

# AMAZED BY THE MESSIAH

**+** **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

Jesus's power over evil and sickness showed people that He is the Messiah, the One who had come to usher in God's kingdom.

**+** **BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

Luke 4

**+** **SETTING:**

In contrasting the rejection of Jesus in His hometown with the events that followed later in Capernaum, Luke purposely drew a comparison between these two narratives. Though the Nazarenes demanded Jesus give them a miraculous sign, He responded with a rebuke. But in Capernaum, Jesus provided several displays of His power. Though we may not always know why Jesus worked one way in one place and worked another way elsewhere, we can trust that He is omniscient, omnipotent, sovereign, and perfectly working out His will to do the will of His Father.

# DAY 1

## READ:

**Luke 4:31-44**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**Luke 4:31-44**

## NOTES



## KEY DOCTRINE #35:

### DEMONS

Demons are angelic beings who sinned against God and now continually work evil in the world today (Job 1:6; Zechariah 3:1; Luke 10:18).

Demons oppose God and seek to destroy His work, as seen in the Bible's description of Satan, the head of demons, who seeks to "steal, kill, and destroy" (John 10:10). Though demons have power, they are limited by God's control and can only act within the constraints of what God permits. In the end, all of the demons will be cast into the lake of fire, for which it was originally created.

From the dawn of time, God has been using His words to bring life and abundance (Genesis 1). God said, and there was. He spoke to Moses to give His people His law (Exodus 20). The Lord said, and there were good and righteous commandments to follow. Out of great compassion, God also spoke words of warning through the prophets. Thus said the Lord, and what was foretold came to pass. Yet Jesus is the Word sent from God to bring grace and truth to humankind (John 1). The Word became flesh, and human beings beheld His glory.

Again and again, we can see that the words of God hold great power. He does not need physical brawn or intellectual power to effect change or create substance. He is the source of all, able to bring forth by Himself anything He pleases. While on the earth, Jesus demonstrated this power by using His words to teach, drive out demons, heal, and proclaim His mission. He commanded and the evil spirit obeyed. He spoke and the sickness vanished. He rebuked and the demons lost their voice.

Today, we hold the Word of God in our hands, and these words hold the same power they always have. They are words that bring life and salvation. They are words that set people free. They are words we ought to treasure, savor, and adore. Yet so often we forget the force behind these words, we fail to treasure these truths, and we ignore the Person in the precepts. The Word of God is not merely a book full of words on a page. It is divine power gifted to us that we may know, love, and worship the omnipotent One who delivered it to us.

**How can you better treasure God's Word today?**

# DAY 2

## READ:

Luke 4:31-37

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 4:33

## NOTES

## VOICES from THE CHURCH

"Being a believer doesn't give you immunity from the assaults of the enemy, but it does give you access to the power of the Father—His power to defend you as well as reverse what's been done to you. If you want to win the fight—if you want to join me in flipping the script, pinning down the enemy, and crippling his impact in your life—the key is realizing you're connected to more spiritual brawn than is coming against you."<sup>1</sup>

—Priscilla Shirer

Most of us have stories of how other Christians have wounded us or others we love. This is a harsh reality that so many hurts come from within the walls of the church. This may be a simple case of immaturity on the part of the offender. Or perhaps an offense taken was not even originally intended. But there certainly are cases of sheer evil from within the congregation where an individual stirs up trouble, violates trust, and brings about great turmoil to the bride of Christ. Even in Jesus's day, it was from within the synagogue that a man with a demonic spirit brought about a disturbance.

The harsh reality is that there are dangerous people within the church. Some are wolves in sheep's clothing who do not know or love God and who dwell among the sheep to take advantage of them. Others are true believers, but they don't realize Satan is using their disobedience to attack the church from within. On one hand, these realities ought to surprise us. Demons have no place amidst God's people, nor do they belong in God's house. However, we shouldn't be surprised that Satan uses whomever he can to further his plan. The evil one is a cunning foe, and if he can keep us fighting among ourselves and wounding one another, he can distract us from our purpose.

