

SERMON FOR JANUARY 30, 2022

TEXT: LUKE 4: 31-44

THEME: WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH JESUS?

31 And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, **32** and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. **33** And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, **34** "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." **35** 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. **36** 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!" **37** And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region. And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. **39** And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them. **40** Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who 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, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ. **42** And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, **43** but he said to them, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose." **44** And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

In the name of Jesus:

The season of Epiphany is all about revealing who Jesus really is. We began the season with reading about the Baptism of Jesus, how, when John

baptized Jesus the heavens literally opened up, the Father announcing that this One is His Son, and then the Spirit descended upon Jesus to begin His ministry. From that moment, Jesus is all about proclaiming that the Kingdom of God is at hand. He is tempted by the devil in the wilderness, He turns water into wine at Cana, and He goes throughout the surrounding region teaching with authority and healing those with demons and a variety of diseases. Luke records: “reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.” News was getting around about Jesus. And a great many people were coming to Jesus to make a variety of requests. Demons were cast out, Peter’s mother in law was healed from her fever, and many brought the sick and infirmed to Jesus to be healed. And in each and every case, no one was turned away.

But this isn’t the real reason why Jesus came to earth and it isn’t the real reason why Jesus was healing the sick and casting out the demons. Certainly people were bringing their sick and infirmed loved ones to Him because they knew Jesus as a great worker of miracles. And yes, they had heard Jesus teach in the synagogue and He was one who taught with authority, He spoke like He knew what He was talking about. But the real reason why Jesus came to earth can be seen in the words of the demonic who cried out to Jesus saying: “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.” And the real reason is expounded upon by Jesus in His own words: “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.”

The Scriptures tell us that Jesus is the very Son of God, the Holy One of God, who came to earth to bring Good News to those who suffer from the bondage and wages of sin and death. The miracles that Jesus did all point to Jesus being the Savior, and His death and resurrection accomplish this for you and me. Jesus came not just for the people listed in our text for today, Jesus came for you. Jesus had compassion on those who were hurting and suffering in His ministry, and He also today has compassion and mercy on all who are burdened by anxiety, sickness, brokenness, and despair today. For any and all who have been touched by the darkness of death Jesus is there for you. He came for you, He loves you. He died for you. He rose for you. He lives for you today. But now, knowing this, what will you do with Jesus?

Sadly, some treat Jesus like that Christmas ornament called the Elf on the Shelf, bringing Jesus out for Christmas and Easter, then putting Him aside until another Christian holiday rolls around. Others will only put their faith in Jesus when they need Him. Have a sickness in the family? Call on Jesus. Financial trouble, ask Jesus for a way out. In a bind, ask Jesus to help. Now to be sure, Jesus tells all of us to call upon Him in the day of trouble, and He will

answer, but to treat Jesus in this way is nothing more than believing in a magic genie, who when you are in trouble, you make a request for assistance, then put Jesus back in the bottle until you need Him again. For many who consider themselves Christians, this is what they do with Jesus, but notice, Jesus doesn't cast them aside. No, instead, He continues to go to them, to seek them out, to love them, to invite them into a relationship with Him. Jesus loves everyone, for He was called for this purpose: to preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well."

Dear brother and sister in Christ, Jesus really does love you! He comes to you today forgiving you of all of your sins. He comes to you today in this very Meal to feed you, to forgive you, to strengthen you. He comes to you today, not to condemn you, but to bless you. And your response is the proper response. You sing His praise, you pray, praise, and give thanks! You leave here refreshed and blessed.

But now what will you do with Jesus? Jesus says that "all authority has been given to Me, so go and make disciples of all nations." He sends us out now with His authority, to tell others of His love. Just as Jesus was compelled to go out and tell others that He loved them with an everlasting love, so you and I too are now compelled by the love of Christ and by the power of His Spirit to go out and invite others to receive His love and follow Him. To share

His love with those who treat Him like a good luck charm. To invite those who really don't know a lot about Jesus to follow Him, and so He now gives you the authority to go and tell others and share with others who Jesus really is and what He has done for them in His life, suffering, death, and resurrection. He uses you to invite people to church, He uses you to bring them to church, He uses you to show others of His love, to be His hands, His voice, His feet, and His presence to tell and show in concrete ways that He loves them, that He is for them, and that nothing ever will separate them from the love He has for them. And we have His promise that as we live for Him none of this will be in vain. For He is with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.