

Showing the Authority of Jesus as He begins His Ministry

a chiasmic or focused outline of Luke 4:14-44

- A Jesus teaches in the synagogue, gloried by all:** 4:14 "Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. 15 And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all."
- B Jesus sent to heal the sick:** 4:16 "So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. 17 And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." 20 Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.""
- C People are amazed:** 4:22 "So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?""
- D "brood of vipers" rebuked:** 4:23 "He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.' " 24 Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. 25 But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; 26 but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." 28 So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29 and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. 30 Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way."
- E Word of Jesus has authority!** 4:31 "Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. 32 And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority."
- D Demons rebuked:** 4:33 "Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, 34 saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!" 35 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him."
- C People are amazed:** 4:36 "Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." 37 And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region."
- B Jesus heals the sick:** 4:38 "Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon's house. But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. 39 So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them. 40 When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. 41 And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ."
- A Jesus teaches in the synagogues, sought by all:** 4:42 Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; 43 but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent." 44 And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

Scripture Readings:

Luke 4: 14 Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. 15 And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all...

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“Jesus Amazes the Crowds”

We are working from the focused or chiastic outline where Luke introduces the ministry of Jesus showing how Jesus comes with authority.

Last week we saw His authority confound His enemies.

This week and next we will see a contrast between those who faithfully serve the Lord and those who are simply intoxicated by His power and authority, or as Luke puts it in verse thirty-six: “they were amazed!”

We have already seen an example of this contrast where the people of Jerusalem are “troubled” along with King Herod in the Christmas account while the lowly shepherds come and worship the new born King

We need to understand how these crowds or other groups of people react because we will see Luke contrast them with the faithful disciples over and over again in his Gospel.

These contrasts will culminate when we see the faithful disciples proclaim the coming King during the triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

And the stunning contrast just a few days later when other “crowds” are calling for the crucifixion of Jesus!

And finally, in the Book of Acts, Luke will once again show this contrast:

Where at the beginning we see those gathered at Jerusalem brought under conviction by Peter’s preaching by the thousands! Contrasted with the final scene in Jerusalem where Paul is attacked by the angry crowd who refuse to hear anything about the Gospel going to the Gentiles:

-- Just like we saw last week!

In our readings today we saw Jesus:

- ✓ Being “glorified by all,”**
- ✓ People “astonished at His teaching,”**
- ✓ All of them “amazed,”**
- ✓ Crowds spreading reports**
- ✓ People seeking after Jesus.**

Now this may at times seem confusing to us, but it is important to know that it was not so with Jesus!

We see the Lord's understanding in John's Gospel where in chapter two we find similar accounts of miracles:

“23 Now when [Jesus] was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. 24 But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, 25 and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.”

We must learn to be careful how we read the Scriptures like these in Luke: At first glance, it would seem good for people to be “amazed” to “glorify” Jesus and especially to “believe” in Jesus, as we saw in John.

- **But a careful reading of the context shows that these are NOT good reactions.**

What we see here in Luke chapter 4 are people who can “glorify” Christ at one moment and be ready to cast Him over a cliff at the next.

So what does all this mean for us today?

- **What lessons can we learn from people acting badly or faithlessly?**
- **How can we be sure that we are not acting the same way?**

First, as we saw last week, these are covenant people and we as covenant people must take the warnings of Psalm 95 and Hebrews seriously!

- **We learned we are called to bow before the Lord's authority and do His work, HIS way!**

With the Westminster shorter catechism, in the very first question, we are instructed about the chief end of man:

Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

In verse 15 Luke tells us that Jesus “taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all”

Were these Covenant People achieving man's chief end?

Obviously not, since when confronted with the actual implications of Christ's authority they became an angry mob willing to kill Him a short time later.

So how do we know when we are rightly glorifying God as we are commanded rather than wrongly doing what these crowds were?

We saw last week where the Prophet Isaiah outlined God's displeasure with His people even as they do things like sacrifices and prayers He had commanded.

A modern example might be hearing the Mormon Tabernacle choir doing a stunning performance of Handel's Messiah, knowing they reject Christ's own claims about Himself and their sinful state.

As your pastor, I struggled all week to find a simple way of explaining this contrast because it is SO important to our understanding of what is going on: AND to understand many of the things we will encounter in Luke's Gospel and to properly apply the lessons to our everyday lives!

I realized that one way we can see this lesson is to simply consider our reading from I Corinthians 13 this morning in our Order of Worship

- **There we see that our motive is MUCH more important than our actions**

Paul shows us the more excellent way: Love, which we have learned means a humble willingness to keep God's commandments: "If you love me keep my commandments!"

