

## **Kingdom Authority**

Luke 4:31-44

(Discussion guide on pg 11)

Often when Christians speak of the good news of Jesus, we focus on what Jesus saves us from. What does He save us from? He saves us from the penalty and the power of sin. Before we were saved by grace through faith in Christ, we were under the judgment of God and under the dominion of sin, that is until Christ set us free.

But although being saved from the penalty and power of sin is good news, it's not the entire news—it's not the whole story or the best part of the good news. The highest gift of the gospel is that Jesus came to restore what Adam lost and bring us back into a right relationship with God. According to Col. 1:13-14, when we are saved, God not only rescues us from the domain of darkness, but He transfers us into the kingdom of His beloved son.

This transfer from one kingdom to another means that we are no longer under the rule of Satan, who is the god of this world, but are now presently under the rule of Christ who lives in us. What's more, there is also the visible and physical kingdom to come that believers will inherit and where we will reign with Christ forever in the new heavens and the new earth.

But until then, we are representatives of God's kingdom on earth. Consequently, we have "kingdom authority" under Christ to live as representatives of His kingdom on earth. And our marching orders according to Acts 26:18 are to turn lost sinners, through the gospel, from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus.

In God's upside-down kingdom, the authority we have as kingdom representative is not about serving our own interests but the interests of others for their eternal good and to the glory of Christ. For this reason, the Apostle Paul, when exhorting believers to give up certain dietary liberties for the good of others, wrote: *"For the kingdom of God*

*is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Romans 14:17*

In other words, Paul is saying that according to the ways of the kingdom of God which believers represent in the righteousness, peace, and joy of the Spirit, we gladly give up our liberties to serve others for Christ. We can make these kind of sacrifices and also accomplish all that God calls us to do, because of the kingdom authority we have through the Spirit as kingdom people.

Understanding the authority we have in Christ and how it's released in and through our lives is essential to living up to our fullest potential in Christ.

Are you living a victorious Christian life in the authority that all believers have in Christ? God the Son lived as a man under authority so that sons of Adam could regain the dominion he lost and with that authority bring others out of the rule darkness and into the kingdom of Christ.

**Main idea:** Kingdom authority is released in and through those under the King's rule so that they could fulfill His Kingdom agenda.

This morning we are going to examine how Jesus exercised His Kingdom Authority and how we can exercise the authority we have through Him to live as victorious representatives of Christ's Kingdom on earth.

## **1. Jesus administered His authority through the Holy scriptures**

Concerning the operation of Kingdom Authority, notice first that Jesus administered His authority through the Holy scriptures. We saw an example of this in our last sermon from Luke 4:16-30. In this passage, Luke records that Jesus went into the Synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth at the start of His public ministry.

While He was in the synagogue, He was handed the scroll of Isaiah. After selecting a passage of scripture that prophesied how He would be anointed by the Spirit to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom to the poor, captive, and oppressed, He handed the scroll back to the attendant and sat down. From this first century teaching posture, He expounded upon the text that He had just read by saying, *“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”* Luke 4:21

And although many marveled at the words that came from His mouth, they questioned who He was claiming to be. To them He was the son of Joseph. So to expose their self-righteous and prideful hearts, Jesus goes back to the O.T. scriptures to show that their resistance to the word was not new. Because of the pride of their ancestors, God’s blessings went to Gentiles who took God at His word.

To this rebuke, His hometown people attempted to throw Jesus down a cliff. These actions perpetrated by those who at first marveled at His preaching, demonstrated that although they appeared to be fans of Jesus they were not truly followers of Jesus.

True followers of Jesus continue in His word. They’re not just hearers of the word, but doers of the word. They don’t just obey the word when it’s convenient, they obey even if it costs them.

