**Jesus’ Words had Power and Authority**

October 3, 2021

Luke 4:31-44
Key Verse 4:36 “They were amazed at his teaching, because his words had authority.”

Jesus did many things during his three years of earthly ministry. If we summarize what he did, they are teaching, healing and preaching. In todays’ passage, Luke tells us these three things about Jesus’ ministry in Capernaum —his authority in his teaching, his compassion in healing sick people, and his clear mission to preach the good news of kingdom of God. We can’t say specifically, one is more important than the others. Jesus used all three of them to expand God’s kingdom on earth. May God help us to follow our true shepherd, Jesus’ example and bring his kingdom to many people through preaching the good news of the kingdom of God. Last week, we learned through Sam’s message, Jesus proclaimed the good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, and release of the oppressed according to Isaiah’s prophesy. Today, we see that Jesus is doing exactly that and revealed his authority as the Son of God. Let’s see his work one by one.

**First**, Teaching (31-37). Look at verses 31-32. “Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath he taught the people. They were amazed at his teaching, because his words had authority.” After Jesus had been rejected by his home town people, he did not despair because of these unrepentant people. He went to Capernaum, and taught the word of God on the Sabbath. The people there were struck by his teaching, especially because of his “authority” (4:32). Matthew 7:28-29 says “the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.” Jesus taught from the same scriptures that all other religious leaders used. But the people in the synagogue were amazed because they felt as if they were listening to a message from God. That day, they might have come there habitually with a sense of obligation. Some of them might have come to get along with people. However, Jesus’ message had power and authority. Jesus didn’t use difficult theological terms. It didn’t seem superficial; it seemed alive and worked actively in their hearts. His words seemed trustworthy so that they were moved by his message. Jesus’ words, which has power and authority, is able to change our lives. Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way and the truth and the life.” Jesus spoke the truth. The truth enables us to know what sin is, and to see our dirty sins in us. Jesus’ words help us to repent before him. His words have power to set us free from our sin problems.

On the other hand, the message by the teachers of the law had no authority. It was not that they were boring to listen to. I have heard preachers who are quite interesting to listen to, but there is no gospel in what they say. They go on and on about how many certain words are used. Such a message has no authority. Once I heard a rabbi saying that Adam was supposed to live 1,000 years, but he gave 70 years to King David and he died at the age of 930. Many rabbis talk about such trivia. Teaching without authority is best summarized by Isaiah 29:13. “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.” Teaching without authority is lip-service – the Pharisees told others to do something but they could not do it themselves. Since their hearts were far from God, they could not understand the Bible. Instead they taught rules that men had made up, about washing hands and about exactly how much one could carry on the Sabbath. But Jesus’ teaching was not like the teachers of the law. This is because he is the author of the Bible and he taught with authority. This means he taught the Bible with faith believing that the Bible is the living and active and absolute word of God (Heb.4:12). He believed that the Bible makes people wise for salvation (2 Tim.3:15-17). He believed that the Bible could set men’s hearts free from sin. Jesus taught them the love of God and the glorious hope in the kingdom of God. Jesus believed the power of God’s word could change these people if they really repented and believed his teachings. When they heard it, they were amazed because they saw that he really believed it. It was so refreshing and inspiring. When we believe the Bible and teach it with faith like Jesus, we can move the heart of people and even amaze them.

Last Friday, we celebrated the Founder’s day. It celebrates the legacy of Dr. Samuel Lee, the founder of UBF. When Dr. Samuel Lee gave messages, many students were inspired by his messages. What was the difference between his messages and others? The difference was that he delivered messages with decision to obey what the Bible says. When he studied the gospels, he realized that the gospels always ended with world mission command, “Go and make disciples of all nations.” He wanted to obey Jesus’ world mission command. But the problem was that he had no money to send out missionaries. Many people discouraged him, saying, “Missionary sending is possible only for Americans and Canadians who have money.” But he prayed. In 1968 he learned that some UBF nurses were going to Germany as contract laborers. By faith, he went to the airport and persuaded them to delay leaving until they had received missionary training. Amazingly several women responded. They were sent out as missionaries after 2 weeks of training. Eventually, Dr. Samuel Lee himself was sent out as a missionary to Chicago in 1977. UBF sent out over 1,500 self-supporting missionaries to the whole world. When we study the Bible with a decision to obey what it says, it will have power and authority. But if we study the Bible like literature with no decision to obey, the Bible study will not have power and authority to change lives.

Jesus’ words struck one young man there. Look at verses 33-34. In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an impure spirit. The man was possessed by a demon but came into the synagogue. He cried out at the top of his voice, “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!” Can you imagine if someone in this room stood up and started shouting at the top of their voice during the message, “Have you come to destroy us?” It would be very disruptive. In this case, it was the work of a demon. Looking at various demons in the Bible, it seems that many of them like to shout. The demon had to act quickly before people repented and accepted the good news of the kingdom. Even this man whom the demon had taken prisoner; even his heart was warming to the good news and the demon’s grip was weakening; so the demon had to take drastic action and stop this preaching. So he cried out at the top of his voice.

