

AMAZED BY THE MESSIAH

+ SESSION OUTLINE

1. Jesus's powerful teaching prompts astonishment (Luke 4:31-32).
2. Jesus's power over unclean spirits fuels amazement (Luke 4:33-37).
3. Jesus's proclamation of the gospel reveals His mission (Luke 4:38-44).

Background Passage: Luke 4

+ WHAT WILL MY GROUP LEARN?

Jesus's power over evil and sickness showed people that He is the Messiah, the One who had come to usher in God's kingdom.

+ HOW WILL MY GROUP SEE CHRIST?

When Jesus approached the man who was possessed by demons, even the demons recognized His authority. Jesus would later demonstrate His authority over sin and evil in a greater way through His crucifixion and resurrection. Sin no longer has power over all who trust in Jesus.

+ HOW SHOULD MY GROUP RESPOND?

Because Jesus has set us free from sin and death, we recognize and embrace His authority over every area of our lives as we proclaim what Jesus has done for us.

GROUP TIME



SCRIPTURE HANDOUT

Scan this QR code for a reproducible handout of this session's Scripture passages.

INTRODUCTION

SETTING: In contrasting the rejection of Jesus in His hometown with the events that followed later in Capernaum, Luke purposely drew a comparison between these two narratives. Though the Nazarenes demanded Jesus give them a miraculous sign, He responded with a rebuke. But in Capernaum, Jesus provided several displays of His power. Though we may not always know why Jesus worked one way in one place and worked another way elsewhere, we can trust that He is omniscient, omnipotent, sovereign, and perfectly working out His will to do the will of His Father.

DISCUSS: What is the most awe-inspiring, powerful thing you've experienced? What emotions were present during this event? (this could be something in nature like viewing a vast mountain range, enjoying the unique beauty of a national park, or standing on the edge of the ocean; this may also be something more personal, like the birth of a child or watching someone accept Jesus as his or her Savior; emotions will vary, but these acts of God often propel us toward humble appreciation of His power, creativity, and grace)

TRANSITION: Awe-inspiring acts filled many of the moments of Jesus's life, leading those around Him to experience astonishment and amazement. Ultimately, His purpose was not to impress people but to save them. Jesus came to proclaim the good news of God's kingdom to rescue people from their sin.

OPTIONAL QUESTION: Looking back on your salvation, what are some details that lead you to astonishment at God's powerful hand of grace on your life? (people He puts in our path; healing He brings to our hearts; bondage of sin He breaks)

POINT 1

JESUS'S POWERFUL TEACHING PROMPTS ASTONISHMENT (LUKE 4:31-32).

NOTES

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.

READ: Ask a volunteer to read aloud **Luke 4:31-32** from his or her own Bible.

EXPLAIN: Use **PACK ITEM 2: JESUS'S EARLY YEARS MAP** and the **VERSE 31** commentary to highlight the following point (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

Jesus's move to Capernaum was not to avoid the Nazarenes but primarily a **strategic** move to proclaim the **gospel** in a more diverse, catalytic space.

DISCUSS: How should we balance strategy with faith in and dependence on the Holy Spirit in our ministry efforts? (Jesus and the apostles thought strategically often; there is a place for utilizing our God-given intellect and ingenuity; however, we must also be careful not to rely solely on our idea of the "best" strategy; there are times when the Holy Spirit leads us to what may seem, by the world's standards, an ignorant way to do something; we must balance savviness with prayer, faith, and looking for the Lord's leading)

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSE 32** commentary to emphasize the following idea (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

Jesus preached from the absolute **authority** of God the Father, through the **power** of the Holy Spirit, and with perfect knowledge of God's plan, such that the people were astonished at His teaching.

DISCUSS: What does it mean to teach with authority today? (on one hand, Jesus is in a category all His own; yet in the Great Commission, Jesus commands us to make disciples by teaching all that He has commanded in Scripture; in essence, Jesus grants His authority to His followers; also, the same Spirit is within us, empowering us to help forward the mission Christ began)

TRANSITION: Though Luke has already sufficiently demonstrated the authority of Jesus through His birth story, genealogy, anointing, teaching, and more, there is much more to be added to the proof-pile of Jesus's authority as Christ, the Son of God.

AUTHORITY

Being God the Son, Jesus already has divine authority to do whatever He wills and wishes. But in the eyes of the people hearing His teachings and witnessing His miracles, Jesus demonstrates this authority, and it is recognized by the crowds. Jesus taught with a greater authority, with more knowledge and insight, than other priests and teachers before Him, contemporary with Him, and after Him.



