

Part 20 His Message Was With Authority (4:31-44)

• *The highlights of the Galilean ministry*

• *Jesus has authority...*

as a teacher

over evil spirits

over sickness

• *Prayer is the source of His authority*

1. In Jesus' story we see the vital importance of authority

• *True authority does not have to be heavy handed or tyrannical*

• *The spiritual world took notice of Him*

• *We all need to be under some kind of authority – to guide our freedom*

2. In Jesus' story we see what it is that produces authority

Luke now comes to describe the highlights of the Galilean ministry of Jesus. The first phase ^{☒1} perhaps took place during about March AD 31 to about mid-year AD 31. Luke is now following Mark's Gospel quite closely. Luke 4:31-44 is similar to what we have in Mark 1:21-39.

The outstanding characteristic of Jesus is His authority. In the spiritual realm, Jesus only has to speak and things happen. People marvel at the authority of His **teaching** ^{☒1}. Then they marvel at the authority He has over the **realm of evil spirits** ^{☒2}. When Jesus is in a synagogue a man shows himself to be demonised. The evil spirit recognises and submits to Jesus. As a result Jesus became well known for His spiritual power ^{☒3}.

Then Jesus comes into Simon Peter's house ^{☒1} and reveals that He has authority over **sickness**; He heals Peter's mother-in-law. Many people come in the evening to see Him and He ministers to all of them ^{☒2}.

The next day Jesus rises early to pray ^{☒1}. This is the source of His authority. When everyone is seeking Him, He is seeking His Father. Soon He leaves Capernaum to preach more widely in the land of the Jewish people ^{☒2}.

1. **In Jesus' story we notice the vital importance of authority.** In some circles 'authority' is not popular. It reminds some people too much of harshness, restraint, bondage, intimidation. In other places 'authority' is very popular. It all depends on which part of the world you are living in and what churches you are familiar with.

Perhaps the first thing that needs to be said is that there is a difference between authority and authoritarianism. True authority does not have to be heavy-handed or tyrannical. True authority is simple. Jesus' authority was simply the fact that He knew what was right with one hundred per cent certainty. When He was preaching and teaching He spoke without harshness or any bullying manner **but He knew that what He said was true**. He knew God would eventually vindicate Him as one who was speaking the truth. This kind of authority is simply a matter of truth held with a clear conscience.

Jesus' authority also involved the fact that **the spiritual world took notice of Him**. When He spoke to demons, they obeyed. When He spoke to a sickness, the sickness obeyed also! He could order a demon to leave. In the same way He could order a sickness to leave. His authority consisted in the fact that spiritual powers recognized Him as a man whom God would want to be honoured.

The fact is that we all need to be under some kind of authority. It does not have to be harsh. We may think we want to be 'free'. That is fine, but our 'freedom' has to be **guided freedom**. It has to be unimpeded movement **along the right lines**. True authority is the kind that Jesus had: loving tender assurance that He was in the will of God.

2. **In Jesus' story we see what it is that produces authority.** Many people want authority: parents, husbands, schoolteachers, policemen, politicians, preachers, apostles. Jesus had amazing authority over every realm. His authority was recognized by people. Everyone who had any kind of sickness in Capernaum came seeking Jesus ^{☒1}. Multitudes were searching for Him ^{☒2}. There are two words used here that are found in Luke's Gospel but not in Mark's similar account: they are the words 'preach good news' (different from 'preach' in 4:44 and Mark 1:38) and 'kingdom' ^{☒3}.

^{☒1} Mark 1:14-3:6; Luke 4:14-6:11

^{☒1} 4:31-32
^{☒2} 4:33-6
^{☒4} 4:37

^{☒1} 4:38-39
^{☒2} 4:40-41

^{☒1} 4:42-3
^{☒2} 4:44

^{☒1} 4:40
^{☒2} 4:42
^{☒3} 4:43

• A message of 'good news' gives authority

• Jesus words were not about laws, rules or religion... but about God's willingness to act powerfully as king in life and circumstances

3. In Jesus' story we see the source of Jesus' authority

What gives a person authority is a message of 'good news'. Many religious ideas are not good news but bad news. It is bad news to tell me that I must somehow find the strength to amend my life. It is bad news to tell me that I have got to be highly religious and have got to go to lots of meetings and do lots of fasting. It is bad news to tell me that I have got to be very clever and understand a lot of doctrinal teaching.

Often the gospel is preached in such a way that it becomes bad news. But the gospel is 'good news' and it is particularly the 'good news about the kingdom'. It is the news that God is willing to act powerfully as a king in my life and in my circumstances. This is why 'multitudes' were looking for Jesus. They had the idea – and they were right – that Jesus was not telling them about laws or rules or religions or intellectual feats of understanding. They had the idea – and they were right – that what He had to say and what He would do would be altogether good news. It is not surprising that Jesus had authority not only over spirits and over sickness; He had authority among the people as well. They kept on coming. They longed to see Him, to hear Him, to have Him work into their lives. That is 'authority' indeed!

3. In Jesus' story we see the source of Jesus' authority. Jesus' authority came from God. It was sustained by the fact that He liked to spend time with God. On this occasion He found the opportunity to get away from the people and pray ^{Ⓜ1}. Although they were seeking him ^{Ⓜ2}, He was not seeking any greater popularity. He was living for God. He knew that He had more work to do in 'the land of the Jews'.¹ His prayerfulness and His commitment to God's will were the source of His authority.

Ⓜ1 4:42
Ⓜ2 4:43

Notes

1. The word 'Judea' in 4:44 does not mean the southern province of Judea but 'the land of the Jews'. Luke simply means Jesus had to go to other towns where Jews were living in addition to Capernaum.

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