

Title: The Authority of Jesus

Text: Luke 4:31-37

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Proverbs 2:14 says that God's word *"delivers us from those who rejoice in doing evil and who delight in its perversity."* And so, if you have your copy of God's word with you today, and I hope you do, please turn to Luke 4. We're going to be looking at verses 31-37 this morning, which is a thrilling passage that demonstrates for us the authority of Jesus Christ.

Have you ever been in a situation when someone tries to speak and assert authority, but their words fall on deaf ears because that person actually has no authority to back up their words whatsoever. If you're a parent, I know that you have. There you are driving in your minivan down the road with all of your kids in the back seat, you're in the middle of a road trip, and it's around mealtime. So, you lean over to your wife, and you ask her sweetly, honey, where do you want to eat today? And what inevitably happens? Like newly hatched chicks, a chorus of little voices immediately start peeping out their opinions from the back seat. And immediately, what do they say? Subway, McDonald's, Chick-fil-A. And then when you get to the drive-thru, honey, what should we get the kids? And immediately, the chorus begins again. Slushies, milkshakes, heart attack-inducing hamburgers, that's what we want. You've got to admire their efforts, even though it's always absolutely fruitless. They can say that Chick-fil-A is where they ought to eat that day, and that slushies should be a part of their regular diet. But they're not the ones with the driver's license and the vehicle to actually take them to said restaurant. And they're not the ones with the money to actually pay for said slushies. They might be speaking a lot of words, but they don't have any authority to back their words up at all.

It's like Saddam Hussein when the American troops invaded Baghdad in 2003. Saddam kept on sending out audio messages to his troops telling them to keep on fighting and to resist the Americans. The only problem was, by that moment his army was scattered, his government had collapsed, and he was currently hiding in a hole in a distant city far away. Nobody listened to a word that he said because he didn't have the authority to back any of it up. That happens a lot to us in life, especially here in America.

Every four years or so, a new collection of politicians are trotted out in front of us, and what do they do? They promise bold reforms and unbelievable progress that will somehow never be hindered by the checks and balances that are thankfully inherent in American government. And every four years or so we are reminded, yet again, that it doesn't matter what comes out of a person's mouth if they don't actually have the authority to back it up.

Well, the passage that's before us today, in Luke 4:31-37, exists to show us that Jesus is not like this at all. What Jesus declares; he can actually do. He has the authority to back up every single one of his claims and promises. And that's what this passage is all about. It's all about showing us the authority of Jesus, the

authority that exists behind all of Christ's words. And this is an important point to make, because if you remember, Jesus has just made some very bold claims in the previous account.

If you remember, back in verses 18-19, we just heard Jesus announce from Isaiah 61, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor, he has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."* So there Jesus just announced that he was the fulfillment of all of God's saving promises. That he is the one who can save sinners. That he is the one who can rip them out of the kingdom of darkness and deliver them into his own, who can rescue them and turn them from the power of Satan to God. That is no small feat. After all, 1 John 5:19 tells us that *"the whole world lies in the lap of the evil one."* *"And that every human being is naturally a son of disobedience following the prince of the power of the air,"* as Ephesians 2:2 says. And so if Jesus is going to deliver people from their spiritual poverty, if he's going to be able to deliver them from the spiritual bondage and spiritual blindness that's inherent in their fallenness, if Jesus is going to be able to set the captives free and bring them into eternal salvation and redemption, then Jesus is going to have to have the authority to back up all of those claims. He's going to have to be able to show that he has the power to overcome Satan on behalf of others. Well, that power and authority on behalf of others is put on full display in the passage that we're about to examine today.

And this account is going to provide for us a good opportunity to examine Christ's own authority in our lives, about whether we're responding to Jesus and his authoritative word properly or not. Are we responding to the authority of Jesus in pride like those in Nazareth did? Who does he think he is to tell us how to live? Or are we responding to the authority of Jesus in humility like those in Capernaum are about to do? It's in light of this topic, the authority of Jesus, that we're going to slowly work through our passage today.