COMMENTARY

VERSE 31 / Luke 4:31 reads very similar to Luke 4:16, where Jesus taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath in the city of Nazareth. But here He is teaching people on the Sabbath in the synagogue in Capernaum (see Luke 4:33). In juxtaposition with the Nazareth encounter, entering into this next episode of Jesus's ministry, there is a sense of suspense. This leads the reader to wonder: How will the members of the Capernaum synagogue respond to Jesus?

As can be seen clearly through the lens of all four Gospel accounts, Jesus used Capernaum as the base camp of His ministry. Nazareth was less geographically accessible than the border town of Capernaum. Situated on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum was a trade route that connected nearby areas, making it a stellar spot from which to travel. Jesus's move to this city was not only to avoid the hot-headed Nazarenes. This was a strategic move that would allow Christ to proclaim the gospel in a more diverse, catalytic space.

The original Greek construction of the word for **“teaching”** suggests Jesus's instruction in the synagogue was continual. It is possible that Luke meant to present a period of time when Jesus routinely taught the people in Capernaum on successive Sabbath days.¹

VERSE 32 / One theme highlighted throughout the book of Luke is that of the authority of Jesus. In the first ministry scene supplied by Luke (4:16-30), he included a summary of the content of Christ's first sermon, in which Jesus claimed the anointing and thus the messianic appointment, affirmation, and authorization from God. In this second ministry scene, Luke skipped over details about the actual content and focused on how the delivery, the ways and means by which Jesus delivered the gospel message, proved His supremacy as the Son of God.

At the time, it was customary for synagogue teachers to simply regurgitate the teaching they had received from their rabbinic predecessors. Departures from the traditional schools of thought about how to interpret Scripture were not acceptable, as clearly seen through the Nazarenes' response to Jesus's teaching on the Old Testament prophets Elijah and Elisha, when He presented them as being sent to the Gentiles because of the unfaithfulness of the Jews. To have Jesus expound Scripture anew would have been astounding to the hearers in Capernaum. Jesus preached from the absolute authority of God the Father, through the divine power of the Holy Spirit, and with perfect knowledge of God's plan. It is no mystery why the people were astonished at His teaching.

The original Greek word for **“word”** here is *logos*, which Luke used dozens of times in his Gospel. In the Greek world, this term often connoted a revelation of something or a metaphysical law that defined human life.² The Gospel writers, however, used this term to present Jesus as both the actual *logos* and the courier of *logos*. He brought a revelation, a message of life, and He is the embodiment of that revelation. We've already seen this dual meaning in John 1:1-5. Thus, Jesus as the authoritative Word brings an authoritative word.

Recall that Satan had tempted Jesus with the promise of authority over all kingdoms of the earth (Luke 4:6), but Jesus rightly rejected him. The evil one had no authority to give to the Son of God what already belongs to the Son in eternity.

Jesus's deeper and more informed teaching, His revelatory message of life, and His ability to heal through the power of God (through the miracles Luke recorded in 4:33-44 and beyond)—all these demonstrated Jesus's authority as the Messiah. If this were all we had, there already would be enough in Jesus's authoritative teaching for the soul filled with faith to trust.

POINT 2

JESUS'S POWER OVER UNCLEAN SPIRITS FUELS AMAZEMENT (LUKE 4:33-37).

NOTES

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, **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.” **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. **36** 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!” **37** And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

READ: Ask a volunteer to read aloud **Luke 4:33-37** from his or her own Bible.

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSES 33-34** commentary to highlight the following doctrine about demons (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

KEY DOCTRINE #35: *Demons:* Demons are angelic beings who sinned against God and now continually work **evil** in the world today (Job 1:6; Zech. 3:1; Luke 10:18). Demons **oppose** God and seek to destroy His work, as seen in the Bible’s description of Satan, the head of demons, who seeks to “steal, kill, and destroy” (John 10:10). Though demons have power, they are **limited** by God’s control and can only act within the constraints of what God permits. In the end, all of the demons will be cast into the lake of fire, for which it was originally created.

