority that Jesus shows here as He commands the evil spirit, as He commands the effects of the Fall and the curse. It's not just evil but also the effects of evil in this world resulting in sickness and illness. But Jesus is demonstrating His full authority over them.

We're going to get to Luke 5:24 in a couple weeks, where Jesus heals a lame man who could not walk. Before He does that though, He says to him, "Your sins are forgiven." This is why Jesus came into this world—to forgive sins, to rescue us from spiritual bondage. So at that moment this man was set free. He was released from his sin and the penalty of his sin. But Jesus said this to him: "*But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—he said to the man who was paralyzed—'I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.'*" So Jesus is doing these visual things to confirm His full authority on earth to forgive sins.

That's the end of Scene 2.

Scene 3 – Jesus’ Amazing Authority Is Confirmed

In Scene 3, word gets out and His authority is confirmed. So Scene 1 is in the synagogue where Jesus demonstrates His authority over demons. Scene 2 is in Peter’s house where Jesus demonstrates His authority over illness. And now in Scene 3, word gets out and His authority is confirmed. Here’s what I mean. Those first two instances weren’t flukes. They weren’t just times when Jesus got lucky. We’re going to see here many, many people come and He’s demonstrating this over and over and over again.

Look at verses 40-41. This is the end of the Sabbath day and people are beginning to come to Jesus.

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. 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.

This must have been incredible. People blind from birth coming to Jesus and seeing for the first time. People who had never heard anything before are hearing now for the first time. People who couldn’t walk, who had to be carried to Jesus, stand up and walk home. Cancer is removed. Tumors are removed. Fevers are cast out. Infections are cast out. People are coming to Jesus wounded, coming to Jesus broken—and they’re leaving whole, they’re leaving well. This is incredible, as Jesus over and over again is demonstrating His full authority over all the effects of sin here in this world.

Then demons again—it says many demons were cast out as well. You see, in the time of Jesus’ ministry we read about this a lot. It seems that during the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry, demonic activity was more concentrated right there in that area. But this still happens today, especially in countries where the gospel has not penetrated, where the gospel is not preached. But even in our own land it takes place and Jesus has full authority over demons.

Again these demons cry out, “*You are the Son of God!*” Jesus doesn’t need demons to be preaching His message for Him. Jesus doesn’t want us listening to them. We saw at the beginning of Luke 4 when Jesus was tempted and Satan quoted Scripture that even when Satan and his demons speak truth, they’re not doing it out of a heart of worship toward God. So Jesus says, “Be silent!” They can’t even speak unless Jesus

tells them they can. This is the kind of authority Jesus has over the evil world. As I said before, there's no dualism here. Jesus has full authority. All He has to say is, "Be silent!" and they can't even talk. This is amazing power and authority.

As we stand before this authority, we stand in awe. How do we respond to this? We respond with hearts of worship and awe, realizing that our God has full authority over this world. We also respond to Him in trust. Because Jesus has full authority, we can trust Him and sing,

My soul finds rest in God alone
My rock and my salvation
A fortress strong against my foes
And I will not be shaken...

(Psalm 62 by Aaron Keyes)

I think this raises a question though in our minds which—although not the main point of this sermon—needs to come up. Even as we see God's full authority over illness and we see Jesus healing and healing and healing and healing—which He has the ability and authority to do—there is still a question in our minds: if God can heal all disease, why doesn't He? Why is it that every week we get a prayer sheet here in the church that tells of heart disease and stroke and cancer and Parkinson's and infections? We pray and we pray and we pray and we pray, and we beg God—and sometimes He heals. Sometimes He doesn't.

I want us to think of one illustration in the New Testament—one answer. We're not going to fully discuss this topic but think of the Apostle Paul who was used by God and filled by the Holy Spirit to bring physical healing to people in his ministry, even to raise someone from the dead. Yet the Apostle Paul prayed and begged God to fix this "thorn in the flesh" as he calls it. In 2 Corinthians 12:8, Paul gives us this account: "Three times I've cried out to God, please fix this! Please remove this from me." But God said no.

Here's what God said to Paul: "*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.*" God says, "My grace is sufficient—not your health, not your comfort—My grace is sufficient for you, Paul, for My power is made perfect in weakness." God's ultimate goal in our lives is not to keep us healthy. His ultimate goal in our life is to bring Himself glory. "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever" (Westminster Shorter Catechism). God isn't just saving us from the effects of sin. God is saving us from sin. He's drawing our souls closer to Himself.

