



Central Peninsula Church

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Luke 4:31-44

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A Day in the Life of..

SERIES: *A Savior for All People*

“And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbath; and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority. In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!’ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be quiet and come out of him!’ And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of the people, he came out of him without doing him any harm. And amazement came upon them all, and they began talking with one another saying, ‘What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out.’ And the report about Him was spreading into every locality in the surrounding district. Then He got up and left the synagogue, and entered Simon’s home. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him to help her. And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and waited on them. While the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on each one of them, He was healing them. Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, ‘You are the Son of God!’ But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ. When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from them. But He said to them, ‘I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.’ So He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea” (Luke 4:31-44).

It’s been popular in literature to trace the events of one day in the life of a person. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn has the most well-known book in the genre, called *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. Perhaps you’ve read some of Jim Bishop’s books, like *The Day Christ Died* or *The Day Lincoln Was Shot*. More recently a popular children’s book, *A Day in the Life of Murphy*, traces one day in the life of a little terrier named Murphy.

There is a lot you can learn about a person by just watching what they do and what they say in one ordinary day. There is something similar in the gospel of Luke. In this section of Luke he traces for us *A Day in the Life of Jesus*—a full 24 hours. On this day, Jesus was in the city of Capernaum, about 20 miles from Nazareth right on the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum was a busy and crowded city; it was the center of activity for the region of Galilee which included about

240 towns and villages. Jesus would make this his base of operations during his Galilean ministry. This particular day was not just any day; it was a Sabbath day. On this day we see Jesus in several different places.

I. A day in the life of Jesus.

First, in the morning we find him in the synagogue. In essence, that’s where Jews went to church. That’s where they went to pray and to hear the word of God. In the synagogue we see Jesus teaching, just as he did in Nazareth. In Nazareth his teaching provoked a violent reaction from his hometown audience. Here in Capernaum people are amazed by it. He DOES get a violent reaction, but not from people; rather from a demon. That’s not exactly what you expect to find when you go to church, but that’s what Jesus encountered that morning.

In the afternoon he went from the synagogue to a home. He moves from the scene of religion to the scene of family. He’s in the home of Simon. This is our first exposure to Simon, who would later be called Peter. We see here that he was married and that his mother-in-law was sick. Remember that Luke was a physician and he uses a medical term when he says she suffered from a “high fever.” It’s flu season and many of us know what it is to suffer with a fever, but it’s likely that this was a fever so high that it threatened her life. So Jesus went from being confronted with a demon to being confronted with a disease. But Jesus wasn’t ready to call it a day.

As the sun went down that day Jesus moves from the synagogue to the streets. He has a large crowd gathered around him. He’s now confronted with BOTH disease and demonic forces. It’s like the mass of humanity has rushed upon him with all its pain, sorrow and bondage. A few weeks ago when we were in Cambodia we stayed one night at a hotel on one of the main streets of Phnom Penh, called the New York Hotel. It had a rather ridiculous looking replica of the Statue of Liberty out in front. You might guess that it wasn’t a place a lot of Cambodians stayed. As we waited out front one morning for our ride, we were confronted with a scene that might have been similar to what Jesus faced. One by one the blind, the lame and the diseased approached us with outstretched hands. It’s a rather overwhelming experience to be bombarded with need. We gave them a little money, but mostly

felt rather helpless to make a difference.

No wonder that sometime after midnight Jesus left for a secluded place; most likely somewhere in the desert. Luke doesn't really say what he was doing out there. In Mark's gospel he says Jesus was praying. But the people of Capernaum were upset when they realized he was gone the next morning. They sent out a search party and found him. They tried to talk him into staying but he knew he was sent elsewhere. Finally, in the days subsequent to the one we just described, *we see Jesus in the surrounding area, preaching the good news of the kingdom.*

II. Jesus demonstrates his unique authority.

When you read a passage like this you have to ask the question: what's the point? Why is Luke giving this day in the life of Jesus? The gospel writers were not just writing travel logs with no sense of theme or direction, but these events were carefully chosen and arranged to serve a purpose. The theme that's most apparent as you read through the stories of the incidents in this day is *the authority of Jesus*. For some of us, the idea of authority is not one we're particularly drawn to. It conjures up images of insecure people throwing their weight around. We think of false authority; the abuse of authority; what is often just the authority of office or rank. But there is another kind of authority. Jesus had no rank, office or credentials to lean back on. He was just an ordinary carpenter from Nazareth. But in this passage he's seen as a man who is utterly in charge. He knows what is going on. He knows what to do. It's the kind of authority people respond to; the kind we all want. There are five marks of the authority of Jesus recorded in this one day.