Without the proper motive or foundation, some extraordinary things are suddenly NOTHING: Speaking like an angel, giving all my money to the poor, perfect knowledge, moving mountains:

- **A pretty impressive list of accomplishments, that Paul states will profit NOTHING!**
- **So applying this to our passage in Luke we see that without hearts that love and serve God, all that these people have done profits them nothing:**
- **However, we need to bring this understanding into the here & now: How does it apply to us?**
- **How can we know that we are rightly glorifying God?**

The Westminster children's catechism gives us some real insight and rightly puts a proper understanding of what it means to glorify God in the first few questions!

Q. 1. Who made you?

A. God.

Q. 2. What else did God make?

A. God made all things.

Q. 3. Why did God make you and all things ?

A. For his own glory.

Q. 4. How can you glorify God?

A. By loving him and doing what he commands.

Q. 5. Why ought you to glorify God?

A. Because he made me and takes care of me.

- **As we often point out, we adults do some of our best learning when we focus on teaching Biblical truth to our children!**

The bottom line is that the Christian Life is about bringing Glory to God and not to ourselves!

- **We should see fruit in two very important areas:**

First we must focus on simple obedience rather than showmanship:

This simple obedience is what the church calendar teaches us as “normal time.” We will see this next week with Peter’s mother-in-law and other women in the New Testament.

This will be very timely as our nation celebrates Mother’s Day!

[we prefer doing that 365 days of the year!]

We will then look to Dale, Mike and Theron to move us through the much more important Church calendar with Ascension Sunday, Pentecost Sunday and then Trinity Sunday.

On Father’s Day we will flesh this concept of simple obedience out more fully as we actually enter the period of “normal time” in the Church calendar that takes us back to the Advent season in December.

- We will be striving to learn to be content with where God has put us and seek to serve Him well
- A much better alternative than always looking for something new and exciting or judging our involvement in the Body of Christ by what is in it for me, or even for my family:

-- Which at bottom is what these folks there in Galilee were doing!

This is critically important because it is how we will establish covenant faithfulness:

- Our children must see us serving in humble obedience trusting in God's promises rather than our own strength:
- Not thinking or acting as if God should have some faith in us!
- Remembering that Jesus knows what is in man!

That is the other lesson for bearing good fruit: Remembering that Jesus knew, and knows what was in man!

- We must see that without God's Grace and the gift of His Holy Spirit, we are no better off than those crowds who were AMAZED at what Jesus could do!
- This is why we Baptize our children, clearly demonstrating to them that we love God because He first loved us!
- This is why our confidence and assurance must be in God – Not in our intellect or experiences!

Remembering that Jesus understands what is in man will also impact our mission work and evangelism"

As Pastor West always reminded those of us who worshiped with him, "It is easy to build a crowd: It takes God to build a Church!"

WE need to learn & remember what we teach our children:

- Q. 4. How can you glorify God?
A. By loving him and doing what he commands.
- Q. 5. Why ought you to glorify God?
A. Because he made me and takes care of me.

So simple and yet SO profound

Conclusion:

**In the end, it means coming to Jesus: Not to be awed by His miracles, not to be amazed by His power:
But to glorify Him as Lord & Savior.**

As the author of Hebrews says near the end of his epistle in Chapter 12: 1 “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”

- **Again, when we see it put that way, it seems like such a simple choice:**
- **Have joy with Jesus or be weary and discouraged without Him**

It is what we see over and over in the Book of Proverbs about the two paths

- **If you are weary and discouraged, then you are on the wrong path.**

You cannot get to the right path by speeding up or learning to do the same wrong things better or by just giving up!

**You must turn around, go back,
and take the right path:**

- **You must bow to the authority of Jesus as your Lord and know the joy and abundant life that he offers.**

As we come to the Lord’s Table this morning we will meditate and celebrate the words of Psalm 34 where we are told to “taste and see that the Lord is good!”

The conclusion of that Psalm is a good summary for this morning’s message: Reflecting on the lessons we can learn from teaching our children the simple truths of our Faith:

Psalm 34:11 “Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. 12 Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good?”

**13 Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.
14 Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.**

15 The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their cry. 16 The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. 17 The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. 18 The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit. ... 22 The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.”

Our hymn of response this morning is based on Psalm 148 and we will read & sing Psalm 148 again as we are commissioned to serve our living Lord: This Psalm calls on all creation to praise and exult the Lord: To glorify God and enjoy Him forever!

Let us do that heartily and rightly as His redeemed servants this morning and throughout the coming week!

Communion meditation:

Psalm 34: “I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. 2 My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; The humble shall hear of it and be glad. 3 Oh, magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt His name together. 4 I sought the Lord, and He heard me, And delivered me from all my fears. 5 They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces were not ashamed.

As a radiant people... Let us rise and exalt His name together with our confession of faith!

, 6 This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him, And saved him out of all his troubles. 7 The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them. 8 Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! 9 Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. 10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.