

AM Luke 4:31-44 Manifesto Commitments

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[0 : 00] Luke chapter 4 in your Bibles, listen out for what Jesus says his job is. Luke chapter 4 and verse 31 and we'll read down to the end of the chapter.

Luke chapter 4 and verse 31 down to the end of the chapter. Luke chapter 4 beginning to read at verse 31, this is the word of God.

And he went down to Capernaum, the 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 them 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?

[1 : 13] How with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits and they come out. And reports about him went 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. And he stood over her and rebuked the fever and had left her. And immediately she rose and began to serve them.

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. 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. 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.

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.

[2 : 19] And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea. Amen. This is a reading of God's inspired and inerrant word.

The Bible is this time into the Old Testament. Into the book of Job. The book of Job. I'm going to read Job chapter 2. One of the things that we come across as we read Luke chapter 4.

Is that time and time again the demons know who Jesus is. We see it in the synagogue. Where the demon says, what have you to do with us Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? We see when Jesus will not allow the demons to speak because they knew who he was.

We're reminded there that the demons know who Jesus is. They know who holds the power. They know who's in charge. And we see that as we come to Job chapter 2.

We're reminded that Satan has this authority. But it's a delegated authority. It's an authority that comes from God. It's a power that comes from God.

[3 : 22] Job chapter 2. Read the whole chapter. It's not a long chapter. And this is the word of God. Job chapter 2. Beginning to read at verse 1. Again, there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord.

And Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said to Satan, from where have you come? Satan answered the Lord and said, from going to and fro on the earth and from walking up and down on it.

And the Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job? That there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil.

He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason. Then Satan answered the Lord and said, skin for skin.

All that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh and he will curse you to your face. And the Lord said to Satan, behold, he is in your hand.

[4 : 26] Only spare his life. So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

And he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes. Then his wife said to him, do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.

But he said to her, you speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God and shall we not receive evil? In all this Job did not sin with his lips. Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamite.

They made an appointment together to come to show him sympathy and comfort him. And when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him. And they raised their voices and wept, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads towards heaven.

And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights. And no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.

[5 : 42] Amen. This is the reading of God's inspired and inerrant word. Let's turn our Bibles then please to Luke chapter 4. Luke chapter 4 and these verses 31 down to the end of the chapter.

Verses 31 down to verse 44 and Luke chapter 4. As I was preparing this sermon, the UK was in the midst of general election fever.

The parties had laid out their manifestos, what they planned to do if they came to power. We had Jeremy Corbyn promising free broadband. We had Jeremy Corbyn promising the renationalization of pretty much every industry that was going.

We had Boris Johnson and his assurances that he would not sell the NHS to Donald Trump. We had Boris Johnson and his assurance that he was going to build a bridge linking Northern Ireland and Scotland.

But now we live on the other side of that election, we can see, well, could the parties be trusted? Can we trust Boris Johnson not to sell the NHS to Donald Trump?

[6 : 47] Can we trust him to fulfill the promises that he's made? It's the actions in government that prove the trustworthiness or otherwise of the promises that he made.

It's what he does now that he's in office that proves the truth of his promise. Last week in the Bible we thought about this section where Jesus went to the synagogue.

We saw Jesus very deliberately find the place that was written in Isaiah the prophet where it says, This is the work of the Messiah. This is the work of God's promised King. He confidently declared that it was fulfilled in his hearing.

It was fulfilled in the words that he was speaking to them. That was his manifesto. That was his pledge. I am the Messiah. I am God's chosen King.

This is what I've come to do. And now as we come to this section in Luke's Gospel this morning, as we come to this section of God's Word this morning, we see Jesus making good on those promises, don't we?

[7 : 54] We see Jesus making good on those claims to be the Messiah. We want to think about three things this morning. See three things from Luke chapter 4 this morning.

Firstly, we want to think about how Jesus brings liberty to the oppressed. That as he meets this demon-possessed man in the synagogue, he sets him free. He frees him from the oppression of the demon.

Secondly then, we want to see how Jesus brings recovery of sight to the blind. Admittedly, it's not explicitly mentioned in this passage, but we see Jesus healing Simon's mother-in-law.

We see that as people hear about that, at the end of the Sabbath day, they bring to him all who had diseases, all who were oppressed by demons. He heals the sick.

And then thirdly and finally, we'll see how Jesus brings good news to the poor. That the people want Jesus the miracle worker to stay. That the people want Jesus the healer to stay in their town.