First, we see it in his insight. Luke says "they were amazed at his teaching, for his message was with authority." They were amazed at the comprehension of Jesus, the vast scope of his knowledge, his insight into humanity and into life. He spoke with authority. He didn't teach like the scribes they were accustomed to hearing: "Now, Hillel says this, and Gamaliel adds this, while other authorities contend..." Jesus made no reference to any authority other than himself. Yet his words were so insightful, so true to the experience of the people there that they nodded their heads, and knew what he said was true. His words had that ring of truth. It was self-authenticating truth. It corresponded to an inner conviction in each person who heard him. They knew that he knew the secrets of life. Do you know that? Have you experienced the penetrating insight that Jesus has into life? Have felt the ring of truth in his words? When you open the Scriptures are you eager to hear what he says because you know his teaching has authority?

Second, we see it in his courage. This is one of those things we seldom think about in regards to Jesus, but he was fearless. Last week we saw how he faced off with the people of his own hometown. He preached a sermon that was so pointed and painful that they tried to throw him off a cliff! Now he faces off with demonic powers. He enters a dangerous battle zone that would make an ordinary man wet his pants. That demon in the synagogue was trying to intimidate him. That's why he calls him by name: "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth." Back then, to name someone was a way to control them. But

Jesus doesn't flinch. He boldly moves in and engages in hand to hand combat with the forces of darkness. By the way, he's not intimidated by the religious authorities either. Remember that this all took place on the Sabbath. You weren't supposed to lift a finger on the Sabbath, even to heal someone, but Jesus is willing to square off with them as well. John Eldredge asks the question, "Who is Jesus more like: Mister Rogers or William Wallace, the hero from Braveheart?" Well, here there is no question who he's more like. He's fierce. He's courageous.

Third, we see it in his power. It's one thing to have courage to face an enemy, it's quite another to have the power to defeat that enemy. Jesus has the power. He has power over demons. The demons know who Jesus is. They have good theology. He IS the Holy One of God. He IS the Christ. But Jesus silences them. He doesn't want or need the enemies publicity. And he rebukes them: "Be quiet and come out of him!" he says to the demon in the synagogue. No theatrics on his part. No holy water. No crosses. And the demon comes out. Notice that even though the man is thrown down when the demon comes out, he's unharmed. That's power. Jesus has power over disease as well. Did you notice he also *rebuked* the disease, as if the disease were some kind of entity? Whatever caused the disease he had power over that as well. The fact that Simon's mother-in-law got up immediately and began to wait on them shows how completely she was healed. That's power. Isn't it good to know that whatever you face, regardless of how intimidating it is, Jesus can deal with it. He's not afraid. He has the power. Sometimes he chooses not to take it away, instead he gives us the power to endure it, because there are greater things he wants to accomplish in our lives through the suffering. But don't think for one minute that somehow he's powerless to heal you or take care of your problem. With just a word of rebuke to whatever it is afflicting you, it would be gone. He's that powerful.

Fourth, we see it in his compassion. In all this talk of power, it might be easy to pass over the fact that Jesus shows great compassion on this day, and there is authority in that compassion. He understands human suffering. He cares for these people. He cares for those in bondage to powers greater than they can manage. He cares for people wracked with pain. He cares for those who feel utterly defeated by some debilitating illness or addiction. Human need moves him. Luke shows this by noting in v.40 that as the masses crowded around him for healing he *laid his hands on each one of them*. This was not a common thing for people to do back then. But it was Jesus' way of showing his concern, of identifying with people in their pain. He did it with each one. I've been to a few doctor's offices recently and I've noticed that some nurses and doctors seem to notice me and some of them don't. To some of them I'm just a number on an insurance card; to others I'm a unique person in pain. Jesus saw each person; each individual face. It wasn't a healing en masse. He could have done that, you know. He could have just taken care of the whole lot of them at once, but instead he laid his hands on each one of them. I may be wrong, but I imagine him not speaking as he did that. He just moved through the crowd and saw each need and gently reached out

and touched them. There is authority in that, the authority of one who deeply cares. I wonder if you know him like that—as One who knows your need; knows just what you're going through. And it moves him. If he were here right now he would find you and he would touch you. Do you know him as one who is aloof and stern, or one who deeply cares, like an anxious parent who sits at the bedside of her sick child?

