

Luke: The Doctor Will See You Now

"Sovereign Over All: Demons, Disease, and Time"

Luke 4:38-44

Powerlessness

Have you ever had that moment where you felt utterly powerless? Maybe it was sitting by the hospital bed of someone you love, and the doctors had no answers. Or maybe it was watching the news and feeling like evil just keeps winning in this world. We live in a culture that loves to talk about power — political power, technological power, even “personal empowerment” — but when life hits hard, all that power feels paper-thin.

Here’s the difference with Jesus: *When Jesus speaks, everything listens.* In Luke 4, we meet someone who doesn’t just *talk* about power — He wields it. Jesus walks into rooms where evil is winning and disease is destroying, and with a word, He changes reality. He rebukes a demon — and it obeys. He rebukes a fever — and it vanishes. No pills. No treatment plan. No negotiation. Just sovereign authority. The same Jesus who stood in Simon’s house is the same Jesus who stands over all of creation today. And Luke wants us to see: His word is enough — for demons, for disease, and for us.

I invite you to Luke 4:38-44 as we continue our sermon series through the book of Luke and focus on the Great Physician and his power. Luke will show us how Jesus exercises absolute authority over all creation—spiritual forces, physical illness, and the course of redemptive history—so we can trust Him fully, live for Him boldly, and wait for Him faithfully. (Read text)

Absolute Authority

Luke wants us to see that this absolute authority and power of Jesus’s word extends not only to the world of demons, but also to the world of nature. So, we follow him to Simon’s house in verses 38–39:

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

My dad did not talk much about his time in the military when he was deployed to Vietnam. He did tell us stories about his time in basic training. He would talk about his drill sergeant keeping them in line and how he never really warmed up to the instructor. My dad was never really one to fall into line with those in authority. However, he did mention that despite his personal feelings, he respected the man and his rank. He did learn to respect that authority, that power, when he served his three years.

When the sergeant shouts “Attention!” an entire platoon snaps into formation — instantly. Not because they *like* the command, but because they know the authority behind it. The fever in Luke 4 had no ears, no brain, and no will — but it *still* obeyed Jesus, because His word carries even more authority than the voice of the highest-ranking general.

When Jesus speaks, creation itself knows its Commander’s voice. Whether it’s a demon in the synagogue or a fever in a living room — His word is final.

Surely it’s not a coincidence that Luke uses the same word for how Jesus spoke to the fever that he did for how Jesus spoke to the demon. Verse 35: “Jesus *rebuked* him [the demon].” Verse 39: “He stood over her and *rebuked* the fever.” This is an even more graphic picture of how mysterious this power is. You might argue that a demon obeys the sovereign word of Jesus because he is a rational creature, making up his mind to do so and then obeying. But here, *Jesus is talking to a fever* — rebuking a fever.

What is a rebuke? It’s telling someone they’ve done something wrong, said something wrong, and gone where they’re not supposed to go. So, Jesus says in effect, “Fever, you should not be doing that. You don’t belong here.”

Now the fever doesn’t understand anything Jesus is saying. It has no ears. No brain. No comprehension. It has no will. And it leaves her. It obeys just like later, when the wind and the water obey him (Luke 8:25).

Do we have any scientific categories at all to explain that kind of power? No. This is the scientifically inexplicable sovereignty of the Son of God over all things. All demons. All nature. That’s what Luke wants us to see — the sovereignty of Jesus over demons and nature.

Every Demon, Every Disease

But suppose someone says, foolish as it may sound, “Well, that was a one-off. One demon. One fever. You can’t generalize this power to other situations.” Luke now shows that the power both over demons and over disease is not a one-off. Verses 40–41: (re-read)

Several months ago, I had to take my daughter to the Urgent care. She was coughing and it wouldn’t go away. So, we took her in. While we were sitting there in the loaded waiting room, she leaned over to me and said, “My crush is here.” I went into “Embarrassing dad mode,” straining and stretching to see exactly which boy would be strolling through. Just then, Mike – Michael – Rush walked in. Young Michael also had a cough as well. Not long after that another sweet family from the church came in as well for the same thing. The urgent care was full. Filling out forms. Waiting to see someone. Hoping to get some clarity and help.

Imagine an emergency room waiting area where every seat is full — people coughing, crying, in pain, worried sick. Now imagine the waiting room is the *whole town*. That’s what was happening in Capernaum that night. Every street became an aisle to Jesus, every doorstep a triage station. And He doesn’t rush. He lays His hands on *every one* of them. No one leaves disappointed.

