

# JESUS CAME TO ...

LUKE 4:31-44

*Jesus Came To Set Us Free In Order To Love Him, Serve Him, And Follow Him.*

## **I. Offer Us A Relationship (Vs 31-37)**

Jesus Set Us Free From Our Bondage To Sin In Order To Give Us A Choice To Love Him Or Reject Him.

- A. An Amazing Place (31)
- B. An Amazing Event (32-35)
- C. An Amazed Crowd (36-37)

## **II. Allow Us To Serve (Vs 38-39)**

Jesus Empowers Us To Serve Him And One Another.

- A. A Sick Woman (38)
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- C. A Loving Response (39b)

## **III. Invite Us To Follow Him (Vs 40-44)**

Jesus Invites Each Of Us To Follow Him In Faith.

- A. Bringing People To Jesus (40-41)
- B. A Desire To Be With Jesus (42)
- C. Where He Goes We Can Follow (43-44)

## **IV. Summary**

# Jesus Came To ...

Luke 4:31-44

We left off last time with Jesus being rejected by His hometown folks. Jesus revealed to them that He was the long awaited Jewish Messiah. Instead of being overjoyed that one of their own had been chosen for this task, they were jealous, they became angry and actually tried to kill Him by pushing Him off a cliff. Now if you go back and read that story found earlier in this chapter of Luke and compare it to this morning's passage, you will immediately note the similarities. However, the one big difference you will note is that instead of trying to get rid of Jesus like they did in His hometown of Nazareth, the people at Capernaum welcome Him and beg Him to stay. Jesus pointed out often that the Hebrews often tried to kill prophets God sent to them and quoted them the proverb, "No prophet is accepted in his hometown."

On the other hand, Capernaum becomes important to Jesus and in fact becomes His hub for ministry in the Galilean area. Jesus made several good friends there.

One of the modern day characteristics of church-going people is that they come to church to receive something. In other words, they come to church because they are lonely and want to be loved. They come to church because they are in financial difficulty and want God and others to help them. Some come to church because they are sick and want to be healed, facing some difficulty in their lives and they want help from God. In other words, people come to church to get something from God.

Now those are all legitimate reasons to start coming to church, but we forget that Jesus is not just a social worker, a physician, or a philanthropist. He is the Lord of the heavenly armies and we are soldiers in that army. He feeds us, heals us, and provides for us in order that we can serve Him and others He brings into our lives.

I think the question we must ask ourselves this morning is this, "Do we come to church simply to receive blessings from God, or are we here to find ways to serve God, to serve His church, and to serve one another?"

In the military, you tend to meet all kinds of characters. As a chaplain, I hung around with other junior officers. In our group, we had medical doctors, administrators, and others. One day we were all out for coffee and one of the officers had just been in for a medical visit. He asked the doctor, "Hey Doc, if there is anything wrong with me, don't frighten me half to death by giving it a scientific name. Just give it to me in plain English."

"Well," the doctor said, "to be frank, your problem is that you are just plain lazy."

"Thank you Doc," sighed the officer with relief. "Now can give me a scientific name for it, so I can go and give it to the commander?"

Isn't that kind of like us? We want Jesus to heal us, to provide for us, and to bless us ... but not so that we can serve Him, but only so that we can enjoy life more.

Let's take a good look at the people in Jesus' new favorite town Capernaum because they model some right responses to Jesus' blessings. The main idea of this morning's text is this. JESUS

CAME TO SET US FREE IN ORDER TO LOVE HIM, SERVE HIM, AND FOLLOW HIM. Did you ever stop and think about that? In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus does teach us to ask for our daily bread, for God to forgive us for our sins, and to deliver us from evil. However, only for the purpose of working to bring about His kingdom and His will to earth through our lives. We must never forget that we were saved for a purpose and that purpose is to accomplish all the good works God has planned out for us to accomplish. As we hear God's Word this morning, let's ask ourselves what works God has planned for us to do. Let's ask Him to reveal them to us, and give us the strength to accomplish them.

