

FBC POWELL, 3-26-17 PM NOTES
"The Authority and Power of Jesus Christ"
Luke 4:31-37
11 in Series, "The Gospel According to Luke"

Matthew 28:18 "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'"

1 Corinthians 1:24b "...Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Hebrews 1:3 "And He [Jesus Christ] is the radiance of His [God the Father] glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His [Jesus Christ] power. When He [Jesus Christ] had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

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Power is the inherent ability to do whatever is needed.

Authority is "the right to."

Power is "the ability to."

I. Jesus' Authority and Power in Teaching (vv. 31-32)

John 7:32 (NIV) "Still, many in the crowd believed in Him. They said, 'When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?' The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him."

John 7:45-46 "The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, 'Why did you not bring Him?' The officers answered, 'Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.'"

2 Timothy 2:15 "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."

II. Jesus' Authority and Power over Demons (vv. 33-35)

"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race [the human race] can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight." — C. S. Lewis

1 John 3:8b "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil."

Luke 11:20 "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

Luke 8:27 "And when He came out onto the land, He was met by a man from the city who was possessed with **demons**; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs."

Luke 8:29 "For He had commanded the **unclean spirit** to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, and yet he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert."

Matthew 25:41 "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

A. The Challenge (vv. 33-34)

Acts 16:16-18 “It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling. Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, ‘These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.’ She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!’ And it came out at that very moment.”

James 2:19 “You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.”

“It should be noted that in a religious environment like Israel’s, demons would rather stay hidden as they sit in religious services. That is their disguise as ‘angels of light,’ and they prefer not to blow their cover. Every false religion, no matter how moral, is demon controlled and there are surely demons present in the leaders and the deceived people. But they stay silent by design. They could not hold their terror in when the Son of God was present.”
— John MacArthur

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.”

B. The Casting Out of the Demon (v. 35)

C. The Amazement of the People (vv. 36-37)

*No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand*
— Keith Getty and Stuart Townsend

*The Prince of Darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo, his doom is sure;
One little word shall fell him.*
— Martin Luther

First Baptist Church Powell 03 26 17 PM
Sermon 11: The Authority and Power of Jesus Christ
Luke 4:31-37

After His rejection in His home town of Nazareth, Jesus set up His base of operations in a town called Capernaum, about sixteen miles from Nazareth. Capernaum was a thriving town on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee.

This passage is about the *authority* and *power* of Jesus Christ. Many times, in the New Testament, we are told of the authority of Christ. Matthew 28:18: “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” You may recognize this as the introductory sentence of what is commonly called, “the Great Commission.” Not only did Jesus have authority, He had power. 1 Corinthians 1:24b: “...Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” Hebrews 1:3 says of Jesus, “And He is the radiance of His [God the Father] glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His [Jesus Christ] *power*. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

The scriptural concept of authority and power are related, but there is considerable difference between them. *Authority is the official legal right to act, control, or command*. As we have already established, Jesus had, and still has, all authority! There is nothing outside the authority of Jesus Christ. He is Lord of all! He spoke with authority; He acted with authority. In every realm, He was given by the Father the official legal right to act, control, and command.

How is power different from authority? There are several Greek words that are translated “power,” but the most common word is *dunamis* that we get our word “dynamite” from. *Power is the inherent ability to do whatever is needed*. The key words in understanding authority are “*the right to*.” The key words in understanding power are “*the ability to*.”

True authority must have power backing it up. Authority without power cannot function very long. Let me illustrate. A 6’ 5” 280-pound defensive lineman on the UT football team has more power than a 5’ 9” 150-pound referee. This past football season, one of our men got me a sideline pass to the Tennessee/Alabama game. As I stood within a few feet of these athletes, I was astounded at how large they really are. If the 150-pound referee kicks the 280-pound lineman out of the game for a serious violation, the lineman leaves the field because the referee has authority. However, the referee’s authority (the legal right to act, control, and command) is backed up by the power of the UT and Knoxville police force, and ultimately, the power of the US government. If the 280-pound lineman refuses to leave the field then, theoretically, the referee could call for the thirty-to-fifty policemen around the stadium with their stun guns and nine-millimeter pistols to remove him. While the 280-pound linemen may have more power than the referee, he does not have more power than a large number of policemen with weapons. That distinction helps us understand what it means that we have authority over the world, the flesh, and the devil because Jesus has given us the use of His powerful name. Our weakness is backed by the power of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is the point. Only our triune God has all authority! Only He has the ultimate legal right to rule, command, and control. But He also has the power to do whatever is needed to enforce His authority. The One who is our Lord and Savior has ultimate authority and ultimate power. No human being, or fallen spiritual being, has the power to match the power of our Lord.

