

Theme: **By Whose Authority**

Text: Luke 4: 31 – 44

Occasion: 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Date: February 3, 2019

Place: Shepherd of the Rockies LCMS, Bailey, CO

Grace and peace to you as you let the authority of God be in your life, from God, our Father, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

By whose authority do you live the life that you live today? Is it your authority? If it is by your authority, then what is your definition of authority? The dictionary says that 'Authority' is the power to determine, adjudicate, or otherwise settle issues or disputes; the right to control, command, or determine the existence, the power to make decisions and to make sure that laws are obeyed, the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obediences.

During this Epiphany season, we have been learning about the life of Jesus through the Evangelist Luke. Through the first four weeks of Epiphany we have learned about Jesus' Baptism and the start of Jesus' ministry; we learned about the temptations of Jesus by the devil and how Jesus showed His authority over the temptations of the devil by using God's Word and last week we learned about Jesus going back to His home town of Nazareth to proclaim the fulfillment of the kingdom of God as promised in the Old Testament and their response was to reject Him; this week the Evangelist Luke tells us: **'And Jesus 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.'** (Lk 4:31-32)

Have you ever been to a lecture or a conference and heard someone talk on a subject that you were interested in and his words just blew you away with their knowledge and the ability to explain what he were talking about in a way that enabled you to understand more and still know that there was more to learn beyond what you could understand. This is the authority that the people in Capernaum were astonished about and more. As they listened to Jesus' Words, they knew that they were not from some other source but from the one who truly had authority, power and the right to determine the existence of everything in their life. These words were right from of God's mouth, not the man-made interpretation of what God had already told them.

Who has authority to tell you what to do in your life? Is it not the creator and sustainer of your life? This has been a source of conflict in the world ever since sin came into this world

and our sinful nature challenged who has authority over us. In my lifetime, that challenge has been seen in the marches and revolts of the 60's and 70's and it has been seen in most families as your children grow from childhood and into adulthood challenging those who are in authority over them. The challenge of the authority often comes before knowing or understanding the extent of that authority and the demands of having that authority.

The Evangelist Luke goes on to tell us, **'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? We 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.'** (Lk. 4:33 – 37)

Are Demons real and can they take over a person's life? The answer is yes and yes in my time as a pastor I have come in contact with people who have been taken over by a demon and had to deal with them. Could a demon-possessed person come into our church service and create the turmoil that he did in the synagogue of Jesus time? The answer is yes again, but the chances of that happening are quite unlikely because God's Word is proclaimed daily in this Church and the devil and all the demons of the world do not like the Word of God because it has authority over them and will cast them out. Oh, the devil and all his demons know where the truth of God's Word is being taught in all its purity and they will try hard to keep each of us from God's Word so that they can control our hearts, souls and minds instead of God's Word, which brings us to the truth of God's love, grace and mercy for us. If you want to keep the devil and all his demons out of your life, then keep God's word a part of your life each and every day. That's the whole reason for daily devotions in God's Word and my encouragements to each of you to be in God's Word daily.

I want you to notice that Jesus didn't ask the demon to please leave, He ordered him out of the man for He had the authority of God's Word because He was God's Word incarnated. I also want you to notice that it wasn't a one on one challenge either, for the demon says, **"Have you come to destroy us? We know who you are the holy One of God."** (Lk. 4:34) Jesus and God's Word is the authority that doesn't just extend over one or two of the demons of the world, but has authority and power over-all the Devil and his armies as they battle against

God's will being done in our lives. So, let God's Word be the force of authority in your life so that you don't become a slave to the devil, but instead a member of God's almighty army using the shields and weapons God has given to you.

The Evangelist Luke tell us about other authority that Jesus has in this world as he goes on to tell us, **'And Jesus 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.'** (Lk. 4:38 – 39)

The expression of 'a high fever' tells us that whatever Simon's mother-in-law had it was deadly and still Jesus commands the fever to leave and her health was completely healed to the point that she could get up from her bed and go back to her normal routine. That's authority! Who has that authority in your life? Well it's not found in yourself or your home remedies or in your doctor's medical knowledge, it only come from your creator and sustainer of your life, God. Oh, the miracle of healing can still be found in today's world as God uses the skills learned by doctors and other medical professionals to help us and yes even at time through the prayers of God's people to perform miracles in this world.

The Evangelist Luke tells us more about God's authority shown to us through Jesus' life as he tells us, **'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.'** (Lk. 4:40 – 41)

Notice that Jesus showed His authority over the illness of this world more than with His Words, but also with His loving touch. We are the loving touch of Jesus' Words in this world as we reach out to those who have become ill in many different ways and we share the loving hands that has touched our lives with them. Yes, even the people who have let the demons of the world take control of their lives can come to know the loving hands of Jesus touching them as we let God's Word be the authority of our live and confront them with the Words of God guiding us in this world.

Jesus by His actions and Words shows His authority in this world and in our lives but there is more to the authority of God in our lives than His Words and actions. God's authority is also seen in the mission and the message about God's love for each of us. The evangelist Luke tells us, **'And when it was day, Jesus 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.’** (Lk. 4:42-44)

I want you to notice that Jesus’ authority through His Word and actions was in Nazareth, His hometown, but the people there rejected him. Jesus authority through His Word and actions was notice in Capernaum and it was the acceptance that leads to miracles being performed on believer and non-believers. It is the Word of God that had come down to them and it is the Word of God that has been given to us through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives that make us believers in all that God has done for us to break us away from the authority of the devil and his destructive ways in our lives. It is the Word of God in the flesh, Jesus Christ, who has taken all our sins upon Himself and paid the price for our redemption by His life, death and resurrection. The Word of God in the flesh has done this for all of us so that we can take the Word of God in our flesh and share it with the world around us. Yes, Jesus says to us, **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”** (Mt. 28:18-20)

Today through the Word of God in the flesh, Jesus Christ, each of us have been given the authority to proclaim the kingdom of God in this world, by taking God’s Word with authority to other so that they can be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, so that they will be saved from the demons of this world and the illnesses of this world to share in the God given blessings of the Heavenly Home that He has prepared for us by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yes, God is with you and me each and every step of the way as you reach out and share God’s Word and His loving hand to cast out the demons and the illnesses of this world for the perfect love, peace and joy of God’s life in us forever. Amen.