DISCUSS: Why might we struggle to recognize the work of demons today? (tempting to think demons are no longer active; some “modern Christians” discount biblical accounts of demon possessions as actually cases of epilepsy or mental illness; we are so focused on the material realm that we forget the spiritual realities)

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSES 35-37** commentary to emphasize the following idea (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

As the sovereign **Creator** of all things, God the Son—Jesus—by the word of His mouth, commanded the demon and it had to **obey**.

DISCUSS: What does it say about us when we don’t obey God’s command? (we are in sin; we are in rebellion against our Creator; we don’t rightly fear the Lord; we should examine our hearts to see if we are indeed in Christ)

TRANSITION: The authoritative message of Jesus prompted astonishment. The powerful works of Jesus fueled amazement. Yet it was His urgent drive to proclaim the good news to all that revealed His mission.

SYNAGOGUE

A location where Jews gathered locally for teaching and assembly in the inter-testamental and New Testament times. Many communities had one or more synagogues with a large inner room for the men to gather and a loft above for the women.

VOICES from THE CHURCH

“Satan can do nothing in this world, and nothing in your life, apart from the sovereign permission of God. Satan is a lion (1 Pet 5:8), but he is a lion on a leash. And God holds the leash. Demons decidedly do not have all authority; Jesus does.”³

—David Platt

COMMENTARY

VERSES 33-34 / The Bible presents many details about demons. As fallen angels, they are servants of Satan. They carry out the same purpose as the evil one: to steal, kill, and destroy (see John 10:10). Through acts of deception and destruction, they attempt to pervert God's purpose and oppose God's work.

In this passage, it is notable that from within this group of synagogue-goers, a man with a demonic spirit began his outburst. The evil one and his minions are crafty and cunning. We should not be shocked that they attempt to attack God's people from within.

Although Jesus was interacting here with only one demonic spirit, several times the demon used the word **"us."** The demon demanded for Jesus to leave **"us"** alone, questioned what Jesus had to do with **"us,"** and also inquired if Jesus had come to destroy **"us."** This demon recognized Jesus in a way most of the people surrounding them had yet to internalize. This Jesus—the Holy One of God—had come to defeat the darkness, all of it, including all its minions and workers. "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

During this era, most believed the presence of demonic forces to be a work of magic. To overcome these powers, necromancers and the like would attempt to control spiritual powers through the calling out of their names. Many scholars believe this was what the demon attempted to do with Jesus. Specifically, the use of the phrase **"I know who you are"** was connected with this sort of conjuring and attempts to conquer spirits.⁴

The demon declared two titles of this synagogue Teacher: 1) **"Jesus of Nazareth"** and 2) **"the Holy One of God."** Whether the unclean spirit recognized it or not, it affirmed what the synagogue members of Nazareth could not: Jesus of Nazareth is the Holy One of God.

This demon, compared to the unbelieving Nazarenes, knew intellectually that Jesus is the Christ, but this didn't mean that the demonic spirit submitted to the Holy One of God. As James so rightly pointed out, mere recognition that Jesus exists is not sufficient to save. "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder" (Jas. 2:19). Intellectual belief is a step in the right direction, but only a dependent faith in Christ's exclusive and complete ability to atone for our sins can save a soul.

VERSES 35-37 / Rebuking and removing the demonic spirit by the command of Jesus's voice alone would have been novel—indeed a show of Jesus's authority and power. The practice of exorcism existed before this, typically using one of two methods: one, already mentioned above, was the invocation of the spirit by name; the second was attempting to force the demon out by making the possessed body an inhospitable dwelling place.⁵ Yet Jesus did not need either of these means of exorcism. Just as He, being God the Son, spoke this world and its creatures into being, Christ commanded the demon to submit to His will. And He did it **"having done him no harm,"** without having to make the body inhospitable, unlike those before Him.

When Jesus rebuked the demonic spirit, He commanded it to be silent. As we will see again in Luke 4:41, Jesus hushed the demons because their declarations were premature in His timeline. He knew that once the masses truly grasped the spiritual nature and reality of Jesus as the Christ, events would progress quickly to the cross. Throughout the Gospels, this pacing of Jesus's perfect timing is evident.

Previously, the authority of Jesus's message astonished the people. But now they were amazed at the authority and power of Jesus Himself—Jesus commanded and the spirits come out. Thus, it is both the words and the works of Jesus that are astounding.

POINT 3

JESUS'S PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL REVEALS HIS MISSION (LUKE 4:38-44).

NOTES

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

READ: Ask a volunteer to read aloud **Luke 4:38-44** from his or her own Bible.