I. Jesus’ Authority and Power in Teaching (vv. 31-32)

When the people of Capernaum heard Jesus teach, they were amazed for two reasons. First, they were amazed at the content of what He taught. He was able to unfold the Scriptures in a way that the common people could understand. But second, they were amazed because of the authority with which He taught. To more fully understand their amazement, we need to look at how the Old Testament Scriptures were typically taught in the early first century. The typical method was “the scribal method.” It involved the quoting of ancient Rabbis and comparing what one of the Rabbis said with another Rabbi. You may think that sounds boring; it was extremely boring! Listen to these descriptions of the typical teaching by the teachers in the first Century: “They would be skillful in splitting hairs to infinity, and they would be proud of their ability to lead their hearers through endless mazes of the imaginations of preceding rabbis... But they would have no power... to move the conscience toward true goodness, or to stir the love of the heart toward God and toward men.” [Quoted in J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, page 144]

Here is another description of the Rabbis compared to the teaching of Jesus.

They [the people Jesus was speaking to] had been accustomed to hearing the rabbis quote extensively the opinions of their predecessors, claiming no authority to say a word of their own. Their sermons were a tiresome reiteration of traditional rabbinical rules and ceremonial details, which hung as a burdensome yoke on the necks of the people. The preaching of Jesus was different. His [fervent] words stirred their hearts and brought a great new light and relief to their jaded and burdened spirits.
[Quoted in Pentecost, page 145]

Someone described the teachers of Jesus' day as being in bondage to quotation marks. All they did was quote one another. It was second hand theology – legalistic, joyless, and boring!

In contrast, Jesus taught with authority. He took the Scriptures (not dead rabbis) and powerfully and authoritatively proclaimed them in language the people could understand. There was an interesting incident demonstrating His power when the Pharisees sent the temple police to arrest Jesus.

John 7:32 (NIV): “Still, many in the crowd believed in Him. They said, ‘When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?’ The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.” A short while later, the temple guards came back without Jesus.

John 7:45-46: “The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, ‘Why did you not bring Him?’ The officers answered, ‘Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.’”

There is still a great gap between those that teach in their puny inadequate human authority and those who speak authoritatively from the Word of God. Listen to this “teaching” of contemporary “theologian” J. J. Altizer: “Insofar as an eschatological epiphany of Christ can occur only in conjunction with a realization in total experience of the kinetic process of self-negation, we should expect that epiphany to occur in the heart of darkness, for only the universal triumph of the Antichrist can provide an arena for total manifestation of Christ.”

[Quoted in Kent Hughes, *Luke, Volume One*, page 148-149]

It is no wonder that these words by Altizer came from his book, *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*. Authoritative teaching is teaching that just sticks with and expounds upon the authoritative Scriptures. It is proper to use people from the past, but not quotes that give man's opinions, but quotes that expound upon, explain or illustrate the authoritative Word of God.

Harry Ironside was the pastor of Moody Memorial Church in Chicago from 1930-1948. One Sunday a visitor leaving the church told Dr. Ironside that he enjoyed the service, although he didn't think Dr. Ironside was a great preacher. Dr. Ironside replied, “I know I'm not a great preacher. But what was it about my preaching that brought you to that conclusion?” The man said, “I understood everything you said.” This guy didn't understand that authoritative preaching is not difficult to understand, but it is convicting because it is charged with the power and authority of God. Such was the preaching/teaching of Jesus. There is authority and power in the church only if the authoritative written Word of God is preached and taught in the power of the Holy Spirit. The task of every teacher and preacher is to obey 2 Timothy 2:15: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”

II. Jesus' Authority and Power over Demons (vv. 33-37)

C. S. Lewis said, “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race [the human race] can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.” [C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, page 9; quoted in John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Luke 1-5*, pages 279-280]

The Bible tells us in 1 John 3:8b: “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.” By casting out demons in His earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated His authority and power over Satan. He said in Luke 11:20: “But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has

come upon you.” If we accept the reality of the devil’s existence, we should have no hesitation in accepting the reality of demons of whom the Bible says that Satan is their prince. They are called “evil spirits” six times and “unclean spirits” twenty-three times in the New Testament. Those are interchangeable terms. As evidence of that, look at Luke 8:27: “And when He came out onto the land, He was met by a man from the city who was possessed with *demons*; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs.” Notice also Luke 8:29: “For He had commanded the *unclean spirit* to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, and yet he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.” These are different terms for the same spiritual beings.