[8 : 56] But he says, no. I need to go and preach the good news of the kingdom of God to other towns as well. Liberty to the oppressed, recovery of sight to the blind, and good news to the poor.

Jesus is making good on his promises. Jesus is making good on his work as the Messiah. Firstly then, we think about Jesus bringing liberty to the oppressed.

Liberty to the oppressed. And we see that in verses 31 through 37. Last week in the Bible then, we saw how Jesus was teaching at the synagogue.

When he started teaching, the people all marveled at him. The people wanted to hear more and more from him. The people initially accepted him with great joy, but then eventually, they rejected him and his message.

So much so that they were ready to kill him. So much so that they were ready to throw him off the top of this cliff. Which explains what we read then as we come to verse 31. And he went down to Capernaum.

[9 : 56] And he, that is Jesus, went down to Capernaum. He'd been driven out of their town. They had no time for him. They didn't want anything more to do with him. And so Jesus goes to another place.

But notice the little details that Luke records for us. He, that is Jesus, went down to Capernaum. Even this little detail authenticates Luke's gospel for us.

Capernaum was much closer to sea level than Nazareth was. So Jesus literally went down. It's easy to gloss over. And by no means would I build my theology on it.

But little details Luke records for us remind us that this is the inspired and errant word of God. Luke was an educated man. Luke was full of the Holy Spirit.

Luke, in his gospel, wanted to make sure that Theophilus had an accurate account. He wanted to make sure that Theophilus could be sure of all of the things that he'd been taught. And so even little details like Jesus going down to Capernaum built Theophilus' confidence.

[11 : 01] Built our confidence in the work that Luke has done. He's driven from his hometown. He goes to Capernaum. You notice again what he's doing.

Verse 31. He was teaching them on the Sabbath. In a few moments time we're going to see how this is what Jesus has come to do. This is going to be his main focus if you like.

That he's going to tell people about the kingdom of God. People today can get fixated on the miracles of Jesus. People today can discount the whole gospel narratives because they can't get their heads around the idea of the miraculous.

And yet that wasn't primarily what Jesus came to do. The miracles authenticated the message. The miracles proved that Jesus was who he says he was.

The miracles proved that Jesus was the Son of God. But he didn't come to be a miracle worker. He came to be a preacher. He didn't come to be a miracle worker. He came to tell people about the kingdom of God.

[12 : 08] And the people of Capernaum were told, verse 32, were astonished at his teaching for his words possessed authority.

Now this looks promising on the surface of it, doesn't it? Here are people who are listening to Jesus. Here are people who are amazed by him. Here are people who are taken in by what it is that he's saying.

But don't forget they've done exactly the same thing at Nazareth. At Nazareth they were amazed by him. They marveled and spoke well of him, verse 22.

But in the end they tried to kill him. You notice what it is that amazes them. Notice what it is that brings them to that point.

What is it, verse 32? They were astonished at his teaching. Why? For his word possessed authority. This wasn't like their scribes.

[13 : 08] This wasn't like their religious leaders. Their religious leaders just regurgitated what other people thought. Their religious leaders simply taught them what other rabbis had said about any one particular passage.

But Jesus, Jesus speaks with authority. This was teaching with authority. Teaching with passion, with heart. David Hume, the great humanist teacher, the great humanist philosopher, once went to hear George Whitefield, the great evangelist.

And some of his friends were a bit taken aback by this and said to him, well you know David, what are you doing going to hear George Whitefield? You don't believe in Christianity? You've basically discounted anything?

Miraculous? Why are you going to hear George Whitefield? And David Hume replied, well I may not believe it, but he certainly does. Such was Whitefield's passion, such was Whitefield's energy for teaching the Bible, such was Whitefield's passion for sharing the gospel, that it got him a hearing with even the great humanist David Hume.

And that's how I imagine Jesus preaching here, Jesus teaching here. It wasn't cold, distant theology. It was warm.

[14 : 30] It was heart engaging, heart searching, teaching. It was something that the people had never experienced before. It was something that the people weren't familiar with. And as Jesus brings that to them, they say, well what is this?

It's teaching with authority. Friends, as we share the gospel, as we tell people about Jesus Christ, as we tell people how to be saved from their sin, we have to do it with passion.

Without fire inside of us. You see, if we present the gospel in a cold, detached way, if we present the gospel that hasn't done anything to us, then we can't be surprised when people react with indifference.

Because it doesn't look like we believe it ourselves, it doesn't look like it's gripped us with its truth. We must share the gospel. We must share the good news of sins forgiven with passion.