## I. OFFER US A RELATIONSHIP

The first thing we learn in verses 31-37 is that Jesus came to offer us a relationship. In other words, JESUS SET US FREE FROM OUR BONDAGE TO SIN IN ORDER TO GIVE US A CHOICE TO LOVE HIM OR REJECT HIM.

Again, let me remind us that the reason the Nazarenes rejected Jesus as the Messiah is because their idea of the Messiah was worldly and political. But the power Jesus came to exert was spiritual power.

### **An Amazing Place (31)**

Verse 31 describes an amazing place. Verse 31 picks up where verse 30 left off up last time. While the crowds attempted to kill Jesus, Jesus miraculously slipped through the crowd and went on His way. We pick up the narrative this morning with Jesus in Capernaum. What is interesting about Capernaum for archaeologists is that we can't exactly locate where Capernaum was. There are a couple of sites that we have narrowed it down to. At any rate, it appears to be somewhere on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.

We find Jesus teaching on the Sabbath. If you remember from last time, that's exactly how the incident started in Nazareth. Here is where it gets interesting because in verses 32-35 we witness an amazing event. Now we have to do a little review from last week. When Jesus read from the Isaiah Scroll, He identified Himself as the Messiah and said that He came to preach Good News to the poor, to release captives, give sight to the blind, release the oppressed, and usher in a Jubilee Year. As we saw last time, the Nazarenes interpreted this politically. They wanted to be free from Roman government, to defeat the Romans, and to rule the world. When Jesus interpreted the passage correctly, they weren't happy.

Let me just try and define the terms the way Jesus did. When Jesus said He came to preach Good News to the poor, Jesus defined poor with its wide semantic range. The word poor in Greek is *ptoxois*. It can mean financially destitute, unable to support oneself, afflicted by illness, tormented by demons, etc. In the Gospels, Jesus encounters many of these people. They come in the form of widows, orphans, demon possessed people, chronically ill and crippled people, and outcast women. For Jesus, anything that prevents us from seeing God for Who He is makes us poor.

That definition of poor also applies to people who are physically healthy and have enough money to eat. We will meet a rich young man whose wealth actually prevents him from embracing Jesus. Even though he has a ton of money, he is poor. The religious leaders' spiritual blindness and pride make them poor. Jesus came to preach Good News to the poor. There are so many things that make us poor today, isn't there? We lust for material things that we think can make us happy. A famous preacher once said, "We spend money we don't have, on things we don't need, in order to impress people that don't even like us." Our sexual lusts make us blind to seeing Jesus for Who He is. Our worldly pride and our spiritual pride blind us to God's will for our lives. Our worries and our anxieties keep us from embracing the full Christian life. It doesn't matter what is making us and keeping us poor this morning. Jesus came to set us free.

He came to set the prisoner free. The word used for prisoner normally refers to prisoners of war. But it also refers to those who are prisoners of fear, false thinking, sin, and prisoners of Satan. He came to set the oppressed free. The word for oppressed refers to those who have been broken, shattered, and disheartened. And Jesus came to heal the blind. The word for blind in Greek is taphlos. It can refer to physical, spiritual, and emotional blindness.

Jesus came to set us free from all of these things. He came to liberate us from anything that would stand in the way of our recognizing Him and receiving Him as our Lord and Savior.

### **An Amazing Event (32-35)**

Look how the people respond in verse 32. It says they were amazed at Jesus' teaching. Literally it says they were amazed at His word. Remember, Jesus is the living Word of God so it is much more than simple teaching with words, it is teaching in word and deed. The Nazarenes were right in thinking this was about power and authority, but they failed to understand which realm Jesus was working in. However, the people of Capernaum seem to get it. They were amazed at the authority Jesus' message carried.