In verses 31-32, we're going to see the exercise of Jesus' authority as he is teaching the word of God on the Sabbath day. Then in verses 33-34, we're going to be confronted with the enemy of Jesus' authority as he is interrupted rudely in the middle of his teaching. Then in verse 35, we're going to see the example of Jesus' authority as Jesus deals powerfully with the interruption that occurred. And then in verses 36-37, we're going to see the esteem for Jesus' authority as those in Capernaum, unlike those in Nazareth, come to understand a very important truth regarding how to respond to Jesus and his word when it is given. So, the exercise, the enemy, the example, and the esteem of Jesus' authority, that is what's before us today.

And so, if you're able, please stand with me out of reverence and attention to the word of God that is given to us today as I read our passage before us from Luke 4:31-37.

Our author, Dr. Luke, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit writes these words for each and every one of us today.

Luke writes, *"And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, and they were astonished at his teaching, for his Word possessed authority. And in the synagogue there was*

a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, '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.' 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. 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!' And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region."

This is the word of God, whose precepts we keep with our whole heart, though the insolence smear us with lies.

Let's pray.

Father, I thank you so much for the passage that is set before us today. I thank you for how it shows us who Jesus is. Father, as we are unfolding in this Gospel of Luke, the person, the words, and the work of Jesus, I thank you, Father, that right here at the very beginning, we are shown that Jesus is no liar. He is no lunatic. Jesus is Lord. And every claim he makes, he testifies to by his own omnipotent power. Father, I thank you for showing us. And now you are going to show us the sovereign authority of Jesus Christ. And I pray, Father, that you would convict hearts here this morning. And I pray that if there is someone here this morning that has not trusted in Jesus Christ, I pray that the sovereignty of Jesus would be something that they would no longer fear. But it would be something that they run to in faith, knowing that Jesus' sovereignty is the means by which he saves. May he be honored and exalted in our midst.

Father, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

You may be seated.

So, Luke begins his account here about the authority of Jesus by introducing us in verses 31-32 to the exercise of Jesus' authority. The exercise of Jesus' authority. Luke writes for us, *"And he went down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority."* Notice Jesus exercised his authority in this passage in a way that most of us would never expect. If I was to ask you to imagine a scene in your mind in which Jesus is exercising his sovereign authority over all things in heaven and on earth, I imagine most of you would probably picture in your mind something like a miracle or a supernatural wonder that Jesus performs. Like Jesus casting out a demon or healing a leper or raising a dead man to life again. You would sit there and say, oh, that is a picture of Jesus exercising authority here on earth. But what's fascinating here is that we see Jesus exercising his divine authority through his public ministry how? By teaching the word of God. These verses tell us that Jesus leaves Nazareth and he descends topographically to a small town in the northern part of Galilee named Capernaum. And what we see here as we progress through the Gospel of Luke is that Jesus grows more and more fond of this city due to their increasing acceptance and embrace of him.

In the future, in fact, we're going to find out on one occasion in Matthew 9:1 that Jesus calls Capernaum "his own city." Contrasting them with his original hometown of Nazareth who we saw last week rejected him. What's cool is I just needed to mention this is that you can visit now the excavated remains of Capernaum's second century synagogue which was built on the exact location of the town's first century synagogue. So, you can visit today at least geographically the exact spot where this account takes place. And I want you to imagine it this morning: the synagogue slowly fills up that Sabbath morning with a collection of humble townsfolk, fishermen from the surrounding reasoning of Capernaum, merchants, craftsmen, laborers from the area and it's a typical Sabbath day.

They are engaging joyfully in the singing of the Psalms, the recitation of the Hallel, the 18 blessings, the prayers. They quietly hear the days reading from the Torah, the first five books of the Bible and the prophets. And then they wait with great anticipation knowing that someone special has come to teach, Jesus. They were looking forward to a great message that day and they were not disappointed. The text says that they were astonished at his teaching and that word astonished means to be struck with shock over something. And we have to pause and ask ourselves, okay, but by what were they astonished as Jesus got up and taught? Were they astonished because Capernaum had some sick fog machines and pyrotechnics on stage? Were they astonished because of the latest fashion that Jesus was wearing as he preached? No, that crowd was enraptured and on the edge of their seats because of the words coming out of that man's mouth. Because of the power and authority and clarity of the proclamation being given.

Jesus simply took the law and the prophets, and he made much of what was already there. And it says here that they were astonished at his teaching because his word had the ring of authority to it. The authority that was not found in any other religious teaching of that day. As Mark records, Jesus taught as one possessing authority, not as the teachers of the law. And Jesus always taught like that, by the way. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, if you remember, concludes with these words in Matthew 7:28-29, "*When Jesus finished all these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as one of their scribes.*" So, you have to ask yourself, okay, what in the world? Like, how were these scribes and rabbis teaching for them to be astonished at Christ's teaching? The best way I could describe it is that they taught under the bondage of quotation marks.