Now after miraculously escaping the hometown fans who turned on Him when the word of God hit a nerve, Luke continues in verse 31:

*“And he 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.”* Luke 4:31-32

What was it about the way that Jesus taught the word of God which caused the hearers to be astonished—to be amazed? Luke explains that it was because His word possessed authority. When speaking of the authority by which Jesus taught the word of God, the gospel of Mark adds in a parallel account, *“for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.”* Mark 1:22

The scribes in Jesus day also read the Old Testament scriptures in the synagogue and attempted to apply meaning to it. However, they didn't possess the authority that Jesus had when He read the word and expounded upon the meaning of the text. And the difference was that Jesus actually gave the meaning of the text and its proper application; whereas the scribes quoted from the traditions of famous Rabbi's which either added to the scriptures or subtracted from it.

Beloved, Jesus in His humanity had authority when He preached the word because the point of His sermon was the point of the text. This is what He was anointed by the Holy Spirit to do. And this is what the Spirit anoints faithful preachers to do today, namely to say what the scripture says and based on that give its application to life.

The preaching that the Holy Spirit gets behind and gives authority to is preaching that is true to the scripture. What's more, an anointed preacher is one who is persuaded that the word of God will do the work of God.

“Jesus ministered the Word! If the church is to have any authority today,” says Kent Hughes, “it must teach on the authority of God’s holy Word. Paul’s charge to Timothy comes to us all: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). A few paragraphs later Paul told Timothy what he was to do as a result of his hard study: “Preach the word” (2 Timothy 4:2). In our day when postmodern culture is not interested in reasoned doctrine but only on feelings, the church must stand on God’s Word. Otherwise it has no authority.”

## **2. Jesus authenticated His authority by exorcising evil spirits and healing the sick.**

Secondly, Jesus authenticated His authority by exorcising evil spirits and healing the sick. While preaching the word in the Synagogue, it appears that Jesus aroused the attention of demons. Luke continues:

*“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? I 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.” Luke 4:34-35*

Today, too many people see the battle against good and evil, God and the devil as a struggle between equally powerful forces. When Adam fell in the garden, he did surrender the dominion he was given over the earth to Satan who is now the god of this world. But we must not lose sight of the fact that although Satan does have power in this world, although he is referred to in scripture as the prince of the power of the air, God is sovereign over all visible and invisible rulers and principalities. Demons tremble before the authority of Jesus.

Now there appeared to be an increase in demonic activity during the earthly ministry of Jesus. This is because demons are opposed to the kingdom of God and Jesus was God in the flesh, who came to destroy the works of the devil. Moreover, God, who is sovereign over the devil, allowed this demonic activity in order to authenticate the authority of Jesus over all opposing forces of darkness.

The gospel of Matthew records in chapter 12 that when the religious crowd accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of the devil, He responded: *“And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself” (Matthew 12:25)*. And then in verse 28 He explains, *“But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.” Matthew 12:28*

Again, Jesus’ Kingship and authority was authenticated by demonstrating His power over demonic spirits which were actively opposing Him. Because of Jesus’ authority, what the demons meant to be a disruption to the teaching of Jesus, became an occasion for Jesus to display His mastery over them.

Beloved, demons have no problem with motivational sermons that only stir the emotions but are devoid of biblical truth. Satan delights in preachers who are more interested in pleasing man than pleasing God. On the other hand, preaching that stands on the authority of scripture and is centered on the person and work of Christ sets the captives free and causes demons to shudder.

Note also that when the demon questioned Jesus concerning whether He was going to destroy them before the time and acknowledged that He was the Holy One of God, this was not meant to show their reverence for Jesus. Rather they were taking evasive actions. But although these demons were bringing disruption to Jesus' teaching, and trying to be evasive, the Lord, with a divinely authoritative command, shut them up and cast them out of the man.

And regarding this display of the authority of Jesus, the people were again amazed. Luke writes:

*“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.”* Luke 4:34-37

Remember, this was not the first time that the religious people in the synagogue were amazed by Jesus. They were amazed by his authoritative teaching and now they're amazed by His authority over demons. But Luke also recorded earlier that in His hometown the same people who were amazed by Jesus' teaching, quickly turned on Him and were ready to throw Him over a cliff.