Demons are not the spirits of dead people (ghosts); they are created angels who followed the highest-ranking angel, Lucifer in his rebellion and were cast out with him. Lucifer came to be known as Satan, the devil, and several other names that describe his evil character. These demons are huge in number (one third of all the angels created) and through them Satan does his world-wide work. While Satan is not omnipresent, through his evil spirits that he rules, he has the ability to do his evil work all over the world at the same time. Some of the demons are already incarcerated in a special place called *tartarus* (translated “hell” in 2 Peter 2:4) because of their especially evil acts before the time of the flood of taking human bodies and having children by evil human women in an attempt to corrupt the seed of the woman from which the deliverer from sin would come (see Genesis 3:15; 6:1-7). The demons who are not currently incarcerated are active on earth in carrying out the plans and schemes of their prince – Satan. Even these demons who are loose on the earth know that a time of judgment is coming and their end is determined. Jesus said in Matthew 25:41: “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’” That is a little background that will perhaps help you understand the passage we are examining.

A. The Challenge (vv. 33-34)

Notice in verse 33 that the man in the synagogue was “possessed” by the demon. Luke calls it an “unclean demon.” That doesn’t mean that this demon was more unclean (translated “impure” in the NIV) than other demons. All demons are unclean or impure. Demon possession was very common during the earthly ministry of Jesus and also in the time of the apostles. An example is seen in Acts 16:16-18:

It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling. Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, “These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.” She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!” And it came out at that very moment.

There are several phrases used in the New Testament to describe demon possession. Luke 8:30 speaks of a man who had a demon that “had entered him,” Acts 5:16 speaks of those “afflicted with unclean spirits,” and many times the phrase “demon possessed” is used. There are multiple instances of phrases such as demons being “cast out” or that “came out.”

Remember that demons are created angels who followed the angel Lucifer in his rebellion. They know who Jesus is and they know the power of God. James 2:19 gives us some important information about demons, “You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.” The word translated “shudder” literally means to bristle like a frightened cat.

Let’s examine what the demon possessed man in the synagogue said (or rather what the demons said through this man). It seems that this man was possessed by more than one demon (notice the plural “us” in verse 34). The phrase “what business do we have with each other” is an idiomatic phrase that means “Why are you attacking us?” These demons knew who Jesus was and they wanted Him to go away. Their desire was to remain undetected. Here is a good summary statement:

It should be noted that in a religious environment like Israel's, demons would rather stay hidden as they sit in religious services. That is their disguise as 'angels of light,' and they prefer not to blow their cover. Every false religion, no matter how moral, is demon controlled and there are surely demons present in the leaders and the deceived people. But they stay silent by design. They could not hold their terror in when the Son of God was present.

[John MacArthur, page 285]

This explains why you can go to countries that have many false religions and where Christians are a distinct minority and the evidence of the demonic is out in the open. Many of you have perhaps seen demon possession in other countries. Why are we not seeing it? It's just as prevalent here as it is in Africa or in Asia, but in "Christian America" the demon's work is more effective as an angel of light and deceiving people about their salvation and guiding them into false doctrine.

Without comment, I will share with you something a man of God said about demonized people in his African country and in America. After some of our teams had seen obvious, open demonstrations of demon possession, he was asked why we don't see this in America. Here is a paraphrase of his answer: "In America you just give them pills to take." In America, the demons' primary tactics are described in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds."

B. The Casting Out of the Demon (v. 35)

Jesus wanted no publicity from demons! Self-appointed exorcists in Jesus' day used many weird and unbiblical practices to try to cast out demons. Some of them seem related to religions today who go through all sorts of incantations and formulas to exorcise a demon. Jesus used no such "hocus pocus." The phrase "Be quiet" is literally, "Be muzzled." Then Jesus simply commanded the demon to come out of the man. That was it! The man fell to the floor as one last futile act of defiance by the demon and then without being able to harm the man in any way came out. Jesus, in compassion, would not allow the man to be harmed by the demon.

C. The Amazement of the People (vv. 36-37)

Notice what the people marveled at – His authority and His power. Today on this side of the cross, the authority of Christ is even greater evidenced by His victory on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. Satan's doom is sealed; Jesus won (though the outcome was never in doubt). Now we share in His victory. As the line in the Getty song, *In Christ Alone*, says,

*No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand*

— Keith Getty and Stuart Townsend

I am also reminded of the hymn written by the reformer, Martin Luther:

*The Prince of Darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo, his doom is sure;
One little word shall fell him.*

— Martin Luther

The outcome of the battle has been decided. We fight in a battle that the ultimate outcome has already been determined. We fight not for victory, but from victory.