In the Jewish Talmud, you can read multiple rabbis confess, I have never in my life ever said anything that was not first said by one of my teachers. And the sad thing is, most of these teachers would often contradict themselves. So, if you were to show up in a first-century synagogue in that day, the sermon would have sounded something like this. Well, Rabbi Hillel says this about this passage. But on the other hand, Rabbi Isaac did say this. And then again, Rabbi Eleazar did say this about this, and on and on it would go for the next hour or so. Can you imagine how boring, how legalistic, how petty, and how pointless that would have been? How spiritually draining. You have come to hear the word of God taught, and you come to stand and sit in front of a man who can't even tell you what a simple passage of scripture means. They were in a famine longing for the word of God and truth. Jesus comes along. He's the exact opposite.

For instance, you hear Jesus repeatedly in his sermon on the Mount say, *"you have heard that it is said, but I say to you,"* that's authority. Jesus didn't just preach about God's word, Jesus preached God's word itself. Jesus was bold, he was biblical, he was clear, and he was convicting because he was filled with the Holy Spirit and empowered to proclaim the word of God. And so, that is why they were utterly astonished at his teaching. They were hearing the word of God for itself. And the way that Jesus spoke reached the listeners. It gripped their conscience, and it stirred their hearts with a laser-like precision knowing that it was for them, this was a hallmark of Jesus' teaching.

At the end of Luke after the two disciples met Jesus on the road to Emmaus, as they were reflecting on all that they had heard, they said, *"Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened up to us,"* what, *"the Scriptures?"* On another occasion, when the religious leaders questioned the guards as to why they never arrested Jesus when they had been sent to do so, the guards replied, *"No man ever spoke like this one."* Jesus had authority. And there's another important point here that we all must see. When Jesus goes to teach, as he goes to this synagogue in Capernaum, he grounds his authority where? On the authority of the written word of God, does he not? He's teaching the scriptures. That's where Jesus constantly grounded his authority in the revealed word of God.

When Jesus defeated Satan in the wilderness, if you remember, he did so by doing what? By giving three quotations from the word of God, from the book of Deuteronomy. When Jesus preached his first sermon in Nazareth, he did so by preaching a text of scripture, Isaiah 61. When Jesus unleashes his salvific sermon on the Mount, it's an exposition of the Ten Commandments from Exodus 21-17. And when Jesus is questioned by his opponents concerning his writing throughout the Gospels, we were going to see that he repeatedly goes back to the writings of Moses in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. He goes back to the writings of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Daniel, Hosea, Zechariah, Malachi. He goes back to the writings of the Psalms. And after his resurrection on the road to Emmaus, Luke records that beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus interpreted them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself. Jesus went right through the word of God, and he explained himself from it. Jesus constantly grounded the authority of his teaching in the already revealed word of God. I think there's a lesson from this.

If that's what the son of God did when he exercised his authority over God's people in an area of worship, then we better do no less. This is very important. If we must understand today that if the church itself is to have any authority at all, if believers talking to unbelievers are to have any authority at all, what comes out of your mouth better be grounded on nothing but the word of God itself. As Paul charged Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15-16, *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Avoiding irreverent babble."* And then in a couple of paragraphs over 2 Timothy 4:2, *"preach the word."* I think this is very important for us to remember in our post-post-postmodern world where people are more interested in how they feel than a logical argument and especially the logic of biblical theology. There's a great temptation on the part of the pastor or minister to preach just to motivate people's feelings.

Well, here we see with Christ himself that the teaching of the church has to be based upon opening up God's authoritative word. Jesus sets for us an example. It is interesting. He could have simply said to that synagogue today, listen to me because I am an authority, for of course Jesus was. He was the son of God. But Jesus doesn't do that. Why? Because he did not want to set up that type of example where people get up in front of other people and say, listen to me. Why? Because I'm an authority. Listen to me because I'm a pastor. I'm a teacher. I'm a doctor. Listen to me because this is my position. This is my experience. This is my education. I am the authority, so listen to me.