The demons recognized the power of Jesus' message and person also. In the middle of this synagogue service, a demon who had taken up residence in a man starts to cry out in a loud voice, "Have You come to destroy us, Jesus?" Let me just point a couple of things out here. The man in whom the demon had taken up residence still went to synagogue. Just because people come to church and look the part, please don't assume that they are demon free. But one thing is clear, when demons come in contact with the power of the truth of Jesus' teachings, they become very uncomfortable.

Secondly, the demon asked Jesus if He was going to destroy both him and the man in whom he had taken up residence. The answer that is revealed through Jesus' actions later becomes no. Jesus only came to destroy the demon. He came to set the man free.

Before we get to that, let's just look at what else the demon said. It identified Jesus as the Holy One of God and Jesus told him to shut up. Here is what is really interesting to me. The people in Jesus' hometown, the ones who should have recognize Him, didn't recognize Jesus as the Messiah. However, the demons recognized Jesus right away. How can that be? The problem is that most of us Christians are lazy and don't know what is in the Bible. However, the demons know and understand Scripture. Perhaps that's why Jesus told the demon to shut up. If people

started to get all pumped up with Messiah fever, perhaps they would have started to take things politically, gathered up a military force, and tried to overthrow Rome. Jesus knew that happened several times in the past and many Jews lost their lives. Jesus was not there to start a political revolution.

Now let's get back to the incident. After telling the demon to shut up, Jesus commanded the demon to come out of the man and to leave him alone. The demon threw the man down. That is actually a technical term used by the Greeks describing a person who was thrown to the ground by spiritual forces, then convulsing, and crying out. Notice, the demon came out without injuring the man. Luke makes sure that we understand that Jesus destroyed the hold the demon had over this man. Jesus set the prisoner free and removed the oppression. Now this man was free. But free to do what? He was now free to choose a relationship with Jesus. He was now able to see Jesus for Who He was. At this point, the man could freely choose to love and follow Jesus, or to reject Jesus with full knowledge of what he was doing. I hope that as we worship, each one of us receive this special insight from God The Holy Spirit as to Who Jesus is. I hope that we come to see and fall in love with Jesus. I hope that we are set free from our bondage and oppression.

### **An Amazed Crowd (36-37)**

If this starts happening during our worship services, then we, like the people in Capernaum, will become an amazed crowd as described in verses 36-37. In verse 36 that word for teaching is mentioned again. It refers to the words, the person, and the works of Jesus. They were not so amazed with the exorcism because that was a fairly common practice among Jews and Greeks at the time. What they were amazed at was the authority and power Jesus commanded over the spiritual world. Later in the Gospel people will be amazed at the power Jesus has over physics and chemistry as well. Jesus will prove He is the Messiah by speaking and acting with supernatural power and authority. The people we so amazed, they spread the word about Jesus all over the region.

How about us, are we amazed at the power and authority by which Jesus set us free and continues to bless us? Are we so amazed that we share the Good News of Jesus with people we come into contact with every day? **JESUS SET US FREE FROM OUR BONDAGE TO SIN IN ORDER TO GIVE US A CHOICE TO LOVE HIM OR REJECT HIM.** If we have chosen to love Him, then we ought to be instruments by which God gives others in bondage the chance to be in a relationship with Him. Jesus said we are His witness and ambassadors.

## **II. ALLOW US TO SERVE**

In verses 38-39 we see that Jesus came to allow us to serve. In other words **JESUS EMPOWERS US TO SERVE HIM AND ONE ANOTHER.** Even though Jesus doesn't choose the disciples until the next chapter in Luke, we see Him on a visit to Simon Peter's house.