Fifth, we see it in his sense of purpose. While it was still dark, Jesus goes out to a secluded place. When the crowd finds him and tries to persuade him to stay, he says, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose." And then in v.44 we see him doing just that. Jesus knew his purpose. There is authority in that. The people of Capernaum want him to stay and set up shop in their town. I mean, he could have a world wide ministry of healing. I saw part of a TV special about a guy down in Brazil called "John of God." His web site says, "They come in their thousands. The sick, the lame, the incurable and the medically discarded, to a small town in central Brazil. They endure long international flights and for some long bus trips... They come to be cured by the miracle healer...the man they call John of God. He will scrape away cataracts and eye tumors with a knife, remove breast cancers with a small incision and cause the crippled to walk with just the touch of his hand... He is acclaimed as the greatest healer of the past 2,000 years." I must tell you, I don't buy that John is "of God." He may have power, but it's not God's power. Notice Jesus refuses to play that game. He knows his purpose. He's even willing to say "no" to a few opportunities to heal so that he can do what he's been sent to do—to preach the good news of God's Kingdom. It's interesting that at this point Jesus is in the desert and the desert is a place of testing and temptation. Well, here he is being tempted to settle into a nice career as a faith healer, a local hero, a one-stop-quick-fix to everyone's problems. But he knows his call is to reach more people, not through healing but through preaching.

Isn't Jesus such a compelling figure? The good news is that he's still here! He's still with us! All that he is here in this story he can be to us right here today. He's alive! He may not always work in such condensed and dramatic ways. Most of us will never see a demon possessed man. Satan would rather have us think he's not even real, but he is. But the authority of Jesus; his insight, courage, power and his compassion are all there for us through his Spirit. But that's not all. All that he is has also been given to us as we walk through our ordinary days. Remember what Jesus said to his disciples in what we call the Great Commission, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations..." In those days, the authority of the messenger is equal to the one who sent him. We operate with his authority. That shows itself in the same way it showed itself in Jesus.

III. Jesus calls us to demonstrate his authority.

We have his insight. He's given us his word, the Scriptures. We tend to be impressed these days by those with expert knowledge in one particular area. Knowledge is so vast, we're forced to live in a culture of experts. As a result,

we sometimes think that unless we're experts on the Bible, we have nothing to say. But the Scriptures are given to all of us, and with even the most basic understanding of the Bible we have insight into reality that the most intelligent atheist on the planet doesn't have. Thirty-five years ago, one of America's most outstanding psychiatrists was J. T. Fisher. He wrote:

If you were to take the sum total of all authoritative articles ever written by the most qualified of psychologists and psychiatrists on the subject of mental hygiene, if you were to combine them and refine them and cleave out the excess verbiage, if you were to take the whole of the meat and none of the parsley, and if you were to have these bits of pure scientific knowledge concisely expressed by the most capable of living poets, you would have an awkward and an incomplete summary of the Sermon on the Mount. And it would suffer immeasurably through comparison. For nearly two thousand years the Christian world has been holding in its hands the complete answer to its restless and fruitless yearning. Here rests the blueprint for successful human life, with optimum mental health and contentment.

Do you believe that? That's why we're so serious about teaching the Scripture. That's why each of us needs to read the Scripture on a regular basis. That's why when we engage in conversations with friends and neighbors we don't have to be intimidated. Not that we go around pounding people over the head with bible verses. But we humbly know that God has given us the key to all knowledge, without which expert knowledge on any subject is like just having one piece of the puzzle.

We also have his courage. I love the story of Todd Beamer. A solid believer, he worked for Oracle and was on his way to California when his plane was hijacked. Todd reached for the GTE phone on the back of the seat and got connected to a GTE supervisor on the ground. He told her they had been hijacked and probably wouldn't survive. She told him what had already happened at the World Trade Center and Pentagon. He said he and three others on the plane were going to try to do something to stop them. He knew they were probably heading the plane towards another prominent building. So he told the GTE person to call his wife and tell her how much he loved her. He asked the lady to pray the Lord's Prayer with her. When they were done, Todd said, "Help me, God. Help me, Jesus." Then the GTE employee heard Todd say to his three friends, "Are you ready, guys? Let's roll." With that the phone went dead. You know the story. Within a few minutes Flight 93 was nose diving into a rural field 80 miles from Pittsburgh. No one on the ground was killed. His wife, Lisa, said, "His example of courage has given me, my boys (and my unborn baby) a reason to live." That's courage. That's the kind of courage that Jesus had. That's the kind of courage he gives us. Where do you need courage? Where do you need say, "Let's roll!"