Look at verse 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. Although it was the man who spoke to Jesus, Jesus spoke directly to the demon. Jesus didn’t address the man. Isn’t that interesting? He didn’t analyze why that man was possessed by a demon. He didn’t condemn the man as a terrible sinner for being a person possessed by a demon. In fact, we don’t know anything about the man except that he was possessed by a demon and then set free by Jesus. Satan intended to disrupt Jesus’ message, but God used it for a good purpose, and provide a demonstration of the authority of Jesus’ words. Look at verse 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!’” The people had already been amazed at the authority of Jesus’ teaching before, but now, they were amazed even more at how powerful his words were. Jesus’ word has power and authority to free men from evil spirits. We are helpless against evil spirits, but Jesus’ word has power, just as he defeated the devil’s temptations with the word of God. Sin and evil spirits are so strong. We cannot free ourselves from sin. But we can call on the name of Jesus who has compassion on us, and his words free us from being oppressed. Jesus is the king who has the authority over the demons. May God help us to be free from our addictive bad habit, oppression from negative thinking and impure spirits by accepting the authority and power of Jesus’ words.

**Second**, Healing (38-41). What happened next? After intensive spiritual battle against a demon, Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon Peter. Probably Jesus and his disciples expected to have delicious lunch at Simon’s home. But there he saw that Simon’s mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever. A high fever is a very serious condition, even today, but in those days, without medicine, she could easily have died. Simon must have been worried. He wanted to follow Jesus, but how could he with a sick mother-in-law? Actually, it was Satan’s attack on Simon’s faith. It sounds like more than an infection; it had a spiritual aspect. She may not have been possessed, but Satan was afflicting her. How did Jesus help her? Look at verse 39a. “So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her.” As soon as Jesus rebuked the fever in her, it left her immediately. Then Peter’s mother-in-law got up, and then she was fine so she began to wait on them. Jesus used his words to rebuke this fever away, and revealed the power and authority of his words again. Jesus’ word has the power to heal and restore us to health both physically and spiritually.

The lesson here is that Jesus took care of Simon’s mother-in-law. So many people had the opportunity to follow Jesus, but they held back, because of their family. Simon was a married man – otherwise he could not have a mother-in-law. How could he leave his family, even his sick mother-in-law? When we leave our family to follow Jesus, our family often does not understand. It looks cold-hearted--don’t we have to take care of our families first? But Jesus says quite clearly, no. He proclaims, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” When Simon left his family, he did not abandon them, but committed them into the Lord’s hand. What if he stayed with his mother-in-law? Could he do anything for her, really? But when he followed Jesus, then Jesus took care of her. In 1 Corinthians 9:5, we read that Peter traveled with his wife in the later years of his life. So he never abandoned his family, but he made a decision to put God first. Then God blessed his family and healed his mother-in-law.

As news about Jesus spread, many people wanted to come to him for healing. Look at verse 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.” The Sabbath ended at sunset. The fact that they came even as the sun was setting shows their eagerness to get to Jesus at the first opportunity. They had seen what Jesus did at the synagogue, so they went and brought all their sick friends and relatives to be healed by Jesus. What did Jesus do? Did Jesus send them away and tell them to come the next morning? Or did Jesus heal them all at the same time with one quick motion? No, verse 40b says, “laying his hands on each one, he healed them.” A special point is made in this verse that he healed them individually one by one. A group healing would have been quicker, but it would not have left the same impact on the sick people. By healing them one by one, Jesus showed his concern for the individual. He did not see a crowd of sick people, but many individuals who are suffering. As he laid his hands on each one, he was inviting each one to his kingdom. Every single person felt the loving touch of Jesus’ hand. He was taking their pain upon himself. The account of this event in Matthew’s gospel adds an explanation: “This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah, ‘He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.’” (Mt 8:17) In this age of mass media, internet chatting, e-mails, and computerized form-letters, personal interaction is lacking. I heard that psychologists have found that millions of Americans and Canadians need a hug--they are isolated and alone. We might think that radio or tele-evangelism is the best way to reach the people with the gospel. But one-direction communication cannot accomplish discipleship. Jesus taught crowds, but he focused on one to one ministry and care. This is why our one to one ministry is so important. We pray that God may raise 10,000 one to one Bible teachers.

**Third**, Prayer and Preaching (42-43). Look at verse 42a. “At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place.” Jesus went out early in the morning to pray. He shows the importance of prayer, and of quiet time with God. In particular, Jesus got up early to pray, despite healing the sick late into the night the day before. Even unbelievers recognize the importance of quiet time in the morning. According the survey, 80% of smartphone users check their phone immediately after getting up in the morning. It increases stress and anxiety. We need to start our day with prayer and the word of God. Otherwise, we will be running around frantically and aimlessly like a chicken without its head. Look at verses 42b-43. “The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, ‘I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.’” The people were eagerly looking for him. They wanted him to stay there as an in-house doctor. But Jesus told them that he had to go to the other towns also. He could have stayed in Capernaum and enjoyed wide support, and maybe built a mega-church. Instead Jesus chose to travel from town to town, often being rejected, often having no place to lay his head. He demonstrated that he had concern for all towns and all people. He also knew why he had been sent: “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.” Many people don’t know why they are here, and think of life as an accident. Even Christians, who know that God has a purpose for them, may not really feel like they have been sent. But we have surely been sent as Christ’s ambassadors to follow his example to preach the good news of the kingdom of God. We do not preach whatever ideas that we think are interesting; we preach God’s kingdom. If we believe what God says, God’s word will have power and authority.

Big Idea: God’s words have power and authority if we believe