They turned on Him because although many were amazed by His power they were not ready to surrender to His Lordship. Sadly, this is true of many today. People want Jesus as they're Savior, but not as their Lord. They want to benefit from the power of Jesus, but they don't want to trust the person of Jesus who is both Savior and Lord.

But remember, the Salvation of Jesus is not only about bringing us out from under the rule of Satan, and Sin, but about bringing us under the rule of His kingship where true freedom is found. Jesus came to set the

captives free through His righteous life and substitutionary death on the cross for our sin.

But many will not receive this salvation because trusting Christ as their Savior and Lord appears to them as a restriction to their lives. Nothing could be further from the truth. When we come under the Lordship of Christ we receive the kingdom authority that brings true freedom to our lives.

“The rebel is free to do what he wants within limits, but he is never free to do what he ought to do without kingdom authority operating in him.” Adrian Rogers

Do you know, it’s possible that the man who Jesus cast the demon out of never bowed to the authority of Jesus personally and came to saving faith in Christ? If this was the case, even though his body was no longer possessed by demons, he was still out from under the authority of Jesus which meant that He had no power to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. He was still a captive.

“The paradoxical truth is that the freedom and authority we have in Jesus is because we are under authority.” Adrian Rogers

Notice also that Jesus’s kingdom authority was not only authenticated by His power over evil spirits but also by His authority over sickness. After casting out the demons from the man in the synagogue, Luke continues in verses 38-41:

*“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. 39 And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them. 40 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.” Luke 4:38-41*

We see here that after Jesus healed Simon Peter’s mother of a high fever, it appears that the word got out, and many more sick people were brought to Jesus and He laid His hands on each one and healed them. Now the fact that Jesus laid His hands on each person shows the compassion of Jesus. He didn’t need to lay His hands on anyone to heal them. He could have just spoke the word, like He did with Simon’s mother, and healed them all.

But again, the fact that He laid His hands on each one demonstrated His personal care and compassion for each person. We must not forget in our pain and in our suffering that Jesus, who suffered in all the ways that we suffer, sympathizes and deeply cares.

But far more than our physical suffering, Jesus cares about the state of our eternal souls. Jesus said, *“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?”* Matthew 16:26a

Again, although Jesus deeply cared about the physical suffering of people, as we should, His primary earthly mission wasn’t to physically heal people. Proclaiming the good news was His primary mission.

Moreover, He healed people, He performed signs and wonders to authenticate His authority and the preaching of the good news so that all who believed would be eternally saved. When preaching to the large crowd gathered on the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter said this about the purpose of Jesus’ miracles: *“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.”* Acts 2:22

Again, the authority of Jesus was authenticated by miracles, but miracles were not His primary mission. Preaching the good news and accomplishing the work of redemption on the cross to save men’s soul by transferring them from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of Christ was His main mission.



Now if you're saved, and have come under the Lordship of Christ, you have kingdom authority to come before the throne of grace and seek God to do miraculous works in your life and in the lives of others. God is still in the miracle working business.

But unlike what the false property gospel preachers do for their own gain, we must not teach or promise anyone that physical healing is guaranteed this side of heaven. This is not taught in the scriptures.

Moreover, the greatest miracle that we need to be praying for with the kingdom authority that we have under the Lordship of Christ is the miracle of a life transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. We need to pray not only to love like Jesus loved, which is the greatest evidence of the power of Christ in our lives, but also for power to preach the gospel so that others would come under the freedom giving and life transforming rule of Jesus.

### **3. Jesus aligned with His Father's authority in solitude.**

Now, in His humanity, Jesus operated with kingdom Authority because lastly, Jesus aligned with His Father's Authority in solitude. After a night of healing many who were sick and casting out demons, Luke records:

*"And when it was day, he 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." Luke 4:42-43*

It's important to emphasize that because of His divine nature as the Son of God, Jesus had unlimited power and authority in Himself. But in His humanity, as the Son of man, Jesus submitted to His Father's authority who determined the limits of His divine authority on earth.