We also have his power. Jesus says to his

disciples, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you..." A man and his family went to visit the Grand Coulee Dam, and they were surprised to find that the visitor center was dark. It was a sunny day, so they thought it had tinted windows, but the closer they got the more they realized that there were no lights on. They went in and found that none of the displays were working either. Finally they realized that there was no power in the center, even though it sat only hundreds of feet away from a huge hydroelectric dam. That's like we are sometimes. We have a relationship with the source of all power; but so often we operate as people who are powerless. Recently Lynn and I realized that on a number of levels we were being attacked by the enemy. We should have known it sooner, it usually takes us awhile. And then we realized how seldom we've been praying together as a couple. We had kind of just slipped out of the habit. Prayer is one of the ways we stay plugged into his power, and we felt the lack of it.

We also have his compassion. Patricia Miller tells about her experience working in the emergency room. She had learned to stop crying at the pain around her. But she was haunted at night by the things she saw. She put a cold, hard shell around her feelings. Five years of emergency room exposure had taken its toll. She writes,

I was taking information for registering a young woman who had overdosed on drugs and had attempted suicide. Her mother sat before me as I typed the information into the computer. The mother was unkempt and bleary eyed. She had been awakened in the middle of the night by the police to come to the hospital. She could only speak to me in a whisper. Hurry up, I said to myself, as she slowly gave me the information. My impatience was raw as I finished the report and jumped to the machine to copy the medical cards. That's when God stopped me — at the copy machine. He spoke to my heart so clearly: "You didn't even look at her." He repeated it, gently: "You didn't even look at her." I felt His grief for her and for her daughter and bowed my head. "I'm sorry, Lord. I am so sorry," I said. I sat down in front of the distraught woman and covered her hands with mine. I looked into her eyes with all the love that God could flood through me and said, "I care. Don't give up." She wept and wept. She poured her heart out to me about the years of dealing with a rebellious daughter as a single mom. Finally, she looked up and thanked me. Me ... the coldhearted one with no feelings. Until she showed up — and God. My attitude changed that night. My Jesus came right into the workplace in spite of rules that tried to keep Him out. He came in to set me free to care again. He gave himself to that woman through me. My God, who so loved the world, broke that self-imposed barrier around my heart. Now He could reach out, not only to me in my pain, but to a lost and hurting woman.

When you're filled with the compassion of Jesus you tend to take the people and the needs he places in your path seriously. They matter. You can't do everything. You can't fix every problem. But you can do something. Sometimes it's just a few words: "I care. Don't give up."

Finally, we have his purpose. His purpose was NOT to set up a one stop fix it shop, but rather to go out to the surrounding cities and preach the good news. What is our purpose as a church? Is it to keep Jesus here in our four walls? Is it to attract as many people as we can to this place so they can be helped by one of our ministries? No, it's not. It's tempting to do that. I would love to pastor a church of 5,000 people. That would feed my ego just fine! But our purpose is to spread out; to take the good news into dark places of this Peninsula upon which we live. It's a ministry of gracious invasion. And you are the messengers. It's not me. It's not the pastors or elders. It's you. It's our job to teach and equip; it's your job to go out and do it. That's our purpose.

So there is one ordinary day in the life of Jesus. Are you amazed at his authority? Maybe you've heard the story of the captain of a naval ship out to sea. He saw a light ahead on a collision course. He signaled, "Alter your course 10 degrees south." The reply came back, "Alter your course 10 degrees north." The captain then signaled, "Alter your course 10 degrees south. I am a captain!" The reply: "Alter your course 10 degrees north. I am a seaman third-class." The captain was furious and signaled. Alter your course 10 degrees south. I am a battleship." The reply: "Alter your course 10 degrees north. I am a lighthouse!" That's the kind of authority Jesus has. What you do with that authority, how you respond to it, whether you let him alter the course of your life, is the most critical decision you will ever make.

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