**His Word had Authority and Power**

May 18, 2014

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 teaching the good news of the kingdom of God.

Last week, we learned through Luke’s message, Jesus proclaimed the good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, and release of the oppressed according to Isaiah’s prophesy. Today, we can see Jesus is fulfilling Isaiah’s prophesy by revealing his authority as the Son of God. Let’s see his work one by one.

**First, Teaching. (31-37)**

Look at verse 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. And some of them might have come to get along with people. However, Jesus’ message has 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. He spoke with authority and people were amazed.

Jesus’ word, 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. Jesus’ words help us to repent before him. His word has power to set us free from our sin problems.

Jesus’ word also changed my life. One day in December 1996, God intervened in my life. At that time I was only interested in computers and English study in the UBF winter school rather than Bible study. But my shepherd told me that if I would study the Bible deeply I could know about God and myself. This invitation led me to 1:1 Bible study. Jesus taught me what being truly blessed means through Matthew 5 “Beatitudes”- “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. I still remember this teaching was totally new to me, and it helped me to open my spiritual eyes. No one forced me to accept Jesus’ words. Actually, Bible teacher can’t force Bible students to accept Jesus’ teaching. Right? Since Jesus’ teaching itself has power and authority, if we have a humble mind, God help us to accept his teaching.

As a Bible teacher, when we share the gospel with others, we all want to be like Jesus. How can our message have authority like Jesus? The answer is that the message we teach should come from Jesus. The authority is not a matter of our theological, social or language skill. Of course, they can affect people’s response. However, they are not critical factors.

In Luke 9, when Jesus sent out his disciples two-by-two, he gave them authority to preach. Jesus gives authority to those he sends, and the young disciples could drive out demons miraculously. However, when they depended on themselves later, they couldn’t drive out any demons. May God help us to trust Jesus’ authority we received from God, so that we share gospel boldly with others and proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God.

Jesus’ word struck one young man there. Look at verse 33. 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. Why was he there? Was he a regular member, I don’t know? Perhaps, he wanted to be healed by Jesus. So, What was his reaction when he met Jesus?

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!” This demon is pretty smart. He knows that Jesus is "the Holy One of God", while the people of Nazareth clearly do not. However, the problem was that though the demon knows who Jesus is, he wants nothing to do with Jesus.

How does Jesus respond to this outburst? 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. Jesus tells the demon sternly to shut-up and to come out of the man. By driving out demons, Jesus helps people to restore their true identity as God’s precious Children.

**Now let’s read verse 36 together. “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. This show when Jesus spoke to the demon, this man was set free. Jesus’ word was so powerful that the demon could not hold the man any longer. Jesus Christ 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. God’s word is the power of his love and goodness to overcome the power of evil in the world and in us.

One shepherd was abused by his babysitter at the age of 10. This led to sexual immorality and drugs. He was under the influence of the evil spirits.  He wore a t-shirt that said “kill everyone now,” and ate lunch in the nearby cemetery. He developed a strange personal religion in which he was a kind of god figure, and no one else was really real.

One night on drugs he cried out in his parents’ kitchen because he knew that he was full of delusions. He prayed to the Truth to set him free from his delusions. Soon after that he was invited to Bible study and through the word of God he was set free. He became whole and got a Ph.D. in philosophy, and became the shepherd for young students. Jesus' word has power to set us free from demonic oppression, and makes us the holy children of God.

Sin and evil spirits are so strong. We cannot free ourselves from sin. We can call on the name of Jesus who has compassion on us, and His words free us from being oppressed. May God help us to be free from our addictive bad habit, oppression from negative thinking and impure spirit 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. 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.

Instead of medicine or chicken soup, Jesus rebuked high fever. It was an interesting medical practice. Anyway, Jesus was using his words to rebuke this fever away, 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.

As news about Jesus spread, many people wanted to come to him for help. 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.” People brought their sick friends and relatives to Jesus as a doctor's visit. Probably the news that Jesus healed a man with a demon with his words quickly spread to the whole town. I wonder how did without twitter or internet, the news about Jesus spread so fast in whole area.

So far, it had been a very full day for Jesus. He worked hard on the Sabbath, delivering the message, driving out a demon from a man and healing Simon’s mother-in-law’s high fever. It was time for Jesus to have some rest and quiet moments by himself.

But unexpectedly, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness. What did Jesus do for them? 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.” Jesus healed them one by one, laying his hands on each one. It shows us Jesus’ compassion and shepherd heart as the promised Messiah, the Son of God. He spent time with each person, touching each of them to show them the love of God with his healing hands.

Jesus also exorcizes demons. The demons tried to reveal Jesus's identity as the Son of God and Messiah, but Jesus silences them. Jesus didn’t want to reveal his identity through the demons and it was not the right time to reveal who he was.

**Third, Prayer and Preaching. (42-43)**

Jesus worked hard all night long to help the sick and demon-possessed in Capernaum. Finally, it was time for Jesus to sleep. Jesus must have been exhausted mentally, physically, even spiritually.

But what did Jesus do? Look at verse 42a. At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place. Jesus left Simon’s house and went to a “solitary place” Why? Jesus often went to solitary places to pray. Especially after dealing with large crowds, Jesus spent time alone with God. Jesus really wanted to spend time with God because, after being around people and really standing up against demons, Jesus needed time with God. And also, it seems that Jesus wanted to affirm what God’s direction was for his ministry.

Then, while Jesus was praying to God, the people were looking for him, and they tried to keep him from leaving them. These people must have been so moved by Jesus’ love and compassion and amazed that Jesus had healed all their sick and demon-possessed. There may have been more sick people around them, so they wanted Jesus to heal.

But what did Jesus say? Look at verses 43-44. “But he said, “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent. And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea”

This is his mission statement. Jesus is saying here the reason why he came into the world, the reason why he was sent by God. Jesus knew what people wanted. Because people saw Jesus’ healing ministry, their expectation was for Jesus to continue to heal all kinds of sick people and drive out demons. People’s demand for Jesus’ healing was getting larger and larger.

After spending time with God in prayer, Jesus made it clear that his mission was to preach the good news of the kingdom of God. This is Jesus’ main task in his gospel ministry even though he healed the sick and drove out evil spirits in today’s passage. Jesus did all things to expand his kingdom on earth. Jesus’ work is not separate from his message of the good news of the kingdom of God. Jesus’ teaching and work of his healing and his compassion for those who are suffering under oppression demonstrates the coming of the kingdom of God.

Jesus was intent in his mission to preach the good news of the kingdom of God in as many places as possible. Do we share the good news of the kingdom today and demonstrate it in compassion for those who are weak and suffering? We can only do so if we have faith in Jesus and hope in the kingdom of God . Jesus knew why he was sent. Do we know why we are sent into the world?

Let’s seek God’s kingdom and invite people into his kingdom. May the Lord open our spiritual eyes and ear to believe the authority of Jesus’ word, and participate in the work of the kingdom today.