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSES 38-41** commentary to highlight the following point (the **bold** words fill in blanks in the DDG):

Jesus repeatedly demonstrated His power, divinity, and **care** as He healed sicknesses and liberated demon-possessed people. Both the physical and the spiritual are **subject** to Him.

DISCUSS: How did the actions of Christ reveal His mission? (purpose filled His every move, even if not originally understood; the healings were demonstrations of His power over both the physical and spiritual realms; all of Jesus's miracles led up to the truth that Jesus also has the power to save, not just from the immediate problems we face but from our biggest problem—sin)

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSES 42-44** commentary to emphasize the following idea (the **bold** words fill in blanks in the DDG):

Jesus was steadfast in His purpose, obeying the **Father** and fulfilling His **mission** in all that He did, proclaiming the good news of the **kingdom** of God.

TRANSITION: Through embracing the Great Commission, all who are in Christ have the same purpose and mission. With this call to proclaim the gospel, we also carry with us the same power of Christ that brought healing and hope.

COMMENTARY

VERSES 38-41 / After back-to-back accounts of Jesus within a synagogue, Luke then provided a more personal portrait of Jesus as a powerful healer. This narrative of events in Simon's, or Peter's, house occurred immediately after Jesus left the synagogue on the Sabbath. In verse 40, we are told **"the sun was setting"** when many came to Jesus for help. Because of the prohibitions on the Sabbath, the Jews were unable to approach Jesus right away with their needs. From sundown to sundown, they observed Sabbath rest. As soon as they were able, the eager people lined up to see if this Jesus could heal them and their loved ones.

Luke, who was a physician (Col. 4:14), noted that Peter's mother-in-law's fever was a high one. Of course, at the time, there were no thermometers to measure her numerical temperature. As a doctor, Luke's wording indicated this was not a case of insignificant sniffles. This was a serious illness.⁶ Yet by the powerful word of Christ, this concerning mega-fever left the woman's body, and **"immediately she rose and began to serve them."** There was no recovery required, no time off needed to recuperate from a life-draining ailment. This was yet another miracle performed by Jesus. In an instant, Peter's mother-in-law seemingly went from death's doorstep to carrying out her day-to-day duties.

After spotlighting this personal account of healing, Luke zoomed back out to the crowds in verses 40-41. Instead of recounting every healing, Luke simply mentioned that there were various spiritual and physical healings. The spiritual healing within the Capernaum synagogue and the physical healing in the home of Peter were not isolated incidents. A pattern had emerged—one which would continue to demonstrate the life and ministry of Jesus and the manifestation of His miraculous power and divine nature.

Luke gave an additional detail in verse 40. Jesus not only healed various ailments,

He chose to perform that healing through various means. Though Jesus had already demonstrated that His word was powerful enough to heal, He also cured some with the laying on of His hands. This was a personal touch.

Earlier in verse 35, Jesus "rebuked" the evil spirit possessing the man in the Capernaum synagogue. Then in verse 39, Jesus **"rebuked"** the fever. Luke used the same Greek word in both instances and again in verse 41, where Jesus rebuked many demons, not allowing them to speak of His messiahship. Through this word connection, Luke demonstrated that Jesus has power and dominion over not only spiritual forces but also physical processes.

VERSES 42-44 / During the time of Christ, it was common for dozens of people to live under the same roof, and those dwellings sometimes shared a small yard with several other houses.⁷ It was no small task to find a deserted place to be alone, especially for Jesus, who was now sought after by people desperate for healing. The crowds were relentless, but Jesus did not allow the pressure to deter Him from His purpose.

Jesus was steadfast in His purpose, what some theologians call the "divine must."⁸ Jesus wholeheartedly accepted the will of the Father to bring the good news to all who would receive it. Jesus also knew the way God's will would unfold, and to deviate from the Father's plan was implausible for the Son. Back in Luke 2:49, even twelve-year-old Jesus held this purpose, this "divine must." Once Mary and Joseph found their son, Jesus declared, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" The Father's perfect plan and the Son's abiding obedience always comes through. Jesus knew what must be done. It would have been easy for Him to just build a movement centered around His power. But He knew He came to **"preach the good news of the kingdom of God."**

MY RESPONSE

Because Jesus has set us free from sin and death, we recognize and embrace His authority over every area of our lives as we proclaim what Jesus has done for us.