No, Jesus sets for us a right example, choosing instead to say my teaching is authoritative not because I'm authority, because even though he was, but because God's word itself is an authority. And that's an example that we can and must follow. Any authority we as believers or church leaders might ever possess is only to the degree that is consistent with and based upon the revealed word of God. You might have a lot of life experiences. Some of you have a lot more life experiences than I do. You could have a lot of bad experiences. The authority comes from the word of God.

And as the synagogue sat enraptured by that clear and commanding word of Christ, suddenly we're confronted in verses 33-34 with the enemy of Christ's authority. It says, *"And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, '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.'"* Now, how shocking that must have been to have someone cut through the silence of that attentive congregation and hear the voice of a man saying at the top of his lungs, *"Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?"* You're like, who's talking, right? *"I know who you are - the Holy One of God."* People must have looked over their shoulders the exact same way that people do today when someone is eating popcorn too loudly in the movie theater or when their cell phone goes off. Who is this person and why are they here? Who brought them, right?

Well, Luke tells us that this man is demon-possessed. That's why he acts this way. He is demon-possessed, indwelt by an evil unclean spirit. One of Satan's minions had entered into the religious members of that synagogue that day. And it could not stand being in the holy presence of Christ. The longer it was near the Holy Son of God and the longer it heard his pure words of truth, the more uncomfortable that evil spirit became until finally in its uncleanness, it begins writhing and it starts crying out, *"Ha!"* And that word ha is actually more, if you study where it occurs elsewhere in the scriptures, it means more Alas! It's a cry of dismay. And the question is what have you to do with us is literally, what do we have in common? Leave us alone is what the unclean spirit is saying. Don't torment me. Go away. The unclean spirit is repulsed by the presence of the Holy Christ.

The next phrase, which is also stated as a question, is really a shout of defiance and dread. *"You have come to destroy us."* And then the dramatic cry, *"I know who you are - the Holy One of God."* Isn't that interesting? Now, this is not the spirit trying to butter up Jesus. Instead, it comes probably from the belief that knowing a person's name and identity is a way to gain mastery over them. And so, it's a futile attempt to gain mastery probably over Jesus. It's also an evil spirit trying to be rebellious, knowing that rather than

Jesus being the one who reveals himself in his time, I'm going to do this. It's a futile attempt and another act of transgression and rebellion against God.

It's interesting that later on, the congregation wondered in verse 36-37, *"Who is this?"* They asked that question. If you see it, *"Who is this?"* Well, it's interesting, because the demon had no doubt. As James teaches, *"even the demons believe and they tremble."* The hosts of hell understand exactly who Jesus is. You might be confused on it this morning, but I want you to know, hell is not. They have a biblically orthodox theology. If you actually read the Gospels and hear every word that comes out of demons' mouths, you actually get a pretty good idea of some major Bible doctrines. You understand that the demons affirm the Trinity. Demons affirm the deity of Jesus Christ. Demons affirm the authority and inerrancy of scripture. Demons affirm the reality of everlasting judgment to those who disobey God. Demons have a better theology than some people that attend our churches today.

And from this encounter, we are reminded, without a doubt, wherever Jesus is preached and raised up, we are reminded once again that there will come opposition. There are enemies to Jesus' authority. Sometimes subtly, those oppositions will come up, but sometimes overtly as well, like you see here. It is true, what happens in Jesus' day is exactly what will happen today. If you preach against the unclean spirits of our culture, against the spirit of pornography, against the perverse sensuality of our culture of abortion, if you preach against homosexuality or transgenderism or pride or licentiousness or self-sufficiency or self-righteousness or covetousness or greed, if you start to preach against these unclean spirits with the Holy Truth of Christ, the foul creatures under the stones will always begin to stir, and you'll see a lot of it in synagogues and churches.