Though we cannot control the actions of others, we can be on guard and prepare to shield against the fiery darts the evil one will throw our way (Ephesians 6:16). Too often we attack one another while our true adversary watches with delight. Let us be men and women of wisdom and mercy as we navigate stormy relational waters. Let us remember that save the grace of God, we would be the "problem child." Let us be aware of the spiritual battle we are in, ever prayerful and ready to fight the evil one's attacks on the body of Christ.

**What can you do to combat Satan's schemes within the church?**

# DAY 3

## READ:

Luke 4:14-44

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 4:38-44

## NOTES

In 2020, after months of sheltering in place, civil unrest, and nationwide protests, many businesses were on the brink of bankruptcy. Not only were they hurting financially, some found themselves smack dab in the middle of rioting, chaos, and physical destruction of property. Doors were closed, windows boarded, and selling shut down. Amidst the aftermath, one video went viral. The footage showed a woman who approached a worker, borrowed his power tool for a photo op, then promptly left the scene in her luxury vehicle. Presumably, the woman took the photo to make it seem as if she had been hard at work in the protection/restoration efforts.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, a seventeen-second video can never tell the whole story,<sup>3</sup> but regardless of whether this particular woman's motive was to present a falsehood, the phenomenon known as performative activism is widespread. There is a temptation within every human to put off the appearance of being better than we really are and doing more than we actually do. It could be through virtue signaling, actively managing our image, or simply not correcting someone when they attribute positive motives to something we did when that wasn't quite the case.

Jesus filled His life with helping people in both public and private settings. There were marvels He performed amidst the crowds as well as wonders accomplished that only few knew about. He enacted miracles, both seen and unseen, and often He told people to be silent about His powerful deeds. Jesus did not act on behalf of His image. His compassion for people and His obedience to the Father fueled the life and ministry of the Son of God. Let us follow in the footsteps of Christ through wholehearted obedience, compassionate service, and with no regard for our image beyond that which brings glory to God.

**What are some ways you can serve and care for others for the glory of God, even if no one else sees your deeds?**

# DAY 4

## READ:

Luke 4:31-44

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 4:44

## NOTES

Accounts of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) have flown into headlines throughout the decades. Personal tales of encountering these UFOs make for great movies inspired by speculative stories. Recently, since not all instances are actual objects, “UFOs” have undergone a name change to UAPs: Unexplained Aerial Phenomena. Regardless of their name, the eyewitness narratives often include loads of presumption and very little physical proof. Even with a name change, these UFOs/UAPs retained the first letter within their name: U for unidentifiable or unexplained. Time will tell if additional information will emerge that can explain the unexplainable, but when it comes to believing in these Unexplained Aerial Phenomena, we don’t have much concrete evidence to hold onto.

Unfortunately, many treat the Bible more like a UFO than the authoritative Word of God. Not only is the Bible authoritative, it is also reliable. Often the very details we gloss over in a passage are some of the most important details when it comes to authenticity. Here in Luke 4, the geographic details can be confirmed. Synagogues have been uncovered. Landscapes fit the description. People have been verified. With every year that passes, more and more archaeological evidence points to the veracity of scriptural accounts. What is known in the annals of history has affirmed details found in the Bible.

We can trust God’s Word—not only because God Himself is faithful and trustworthy, not just because we have personally experienced transformation from its message, but because there is ample proof that the people, places, and periods mentioned in the Bible existed. These words we get to enjoy are God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16-17), endure forever (Psalm 119:160), and prove true (Psalm 18:30). God’s Word is not a book full of unidentified phenomena. It is real, living, active, and trustworthy.

**What are some ways you can share the trustworthy words of Scripture with someone who needs the hope of the gospel?**

# DAY 5

## READ:

**Matthew 16:21-23**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**Matthew 16:21-23**

## NOTES

If we take an in-depth look at the ministry of Jesus, we can identify many instances of strategic moves made. However, we will also find plenty of times when His actions seem antithetical to His purpose. This would have been especially true for those watching the life of Jesus unfold, those who didn't have the benefit of 20/20 hindsight. Undoubtedly, the disciples and followers of Jesus found themselves scratching their heads, wondering what in the world Jesus was doing. One instance of this was when Peter had the boldness to rebuke Jesus's announcement that He must suffer at the hands of the religious leaders. Jesus, in turn, vehemently chided Peter, calling him a hindrance who had his mind set on the things of human beings instead of the things of God.