HEAD:

God's power displayed is often more than our brains can fully perceive. During His time on earth, Jesus repeatedly demonstrated His divine power over both the physical and spiritual realms. Ultimately, through the resurrection, He proved His dominion over sin and death. But when we are faced with what is seemingly insurmountable, it can be easy to forget or doubt the power of God to save. Yet the acts of Jesus today are still just as powerful and purposeful, and we can trust Him to care and to save.

In what areas of life do you need to remember the reality of God's ability and power to save?

HEART:

The life of Jesus is not a sweet bedtime story or inspirational folktale. Jesus is a living, breathing human. He is also the Messiah who came in power to usher in God's kingdom. Authority filled Jesus's actions, demonstrating His dominion over every aspect of human life, both seen and unseen. No evil spirit could overpower His resolve to obey God's plan. No earthly need could thwart His mission to proclaim the gospel.

In what areas of life do you need to repent and submit to the authority of our powerful, loving, and caring Savior?

HANDS:

Jesus lived with great purpose and clarity. He did not waste moments. He did not waffle in His direction. He did not neglect God's ultimate goal. After Jesus defeated sin and death, He appeared to His people before He ascended into heaven and provided a clear and compelling commission: Go and make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18-20). With this command, Jesus attached the promise of His power-filled presence, which we experience through God's gift of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, filled with the same power and authority that rebuked the sickness and the spirits, we are abundantly equipped to proclaim the good news of Jesus to all nations.

What are some ways you will walk forward in the authority of Christ and proclaim the good news today?

NOTES

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"The life of a believer is a series of miracles wrought by 'the mighty God.' He is mighty to keep His people holy after He has made them so, and to preserve them until He brings to completion their spiritual existence in heaven."⁹

—Charles Spurgeon
(1834-1892)

POINT 1: JESUS'S POWERFUL TEACHING PROMPTS ASTONISHMENT (LUKE 4:31-32).

+ COMMENTARY

“Luke has already mentioned Capernaum (v. 23) as a center of miraculous activity in the ministry of Jesus. Capernaum was on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. Luke adds a geographical note for Gentile readers. The ruins of a later (probably third-century) synagogue may be seen today in that vicinity. The expression ‘went down’ reflects the descent necessary from the elevated situation of Nazareth to the coastal plain . . . The incident Luke next gives is perhaps more striking than the parallel in Mark (1:21–34) because it exemplifies the liberating work described in the preceding Isaiah quotation (vv. 18–19). The reaction of the people, though comparable to that in the preceding incident (vv. 20–22), differs from it in one important aspect. Now they are astonished that this teacher, who in their eyes was not even a rabbi, taught with authority (v. 32). The contrast is sharpened in Mark 1:22 by the additional words ‘not as the teachers of the law.’ The majority of rabbis would base their teaching on the chain of tradition, citing the opinions of their predecessors. By omitting this specific comparison, Luke may simply be deferring to his Gentile readership, who would perhaps not be as aware as Jewish readers of rabbinical custom. But it may also be that Luke is emphasizing the absolute authority of Jesus. In support of this is Luke’s use of the word ‘message’ (logos, lit., ‘word’) . . . Keeping in mind that the parallel passage in Mark does not use ‘word’ but says ‘he taught them,’ Luke would seem to be emphasizing the ‘authority’ of Jesus’s ‘word’ (cf. v. 36).”¹⁰

+ ILLUSTRATION

Over the centuries, people have utilized various tools to present an authoritative message. In medieval times, many used signet rings, which they would press into a wax seal. This unique mark and sealing applied to a letter provided authority and authentication to the message within. Today, important legally binding documents require the seal of a notary. This stamp of approval by the authority of the notary provides credibility to the document and sets it apart from any potential forgeries. Even some social media platforms have a verification process for accounts to achieve verified status and receive the award of a check mark symbol, preventing scammers and pretenders from falsely impersonating a public figure. Throughout the years, these seals, symbol, and stamps have been symbols of authenticity that carry authority.

At the time of Jesus’s baptism, the Father sent the Holy Spirit to anoint Jesus as a symbol of

EXTRA

God's favor, power, and authority bestowed to Jesus. This gave a visual verification that Jesus is the Messiah to all who witnessed His baptism and to all who would then hear about it. Then Jesus's unique, power-filled, authoritative teaching provided further proof of His authenticity. As believers, we too have the seal of the Holy Spirit, who bears witness of our authenticity as children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Additionally, through the Great Commission, Christ has bestowed upon us His power and authority so we can carry out His commands with boldness.