### **A Sick Woman (38)**

At Simon's house, Jesus encounters a sick woman in verse 38. After the synagogue service and the exorcism, Jesus was invited to lunch at Peter's house. When He got there, he found Peter's mother-in-law suffering from a high fever. This term high fever seems to have been a medical term. That would tend to authenticate Dr. Luke as the author of this Gospel. It seems as if several people asked Jesus to heal her. This is incredible faith already shown by Peter, his family, and his friends. Jesus was not a physician in the sense Luke was. Jesus was a man of faith. Remember, Jesus did not perform any miracles in Nazareth and later we will see that Jesus doesn't perform miracles with the faithless. How much faith do we have in Jesus? Do we truly believe He is the answer to our needs, wants, and desires? Faith is what opens the door for Jesus to work in our lives and in the life of our church. He wants to work. Please let's continually open the door to our hearts in faith, invite Him in, and allow Him to work. I know we often use this verse in evangelism. I think that's okay, but the following invitation was made to the people who belonged to the church. So let us hear Jesus speaking to us when He said:

*"20Look! Here I stand at the door and knock. If you hear me calling and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal as friends" (Revelation 3:20 / NLT).*

### **A Loving God (39a)**

Please, let us continue to listen for Jesus' voice as He knocks at the door of our hearts and calls out to us to let Him in. It's important, because as we see in the first half of verse 39, Jesus is a loving God. There was no fanfare here. There was no spectacle. Jesus simply leaned over her, rebuked the fever, and immediately she was healed. We must remember that Jesus is all we need. The problem is that often God has to bring us to this realization by allowing us to experience all sorts of difficulties. I have a friend who experienced this first hand. After a great deal of suffering, he told me he learned this one point. He said, "John, you don't know that Jesus is all you need, until Jesus is all you have."

### **A Loving Response (39b)**

I know my friend responded to Jesus' healing in a very loving and dedicated way. In the second half of verse 39, we see a loving response on the part of Peter's mother-in-law. Please listen to the language, "She got up at once and began to wait on them." Is that the way we treat God's blessings? As I examine my life in light of Peter's Mother-in-law's example, I have to say that often times, I receive the blessing whatever it is; healing, money, deliverance, or a restored relationship, say thanks to God, and then go about my life, looking for God's next blessing to come my way. I do not often enough think about how I can use the blessing to better serve God. It seems to me that the proper response to all of the blessings we receive from God, is to use them to serve Him and share our blessings with one another. It is clear in the Scriptures that JESUS EMPOWERS US TO SERVE HIM AND ONE ANOTHER.

I hope that we are seeing that Jesus' mission in life was to remove the things that prevent us from seeing Him for Who He is. He sets us free in order that we may freely choose to enter a loving

and passionate relationship with Him. He heals us and empowers us to serve Him and one another.

### III. INVITE US TO FOLLOW HIM

#### **Bringing People To Jesus (40-41)**

And in verses 40-44 we see that Jesus came to invite us to follow Him. JESUS INVITES EACH OF US TO FOLLOW HIM IN FAITH. When you take some time to think about it, these people from Capernaum are incredible people. Not only are they taken with Jesus' power and authority to heal and to set free, they love one another enough to bring people to Jesus in verses 40-41. Jesus had spent time teaching in the synagogue. He set a demon possessed man free. After the service, He went to Peter's house to have lunch and relax. While He was there, He healed Peter's mother-in-law from a high fever. Now the sun set and the Sabbath was over. It seems as there was a steady stream of people bringing their sick friends and relatives to Jesus for healing. What an incredible demonstration of faith and love. They had faith that Jesus could heal. They had love to bring their friends and family. We have some people in church who are like that. They are constantly witnessing to people, telling them about Jesus, and bringing them to church. I'd like to thank those of you who do that. If we all start to do this, there is no doubt, God will bless us, and He will add to our numbers; those who are being saved and set free.

Again we can see that as Jesus cast out many demons, they were shouting, "You are the Son of God!" The demons recognized Jesus as the Promised Jewish Messiah. They recognized Him by His power, His authority, His work, and His person. Jesus came to set people free from their bondage to Satan, to sin, to this world, and to their spiritual blindness. Please remember this. During the Hebrew Jubilee year, all land and possessions were returned to their rightful owners. God created us in His image and His nature. We were created to be in fellowship with Him. We belong to Him. However, because of Adam's sin, we were all born into slavery. We were born as slaves to Satan and sin. Jesus died to set us free. It truly is a Jubilee year when we place our faith in Jesus and we are returned to Him, our rightful owner. People were being healed and set free. It was truly a wonderful day for the people of Capernaum. Their faith unleashed some amazing power from Jesus.

