

Luke 4:31-43 – Jesus heals

I wonder what your experience of this world is. I wonder what you think as you read the newspaper or watch the news or scroll through your social media threads. My feelings are often ones of sorrow, sadness, mournful, distressed. Why? Because in the world there is so much hurt and heart ache. There is so much wrong with this world and it's not how it should be. Famine and war rage. Oppression and cruelty are so evident. Crime and death are far too prevalent. Jobs are lost, marriages are breaking far too easily, the consequences of sin are rampant and in your face 24/7. As I was writing this sermon on Thursday it was national suicide awareness day and just thinking of the mental health issues and someone wanting to take their own life makes me want to weep. Why? Because it's not how it should be. God created a perfect Genesis 2 world, but we are living in a fallen broken Genesis 3 world, where sin and evil are strife. And this isn't just limited to outside the church. There is brokenness inside the church as well and being a pastor, I see that too. Unfortunately, there are misconceptions that:

- 1) Being a Christian means life is always good and positive without the bad and challenges.
- 2) Having a sufficient amount of faith in God will result in removal of bad and/or challenges.

Neither of these is true. Christians suffer here are some examples from the Bible:

- Job was righteous but became sick and suffering
- Psalmist groaned and cried out in suffering (Psalm 5:1; 13:1 "How long, O Lord?"; 22:1; 23:4 "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."; etc...)
- Prophets were persecuted and suffered (Hebrews 11:35-40 "Some were tortured... others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, sawn in two, killed with the sword...")
- Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, oppressed and afflicted (Isaiah 53:5-8)
- Jesus was poor without a place to lay his head (Luke 9:58)
- Jesus chose suffering, "No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (John 10:18).
- Paul suffered significantly "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed but not driven to despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So, death is at work in us but life in you. (2 Corinthians 4:8-12).
- Peter said, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed" (1 Peter 5:12-13).

And all of this hurt and pain and suffering in the world often leaves me feeling hopeless and helpless. But there is one who can make a difference. We will see this morning that there is

a creator God who took on human flesh to make himself known in the person of Jesus, who came to bring hope and healing. Into situations of hopelessness he brings hope.

So where are we in Luke's gospel. Last week we looked at how Satan tempted Jesus and how all of those temptations were aimed at Jesus because he is the son of God, the temptations confirm who Jesus is. Then he has been teaching in the synagogues of Nazareth his hometown but the people he grew up around reject him and try to kill him so he travels back to Galilee and here we meet him again teaching in the synagogue.

As we look at who Jesus is this morning, I want to draw out two aspects of Jesus character shown in this passage which are Jesus'

- 1) Power and authority
- 2) Compassion and intimacy

Then we will finish by briefly looking at four lessons for us today. So now that you know where we are going let's get into the character of Jesus.

The power and authority of Jesus

- We see for the second time in this chapter Jesus teaching being describes as having power and authority.
 - The people would have been used to hearing teaching in the synagogues from the Rabbi but there was something different about the teaching of Jesus.
 - We see back in v20 the Luke describes the congregation as having their eyes fixed on Jesus.
 - Have you ever come across someone who when they are speaking the whole room goes quiet and you could sit and listen to them for hours?
 - That is just what Jesus would have been like.
- Why does Jesus teaching carry extra power?
 - Because he did not quote or reference other authorities but spoke with his own inherent power
 - When the Rabbi's were speaking, they would have quoted other more notorious Rabbi's to give clout to what they were saying. They would not really have anything to say for themselves but would just quote others. but Jesus would not have been doing that.
 - He simply read the scripture and explained it's meaning.
- But it is not just his teaching that has power and authority, but Jesus has power and authority over demons. And this isn't a one of as this isn't the only place, we see this.
 - Demons are spiritual beings who we as humans have no power over, but Jesus has power over them.
 - Notice the demon knows exactly who Jesus is.
 - Power to command them what to do. Both to come out of the person and to be silent.
- Jesus has power over sickness.
 - It's not just demon possession (spiritual sickness) Jesus can cure but physical sickness also.

- Simons mother-in-law has an awful fever and would have been on deaths door.
- Have you ever had a really bad fever?
 - In the current pandemic there are 1000's who know what a bad fever is like
 - You know that when you have a bad fever once the fever is gone you are left weak and tired for days as you slowly regain your strength.
 - But look here, Jesus not only has the power and authority to rebuke the illness and get rid of it but he has the power to restore her strength so that she was well enough to be able to get up and cook food.
- Jesus then we are told goes on to heal many more that evening.
- This display of power caused people to marvel.
 - Something they could do nothing about Jesus deals with without breaking a sweat.
 - They would have been asking who is this man that he can do these things?
 - A good question to ask today!
- People are still sick today – Jesus said he came for the sick not the healthy.
 - We all have a problem – sin
 - We are all spiritually sick with no hope of curing ourselves.
 - Jesus can heal us.
 - He can free us from being slaves to sin.

The compassion and intimacy of Jesus

- Jesus isn't just all business, but he is also incredibly personal.
 - After teaching in the synagogue he goes to Simon's mother-in-law's house for what seems to be a personal visit and to eat.
 - But Simons mother-in-law is sick, and Jesus is willing to help.
 - The disciples trusted that Jesus could help, and he does.
- Jesus compassion is evident.
 - It's the end of a long day. Normally after sun set the day was over and everyone stayed in their own homes
 - There were no streetlights in those days.
 - The working day was done but all these people come to Jesus
 - He could have sent them away and told them to come back in the morning but no he compassion on them and heals many of them
 - Jesus always has time for you.
- Jesus displays his intimacy in the same act.
 - When this big crowd turned up, He could have just healed them all in one go, en masse.
 - I like to figure out ways of saving time and doing things as simply as I can but not Jesus.
 - No, Jesus chooses to lay hands on each individual that he heals.
 - Jesus doesn't just want to heal people, but he wants to personally know them and meet them and for them to personally know his touch.

- He is not just powerful to heal but he wants relationship with those he heals
 - Jesus is very personal and caring.
 - And that is no different today. Jesus wants to have a close relationship with you.

We have seen what kind of man Jesus is. A man with great power and authority but who is compassionate and intimate. What an awesome combination that gives us great confidence in approaching Jesus. We can approach Him with confidence because he has the power to make a difference in our lives but he does it gently and with great care because he loves us and is compassionate upon us.

But there are also some lessons for us in this passage.

Lessons for us

1) Come to Jesus

- a. Jesus is still has the same power and authority as he had then.
 - i. He can still heal and restore and that's what he wants to do.
 - ii. In this broken world people need to meet and encounter Jesus and come to know him
 - 1. If you don't know Jesus then come to him today
 - 2. If you know Jesus then when you are facing trials and difficulties come first to Jesus.

2) Pray

- a. the disciples realised they could do nothing to help Simons mother-in-law so they asked Jesus for help.
 - i. We do that through prayer
 - ii. When life and the circumstances around us seem to much do we turn to the one with the power and authority in the first place or is it an afterthought.

3) Make time and space for God

- a. Jesus having taught in the synagogue, driven out demons, healed many people the very next morning gets up early to go and spend time alone with the Father.
- b. Don't ever be too busy for God.
 - i. Priorities time with God above everything else.

4) Seek God's will.

- a. Jesus was liked in Galilee but he didn't stay.
 - i. There were crowds of people looking for him and wanting to learn from him
 - ii. But he knows that God has work for him to do in other places so he leaves to teach others the amazing news.
 - 1. Don't get wrapped up in good things and miss out on the best thing.