POINT 2: JESUS'S POWER OVER UNCLEAN SPIRITS FUELS AMAZEMENT (LUKE 4:33-37).

+ COMMENTARY

"In the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon. This last expression is nowhere explained. Some take it literally and think the man was dirty and dishevelled. Others hold the reference to be moral and think of a wicked spirit. It is possible that both are in mind. In the ancient world it was widely held that many troubles are caused by evil spirits. The Bible says little about demon possession before or after the incarnation, but much during Jesus's ministry. In Scripture this phenomenon is part of the conflict between Jesus, who came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8), and evil . . . On this occasion the demoniac 'shrieked at the top of his voice' (neb). Have you come to destroy us? is usually taken as a question, but it might be a statement, 'You have come . . .'. The demon recognized the opposition between Jesus and all of his kind. The Holy One of God (elsewhere only Mark 1:24; John 6:69) is an unusual title, stressing the thought of consecration to God's service. In this place we should see it as an example of what James had in mind when he wrote 'the demons believe—and shudder' (Jas 2:19). Ryle comments that the demon's knowledge was 'unaccompanied by faith, or hope, or charity'."¹¹

+ ILLUSTRATION

There are moments in our lives that leave us speechless. Whether it be the magnificence displayed by an idyllic spot in nature, the miracle of life demonstrated at a birth, or a near-death experience from which God rescued us, we've all been amazed by important incidents. These moments are often more than mere stops. They are encounters with the grandeur of God, and they can become significant turning points in our lives.

Jesus provided many of these opportunities throughout His life and ministry. He left no room for doubt when it came to His power. In a world full of superstitions, Jesus Christ brought clear control over the spiritual realm. Through His mere words alone, He exerted dominance over the demonic. Over and over, throughout His life, Jesus would display His power to deliver humankind from what ails them. Even today, whether it be a spiritual force, a physical ailment, or a sin-soaked soul, Jesus's omnipotent command can forever change our direction and destiny. Our only part is to respond rightly to His glorious rule and merciful salvation by submitting to His kingship and placing all our trust in His power and authority.

POINT 3: JESUS'S PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL REVEALS HIS MISSION (LUKE 4:38-44).

+ COMMENTARY

“The expression [‘kingdom of God’] occurs thirty-one times in Luke, and ‘kingdom’ occurs another six times. Luke made no attempt to define this expression here, for he anticipated that his readers already possessed some understanding of its meaning. Furthermore the preceding material in Luke 1:1–4:42 should help further clarify what his message of God’s kingdom entails. The expression ‘kingdom of God’ should be interpreted dynamically rather than statically, for it involves the dynamic of God’s reign rather than a territory with static borders. The term ‘kingdom’ in the Bible usually refers to the rule of someone rather than the territory controlled (cf. 19:12, 15; 23:42). Understood this way, God’s kingdom was proclaimed by Jesus and Luke as a present reality (11:14–22; 16:16; 17:20–21) as well as a future hope (11:2; 13:22–30; 22:16–18). The alternatives of either a ‘realized’ understanding of God’s kingdom (the kingdom already has come) or a ‘consistent’ understanding (the kingdom is still entirely in the future) are therefore unnecessary. God’s kingdom is both present and future. It already has been realized in fulfillment of the OT promises but awaits the final consummation when Jesus returns.”¹²

+ ILLUSTRATION

There are tales that challenge our linear thinking, especially true of psychological thrillers and mysteries that leave us stumped until the end. Many of these films and books capitalize on our desire to figure things out before they happen. But once we view the revealed plot twist, it cannot be unseen by our mind’s eye. The story can be enjoyed again, but it will never be the same as the first time when we found ourselves on the edge of our seat.

When it comes to enjoying the biblical narrative, we have the benefit of being able to observe the life of Jesus with the end of the story in view. We already know the singular purpose and ultimate plan of Christ to rescue humankind through the cross. Therefore, it would be easy to shake our heads at the crowds in Jesus’s time, yet it’s very likely that many of us would be like them, those who just couldn’t see or understand what Jesus was doing and why He was doing it. While we do have the perspective of hindsight when it comes to the life of Jesus in the first century, we must learn to trust in His plan in our day. This is especially true for the places in our lives where we just can’t understand what He is doing. Regardless of how we feel, He is always in control, just as He was two millennia ago. God is always working out His will in perfect ways and with impeccable timing.

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