And so here we see an exorcism is in order. Back then, exorcisms, the Jews did crazy things when I was researching it. They had these crazy ideas of holding a ring under the nose of the victim, chanting along in cantation, drawing the ring back and with the demon in tow out of the person or something like that. Well, here we see Jesus does not engage in any ridiculous hocus pocus like that. He doesn't need to hide behind ceremonial smoke and mirrors because he has real authority. And we see that in how Jesus responds. He has the authority to back up his words. Jesus doesn't just engage in dialogue he simply delivers this man. And that's what we see next, the example of his authority in verse 35. It says, *"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."*

Now, if you study the actions of Satan and demons throughout scripture, they always mean harm. Satan might promise you many things. His goal is to devour you. And here we see by the authority of Jesus, he absolutely delivers this man, and the man experiences no harm. Two straightforward commands and the demon is out of him. Jesus says first, *"Be silent,"* literally be muzzled, be mute *"and come out of him."* And it says, *"And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm."* Just like that, the demon is decisively repelled. No two hours of praying and fasting and doing everything else. He demonstrates the absolute authority over the spiritual realm. It's like nothing to him. Even demons, wicked spirits, obey Jesus's omnipotent words. Think about that. Even demons, wicked spirits, obey Jesus's words.

The devil seeks to send all of his minions to hinder the proclamation of the gospel of truth and yet they have no authority over Jesus at all. Jesus stands in power and authority over them. As 1 John 3:8 says, *"The reason why the Son of God has appeared was to destroy the works of the devil."* And you see Jesus doing that here in that synagogue. You might be thinking though, if you were here last week, wait a minute, I thought Jesus came to preach the gospel. And now you're telling me Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. And I say, amen, absolutely, those two things are exactly the same things. The two are virtually synonymous. It is in the preaching of the gospel that sight is given to the blind. It is through the preaching of the gospel that freedom and liberty are given to the captives. And it is through the preaching of the gospel that the gates of hell are assailed. And it is through the preaching of the gospel that both Satan's kingdom is rolled back, and God's kingdom is advanced. Through this example there is left no doubt for us.

The universe is not in the grips of dualism an eternal struggle between Satan and God. No, it is clear here who the sovereign victor is. Satan is a defeated foe and Christ is captain. He is the ultimate authority. This is the authority of Jesus. He says, I am the saving power of God. And he demonstrates it here. So, what's our response to be to this Jesus of all authority? Our response is to be the same as the congregations as we see in verses 36-37 where we see an esteem for Christ's authority. Look at verse 36 and it says, *"And they were all amazed and said to one another, what question do they ask, 'What is this,' what, word?"* *"What is this word?"* Notice there is no difference between the word with which Jesus taught them and the word with which he cast out demons. It is the same word with the same authority. The word with which he commanded demons was the word with which he commanded them. They understood that. The word of power was the word of astonishment. *"What is this word?"* It's the same word, the same message, the same authority.

For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits and they come out and the obvious application is this: if even demons, rebellious fallen unclean spirits, obey absolutely the voice of Christ when it is given, how much more ought we to obey the word of Christ when it is given also? Oh, the trembling pride in which we raise ourselves up against Christ. And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region. It's interesting. Their response, what is this word is similar to the response of the disciples if you remember when the storm comes up out of the sea of Galilee in Mark 4:35-41. Jesus was asleep on the bottom of the boat and the disciples decide that it is important now to wake up Jesus and let them know a few things. They're about to take a trip to the bottom of the sea. And excuse me Jesus, we just want you to know that our boat's about to go down and we want you to know frankly that if you cared at all about us you would do something. And Jesus stands up, he rubs his eyes, he looks out over the sea, he just says, peace, be still. And immediately the sea becomes calm, and the keel of the boat settled down in the water. And the disciples' response at seeing that word speak from Christ is given in verse 36. *"What manner of man is this, for even the winds and the waves obey him?"* That's exactly the question that Luke is trying to stir up in our hearts and minds this morning. *"What manner of man is this?"* And *"What is this word,"* that he is speaking?

People are still asking that question today. Is Jesus just one of the many other religious teachers on this planet? Is Jesus just someone who came to add his two cents to our religious experience? And I'll sprinkle

a little bit of Jesus in with everything else that I decide to believe. The answer is no. He doesn't give you that opportunity. Jesus is God come to earth. He is the sovereign who by his sovereigns he can exercise salvation on behalf of his creation. He is the saving sovereign and the king of heaven and earth. How would we know that? We'd know it because he would demonstrate his kingly authority. He'd demonstrate a how? Everywhere. Over what? Over everything.