He's drawing our souls closer to Himself so we can say, "God, I am sick," or probably even more difficult, "God, someone I love is sick—a child, parent, spouse—and God, it hurts. It's lonely. It's discouraging. God, I'm begging You to take this away. But God, if it's on this path that I have more of You—that I know You, that I depend on You more—if it's through this path of suffering that You have more of me and I have more of You, then God, it's worth it."

Jesus demonstrates His full authority. He has full authority over every one of our lives, every one of our sicknesses, every one of our problems. He has authority over evil. But this isn't His main mission right now, and that's what we're going to get to in Scene 4.

Scene 4 – Jesus' Mission Is Confirmed

Jesus leaves and His mission is confirmed. He demonstrates authority over demons. He demonstrates authority over illness. He demonstrates His authority over and over and over again. But now His mission is confirmed. Look at verses 42-44:

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 wanted Jesus there, and why not? He's an amazing Teacher and He's healing everyone.

...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." And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

Jesus goes away and they flock to Him and say, "Jesus, stay here! Stay here with us. Continue healing us." Jesus says, "This isn't why I'm here." He has demonstrated His authority to forgive sins. That's been confirmed and solidified in our minds. . But He also has the authority to proclaim the gospel. He says, "This is My purpose: to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God. I must do it throughout this whole world." So He's going out and preaching this good news.

Think where Luke's taking us here in chapter four. He starts with Jesus' temptation, where Jesus—the second Adam—heads straight into the desert, led by the Spirit and fasts 40 days. He's tempted by the devil. Jesus declared, "Things in this world aren't how they're supposed to be." And it's in this cold dark world that Jesus

steps in and is now facing temptation. Where Adam failed, where Israel failed, where every other human being in the history of this world failed, Jesus stands righteous in our place—earning salvation, earning righteousness, so He can give us His righteousness and take on Himself our sins.

Then He goes and begins preaching the gospel, preaching the good news. We saw how He did this from Isaiah, preaching, “I am here to rescue this world. I am here to preach good news of restoration and redemption” (Luke 4:18-19). Now He’s authenticating, “I have the authority and power to make these claims. I have authority over all evil. I have authority over all sickness—over evil itself, over the effects of sin here in this world. I have authority over all things. But that’s just pointing to My greater mission which is to preach the gospel, the good news of the Kingdom of God that has broken in to this world.”

Through Jesus the gospel is beginning to rescue and redeem a people for Himself. It’s even beginning to show signs of reversing the curse—but not yet fully realized. So I want you to turn to Luke 22. Throughout Luke’s Gospel we see Jesus preaching this good news—preaching this gospel—and demonstrating it with His full authority. But now I want us to look at Luke 22 for a couple reasons because He’s going to talk about this Kingdom again. He’s going to talk about the good news again as it became more clear through Jesus’ ministry and through His talking that this gospel He’s preaching was going to come through His death.

So now right before His death He’s with His disciples. We’re going to celebrate today what Jesus started here in Luke 22. Look at verses 15-18:

And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. [He’s about to suffer; He’s about to die.] For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

See, Jesus is preaching the good news of the Kingdom, that it’s coming! It’s coming in fullness. Paul tells us that “as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26). He’s coming again! There is coming a day when I will never again have to remind myself that God can heal—but I don’t know if He will. Never again will I look at someone and say, “I don’t know why you’re suffering.”

Because Jesus' Kingdom is coming in full, when He will remove and finally cast out all sin and all the effects of sin. And for His people He is coming to redeem and fully restore. For those who are not believing in Him, He is coming to judge. But He's saying that the Lord's Table—which Jesus commanded us to do, to remember His death—we're to do this until He comes again. Back to Luke 22:19-20:

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

Jesus has full authority to make the gospel claims that He died for you.

Let's pray.

Father, we rejoice. We stand in awe of You. Jesus, You have absolute authority over all things, yet You laid that down to die for us, to die in our place. Father, I pray that now as we celebrate this Lord's Table that You will use this to reaffirm in our minds, to build up our faith, that we can trust in You. Build up within us a longing for the return of Jesus as He comes to reign. Please come, Lord Jesus. We pray this in Your name. Amen.

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