#### **A Desire To Be With Jesus (42)**

Verse 42 demonstrates they had a passionate desire to be with Jesus. At daybreak, as was Jesus' custom, He got away alone to spend time with God the Father in prayer and devotion. I think we often overlook this. Jesus was fully God. And yet, He made it a practice when doing ministry to make sure and get reenergized in the presence of the Father. Too many times we try to do ministry on our own power. When we get busy, the first thing to slip is our alone time with God. Please remember Jesus' words:

*"5" "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5 / NLT).*

If we want to do God's work, then we must remember to do it God's way. Do you remember from last time, his hometown couldn't wait to get rid of Him? In fact they wanted to kill Him. But here, the people in Capernaum hunted Him down early in the morning. When they found Him, they begged Jesus to stay. They tried to prevent Him from leaving. As aggressively as the Nazarenes wanted Jesus to go, the people of Capernaum wanted Him to stay.

I'm hoping that our desire and attitude are that we long to keep Jesus near and to be with Him constantly. I'm finding that the older I get, the more I want to be with Jesus.

### **Where He Goes We Can Follow (43-44)**

And in verses 43-44, we are reminded that where He goes we can follow. They kept on begging Jesus to stay with them. But Jesus said, "I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God to the other towns also." We know now that the Good News was that the Jewish Messiah had arrived. Jesus had been identified as the Messiah. He came to set the prisoners and captives free. He came to restore sight to the blind and preach good news to the poor. Jesus came to reveal God's love to people. Jesus came to die for your sins and mine. The text says that Jesus kept on preaching this message in the synagogues of Judea. In other words, Jesus preached and taught by word and deed the Good News in all of Israel. We know that Peter and others who Jesus chose to be disciples followed Him. They left everything behind to follow and serve Jesus.

## **IV. SUMMARY**

We have a great opportunity to follow Jesus. He has commissioned us to teach people about Him and salvation. He appointed us to be His ambassadors to carry on His work. We are to be in the business of setting people free by introducing them to the Gospel. We have been commissioned as soldiers in God's war against Satan and evil. We have a glorious calling as individuals and as a church. Let us faithfully follow Jesus in His mission against Sin, Satan, and death. Nothing can stop us; not even the gates of hell. **JESUS INVITES US TO FOLLOW HIM IN FAITH.** How do you feel? Are we up to the task? Please let us never forget this. The Apostle Paul put it like this:

*"19... don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, 20for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body" (I Corinthians 6:19-20 / NLT).*

**JESUS CAME TO SET US FREE IN ORDER TO LIVE HIM, SERVE HIM, AND FOLLOW HIM.** Charles Spurgeon put it this way:

*"Some of you good people, who do nothing except go to public meetings, and Bible readings, and prophetic conferences, and other forms of spiritual (indulgence), would be a good deal better Christians if you would look after the poor and needy around you. If you would just tuck up your sleeves for work, and go and tell the Gospel to dying men, you would find your spiritual health mightily restored, for very much of the sickness of Christians comes through their having nothing to do. All feeding and no working makes men spiritual (invalids). Be*

*idle, careless, with nothing to live for, nothing to care for, no sinner to pray for, no backslider to lead back to the cross, no trembler to encourage, no little child to tell of a Savior, no gray-headed man to enlighten in the things of God, no object, in fact, to live for; and who wonders if you begin to groan and to murmur, and to look within, until you are ready to die of despair.”*

We were saved at a very high cost to God. It cost Him the blood of His precious Son Jesus. We were saved for a purpose. Our purpose is to continue on with the work of Jesus, to save a lost and dying world.