And I want you to know that this truth is exactly what's going to be repeated as we go through the Gospel of Luke for the next several weeks, possibly month. Is that Jesus by the omnipotent power of a sovereign word is going to command demons to leave and they leave. He commands fevers to leave, and they leave. He commands leprosy to leave, and it leaves. And then Jesus turns around and he commands sins to be forgiven and they're forgiven. And he commands men to do the impossible to leave everything and follow him and men do the impossible. They leave everything and they follow him by the sheer power of his omnipotent word. How can you explain this? Have you ever seen a man with words like Christ? No, you have not. Why? It's because Jesus is God the Son incarnate as man among us. He's the king of glory. He's the sovereign of all. And his sovereignty can be used in salvation to those who are in bondage. And in judgment upon those who are rebellion. And it's exactly what you see here in Luke 4. Jesus has authority.

And we're going to find out that this is one of the central messages of the Gospel of Luke. And it better start changing the way we give our Gospel proclamation. You'll never hear in the Gospel of Luke will you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior. Jesus will turn to people, and he will say repent, believe, submit, and surrender. Why? Because Jesus is not just one option among many. He is the saving sovereign of all.

So how do we apply this? How do we apply the reality of the authority of Christ and the truth of his omnipotent word? First, the reality of the authority of Jesus ought to convict us with responsibility. If Jesus is so sovereign that he can do all of this by the mere word of his power, how much more ought we, like that congregation of old, to esteem and to honor and to obey the word of Christ for his word is the very extension of his sovereignty. To obey Christ is to obey his word. To honor Christ is to honor his word. To love Christ is to love his word. And make no mistake, where there is no obedience to his word, there is no obedience to Christ. Where there is no honor to his word, there is no honor to Christ. And where there is no love for his word, there is no love for Christ either.

We must not be like those of Nazareth who heard Jesus' words and said, what else have you got? We must be like those of Capernaum who heard Jesus' words and said, what authority that can save a soul like me? I must surrender my life to him forever. So, the truth of Christ's omnipotent word convicts us with responsibility. The same word with which Jesus commands the swirling forces of this universe is the very same word with which he commands you. Beginning today, I pray that we would pay much closer attention to what we have heard, knowing from whom we have heard it.

So, the authority of Jesus and the truth of his omnipotent word convicts us with responsibility also fills us with hope. Jesus says in the very last verses of Matthew, *"All authority in heaven and on earth is given to me."* We see that that truth is established here at the very beginning of the Gospel of Luke. Jesus has all authority and all power, and that authority is demonstrated by his word. That is wonderful news because

you know what that means? It means that there is hope, great hope for anyone who hears that word. And anyone here today, if it doesn't matter who you are this morning, you may have the hardest heart in the state of Ohio because it might be a religious heart like the hearts in that synagogue. And in your heart, rebellious and impenetrable heart, you might think that you're beyond changing. Christ can change you.

You might think that you're beyond saving. And Christ can save you. You might think that you're beyond hope. Christ is your hope. Because all authority in heaven and earth is given to him. The authority to forgive sins and to give life and to empower and change your soul. There's only one thing needed for you to receive that saving transformation of Christ which Jesus demonstrated physically here, the only thing that's required is humility. Like we saw last week recognize Jesus for who he is as the Holy One of God, the saving sovereign. And bow in humble faith and desperate dependency before him. It is this humble faith in him that will bring healing to your soul. Hear the word of Christ. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Believe in him and be saved. Convicts us with responsibility and fills us with hope.

This is the word of God from Luke 4:31-37 which I have considered a great privilege to be able to share with you today I now can commit to your further study and your faithful obedience until Christ, the Lord and sovereign of all, returns.

Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for this passage that catches our hearts up into the glory of your Son Jesus Christ. Save us, Father, from too little a view of Jesus. May we remember who he is in his authority. Father, I pray if there is someone here today who has not trusted in Christ that they would run to him today and ask him to do what only he can do by his power. Deliver them from the snares of Satan and from eternal death. And Father, we thank you that Jesus has shown that he is able to do everything that he has promised. Showing it ultimately by going right to the grave and coming out the other side. We thank you that on the cross and through his resurrection Jesus Christ put all the forces of Satan to flight. And showed once and for all that he is the Lord of heaven and earth, and he can save those who trust in him. Father, I pray for us as we have recognized the authority of Jesus in his word. May we be faithful this week in declaring it, knowing that he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to you by faith. And they will do so as the word of Christ is preached. Help us to share this word with those who are around us. We pray that we might see Christ saving sovereignty at work among us.

For your glory in Jesus' name, amen.

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