The ministry of Jesus cannot be turned into a calculated formula for us to follow. His key to success was not in the strategic moves He made; it was found in His intimacy with His Father. This closeness afforded Jesus a perspective no earthly guru could give. Christ's nearness to God provided the knowledge of His character, His plan, and His desires.

Today, through the presence of the Holy Spirit within us and the words of God before us on the pages of Scripture, we also can know God intimately. We can comprehend His character, His plan, and His desires. As we do, we can receive the same wisdom and perspective of Jesus, which defies human wisdom and is superior to all earthly strategy. This allows us to make better decisions and not be swayed by the whims of the world. We can be tethered to God's truth, grounded in God's goals, and steered by God's scope.

**What decisions are you facing today for which you will ask for and apply God's wisdom?**

# GROUP

NOTES

## VOICES from THE CHURCH

“Satan can do nothing in this world, and nothing in your life, apart from the sovereign permission of God. Satan is a lion (1 Pet 5:8), but he is a lion on a leash. And God holds the leash. Demons decidedly do not have all authority; Jesus does.”<sup>4</sup>

—David Platt

### POINT 1: Jesus’s powerful teaching prompts astonishment (Luke 4:31-32).

Jesus’s move to Capernaum was not to avoid the Nazarenes but primarily a \_\_\_\_\_ move to proclaim the \_\_\_\_\_ in a more diverse, catalytic space.

**?** How should we balance strategy with faith in and dependence on the Holy Spirit in our ministry efforts?

Jesus preached from the absolute \_\_\_\_\_ of God the Father, through the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit, and with perfect knowledge of God’s plan, such that the people were astonished at His teaching.

**?** What does it mean to teach with authority today?

### POINT 2: Jesus’s power over unclean spirits fuels amazement (Luke 4:33-37).

#### KEY DOCTRINE #35: DEMONS

Demons are angelic beings who sinned against God and now continually work \_\_\_\_\_ in the world today (Job 1:6; Zechariah 3:1; Luke 10:18). Demons \_\_\_\_\_ God and seek to destroy His work, as seen in the Bible’s description of Satan, the head of demons, who seeks to “steal, kill, and destroy” (John 10:10). Though demons have power, they are \_\_\_\_\_ by God’s control and can only act within the constraints of what God permits. In the end, all of the demons will be cast into the lake of fire, for which it was originally created.

**?** Why might we struggle to recognize the work of demons today?

As the sovereign \_\_\_\_\_ of all things,  
God the Son—Jesus—by the word of His mouth,  
commanded the demon and it had to \_\_\_\_\_ .

**?** What does it say about us when we don't obey  
God's command?

### **POINT 3: Jesus's proclamation of the gospel reveals His mission** (Luke 4:38-44).

Jesus repeatedly demonstrated His power, divinity,  
and \_\_\_\_\_ as He healed sicknesses and liberated  
demon-possessed people. Both the physical and the  
spiritual are \_\_\_\_\_ to Him.

**?** How did the actions of Christ reveal His mission?

Jesus was steadfast in His purpose, obeying the  
\_\_\_\_\_ and fulfilling His \_\_\_\_\_ in all  
that He did, proclaiming the good news of the  
\_\_\_\_\_ of God.

## **MY RESPONSE**

Because Jesus has set us free from sin and death, we  
recognize and embrace His authority over every area  
of our lives as we proclaim what Jesus has done for us.

- **HEAD:** In what areas of life do you need to  
remember the reality of God's ability and  
power to save?
- **HEART:** In what areas of life do you need  
to repent and submit to the authority of our  
powerful, loving, and caring Savior?
- **HANDS:** What are some ways you will walk  
forward in the authority of Christ and proclaim  
the good news today?



Scan this QR code to access  
this session's Scripture passages.

### **VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY**

"The life of a believer is a series  
of miracles wrought by 'the  
mighty God.' He is mighty to  
keep His people holy after  
He has made them so, and to  
preserve them until He brings  
to completion their spiritual  
existence in heaven."<sup>5</sup>

—Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)