When Jesus speaks and acts, there are no shortages, no supply chain delays, no out-of-stock notices. His mercy never runs out, and His authority never falters.

Various diseases. Many demons. When Jesus speaks or touches, they go. His authority and power are absolute. No demon and no disease can stand when Jesus exerts his sovereign will, which he can do whenever he pleases. Then and now.

Why Christ Came Once

And now we have arrived at the end of verse 41, where we started, and we can turn to the twenty-first century.

The second half of verse 41 says that when the demons declared Jesus to be the Son of God, “he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, *because they knew that he was the Christ.*”

Why didn’t Jesus want the news to spread that he was the Messiah? Jesus gives part of the answer in Luke 9:20–22, when he told his disciples not to spread this news. He says it’s because “the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”

The common conception of the arrival of the Messiah did not include his crucifixion. It included his supernatural military triumph over all Israel’s enemies and the establishment of his earthly kingdom. That’s what they expected from the Messiah, and that was not going to happen for another two thousand years or more.

In Luke 4:41, when Jesus blocked the spread of that misunderstanding of the kingdom and of his Messiahship, he signaled a view of the world — a worldview — that accounts for the twenty-first century, for our place in history, and points to how demons and fevers and death and sin and the sovereignty of Christ relate to us.

The mystery of the kingdom (Luke 8:10) was that the Messiah, in his first coming, would heal the sick and cast out demons and raise the dead and forgive sins, and in this way he would give many signs of what his final, perfect, sinless, painless, deathless kingdom would be like, after his second coming. The *mystery* was that there would be an unspecified period of time between the *inauguration* of the kingdom in Christ’s first coming and the *consummation* of the kingdom at his second coming. That’s where we live.

God’s number-one purpose in the first coming of the Messiah was that he die in the place of sinners and so purchase forgiveness. “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

Until He Comes Again

So, here's our situation between the two comings of Christ. By trusting Jesus Christ, his sacrifice for sin becomes mine. It counts for me, for you. All our sins are forgiven once for all (Colossians 2:13). There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus through faith (Romans 8:1). God's just condemnation and Satan's legitimate accusation are gone.

The one damning weapon with which Satan and his demons could ruin you is stripped from their hands — namely, the record of your unforgiven sin. That record was nailed to the cross. “This he set aside, nailing it to the cross” (Colossians 2:14).

“God is totally, one hundred percent for you and not against you, if you are in Christ Jesus.”

Which means this for our lives: We live in the period of time between the Messiah's two comings. In this period, Jesus — the risen, reigning Son of God, who upholds the universe by the word of his power (Hebrews 1:3) — is absolutely sovereign over demons and disease. But he does not remove them in this period of time. That's the next phase of redemptive history, after the second coming.

But what he does remove, absolutely and completely, is your guilt and condemnation. Which means that in this period — in your life today — God is totally, one hundred percent for you and not against you if you are in Christ Jesus. And if God is for you, who can be against you (Romans 8:31)?

And if you say, “Demons can be against me; disease can be against me,” no, actually, they can't be. Because in Christ Jesus, whatever disease and whatever demon assaults you, Jesus turns it for your good (Romans 8:28). This is the good news of the kingdom: Jesus is sovereign, and he is for you. Trust him. Be valiant for him until he comes or until he calls.

When Jesus Speaks

We live between two comings of Christ — the time when the kingdom was inaugurated in His first coming, and the time when it will be consummated at His return. In this “in-between,” demons still roam, and disease still strikes.

But there is one thing Jesus *has* removed, completely and forever, for those who trust Him — the record of your sin and the condemnation that goes with it. That weapon has been nailed to the cross, never to be used against you again.

So yes, demons may try to intimidate you. Disease may try to weaken you. But they cannot destroy you because Jesus has already claimed you. The One who commands fevers and they flee, who rebukes demons and they run, is the same One who says to you, “You are Mine.”

When Jesus speaks, everything listens. Demons listen. Disease listens. Creation listens. The question is — will you? Not just admire His authority, not just acknowledge it, but bow to it. Because the Jesus who is sovereign over all creation is also the Judge before whom every knee will bow. Today He offers Himself as your Savior, your Advocate, your eternal refuge. Tomorrow — or one day soon — He will return as King. Trust Him now. Follow Him now. And live with unshakable confidence: if God is for you, who can be against you?

When Jesus speaks, everything listens — so let’s be the first to say, ‘Yes, Lord.