Therefore, Jesus regularly withdrew to solitary places where He prayed and communed with His Father. Although there were so many desperate people vying for His attention, Jesus valued above all time

alone with God the Father. And in that quiet place where He listened to the voice of His Father, He submitted to His authority.

Let me remind you again of this vital kingdom principle: “You’ll never be over what God has placed under you until you are under what God has placed over you.”

“The great work that Jesus did in His ministry did not draw on the resource of His divine nature, but on His constant communion with God the Father and His empowering by God the Holy Spirit. The time in a desolate place was essential for that.” Guzik

And if spending time with the Father in solitude was essential for Jesus, how much more essential is it for us.

“When we teach our teenagers to drive” said Adrian Rogers, “where do we begin? The steering wheel? No, always with the brakes! If you can’t get your teen interested in the brake, then you aren’t interested in showing him the accelerator. In the same way, you will never know the release of the Spirit until you yield to the restraint of the Spirit. We must first master our spiritual brakes. We must learn that strength comes through surrender.”

Notice also that the time that Jesus spent alone with His Father also kept Him focused on His main mission. Luke records that while He was spending time alone with His Father in solitude many came to Him and would have kept Him from leaving, *“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.”* Luke 4:43-44

Jesus didn’t lose sight of His main mission, namely to preach the good news of the kingdom of God. And because He was under the authority of His Father He received all the strength He needed in His humanity to fulfill His Father’s plan which was to set the captives free.

How do we come to know with conviction the will of the Father? We must spend time alone with God in prayer with an open Bible so that we can hear His voice. We must spend time in His presence so that

we can be transformed by His glory. We must pray not to bend God's will to ours but to bend our will to His.

“When you are willing to be to Jesus what Jesus was in His humanity to the Father, then Jesus will be to your humanity what the Father was to Him.” AR.

## **Conclusion**

The good news of the kingdom that Jesus preached and that He gave His life for so that it can be realized in our lives, is that all who trust Him as Savior and Lord are set free from the domain of darkness so that we can know the freedom of Kingdom authority.

Strength comes from surrender. Don't be deceived into thinking that surrendering to Christ means captivity. Surrendering to Him gives us freedom which is the power of kingdom authority to do what we ought to do.

There is actually no person who is as free as the one who is under the rule of King Jesus. To attempt to save our own lives is to lose it. But to give our lives fully to Him is to save it. A wise man said, “The slave to the compass has the freedom of the seas. The rest must sail close to the shore.” Surrender all to Jesus and be victoriously free.

## **Discussion Questions**

Read Colossians 1:13-14; Romans 14:17; Acts 26:18.

- What is the highest gift of the gospel?
- Why is understanding what the highest gift of our salvation vital to living a victorious Christian life?

Read Luke 4:31-22.

- How did Jesus administer His authority through the scriptures?
- Why did Jesus' teaching possess authority; whereas the scribes, who also taught the scriptures, did not have that same authority?  
Mark 1:22; 7:13
- What kind of preaching does the Holy Spirit bless?

- In view of the fact that many in the synagogue marveled at the teachings of Jesus but later attempted to throw Him down a cliff, how would you differentiate between a fan of Jesus and a true follower of Jesus?

Read Luke 4:33-41.

- Besides showing His compassion for people, what else did Jesus' power over unclean demons and sickness demonstrate about Him? (See also Matthew 12:28; Acts 2:22)
- What brought demons into the synagogue and why did they cry out with a loud voice?
- Although Jesus possessed great power that amazed the people, what prevented some of them from becoming followers of Jesus?
- What is a key principle for experiencing kingdom authority in our own lives to overcome the opposition of the devil/demons?

Read Luke 4:42-44.

- What is the connection between the authority Jesus demonstrated and His time alone with the Father in solitude?
- What was the primary purpose for what Jesus was sent to the world and what helped Him stay focused?
- How do we come to know with conviction the will of the Father and receive power to carry it out?
- Have you surrendered all to Jesus? What is your greatest motivation for doing so?