I love verse 33. I don't know why as I was preparing this it just came back to me, I suppose, with a fresh sense of power. It's just so poetic in many senses, isn't it?

[15 : 46] Because in their synagogue, what is there? Right in the midst of their religious community, right in the midst of their religious people, what is there?

And in the synagogue, there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon. This was a man whom they knew, this was a man whom they recognized, and yet, in their midst was a demon.

In their midst was one who was unclean. These people who put such store by their religious rules, these people who put such store by not touching the sick, these people who put such store by keeping the externals of religion, and yet, there was a demon in the midst of the synagogue.

It's a bit like the police forces in the 90s, you know, this is all coming out now, the police forces in the 90s would plant undercover officers in PETA or the IRA or whatever to get information.

And here we have a demon in the midst of the synagogue, an informer in the ranks, so to speak. And yet, notice, it's the demon who knows who Jesus is.

[16 : 57] It's the demon who recognizes who Jesus is. What do you want? What have you to do with us? Verse 34. What do you want with us? Jesus of Nazareth.

I know who you are. I know who you are. The Holy One of God. Have you come to destroy us? There's a couple of things we want to pick out of this. A couple of things that we need to highlight for ourselves. even at the beginning of his ministry, the demons recognize who Jesus is.

Even at the beginning of his ministry, the demons recognize what it is that Jesus has come to do. He'd come to destroy them. He'd come to defeat them once and for all. Secondly, we notice that the demons realize where real power lies.

What are you going to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? They know they don't have any power. They know that they're not in control of this situation.

[18 : 03] They know that the real power lies with Jesus. That's why we read from the start of Job, isn't it? It's a similar story to what we see there. Similar idea to what we see there.

The devil appears before God and he's given this power but it's a delegated power. He's given this authority but it's a delegated authority from God. God is the one who's in control of the situation in Job.

God is the one who sets the limits to how far the devil can go. God is the one who says, have you considered my servant Job? God is the one who says, go this far and no farther.

It's one of those balances that's hard to strike in the Christian life, isn't it? See, we know our Bibles. We know the texts that speak to us and tell us that the devil is like a roaring lion.

We know that the devil is seeking people to devour but we also know that ultimately the devil has been defeated in Jesus Christ. That's what Revelation teaches us. That the devil roams the earth but he has this mortal, this fatal wound on his head because he's been defeated by the lamb who was slain.

[19 : 20] So how do we keep these two things in balance? That the devil has this power on the earth that he is like a roaring lion seeking some to devour and yet he's been defeated by Christ.

We can shift from one extreme to the other so easily looking for demons in every situation. As I went to print the notice sheets yesterday morning the printer had broken and it was sort of a fatal wound to the printer sadly.

Now some people might look at that and say well you see there's the devil the devil didn't want those notice sheets printed. Whereas you say well actually the printer's just eight, nine years old it's probably come to the end of its life.

we can shift from one extreme to the other of looking for the devil in every situation to not worrying about the power of the devil at all.

The devil is real friends his power is real friends. But don't forget this morning ultimately that he has been defeated in Christ. That ultimately Christ is the victor this morning.

[20 : 33] That ultimately as that cross of Christ proves the devil has been defeated. The final thing I want us to notice from this section is that the demons knew who Christ was but it didn't change their life.

What have you to do with us Jesus of Nazareth? What does he say? I know who you are the Holy One of God. It isn't enough for us this morning just to know about Christ.

It isn't enough for us this morning just to know things about Christ. It isn't enough for us this morning just to have the right theology about who Jesus is. We must know Jesus for ourselves.

We must know the truth that Jesus is the saviour from sin. We must know the truth that Jesus is our only hope before God this morning. And there are people who come into church Sunday by Sunday their theology is probably alright.

There are people who come into church Sunday by Sunday and their lives may be quite outwardly righteous. And yet they don't know Christ.

[21 : 54] The demons knew their theology it was right I know who you are but it didn't change anything about them. We can have all our theology right but we need to put it into practice.

We need to be allowing the Bible we need to be allowing those things that we know about Jesus to make those last six inches to journey that last six inches from our head to our heart.

we don't need to know more and more and more stuff about Jesus we need to put into practice what we know about Jesus. It isn't enough to know about Jesus we have to know him personally for ourselves.

So Jesus commands the demon to come out of the man and of course it does. The people are again amazed at him verse 36 what is this word for with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits and they come out not just at the deeds that he's performed not just at the fact that he's driven out the demon but they're amazed at his words they're amazed at the things that he says and reports about him go out through the region.

So here's the first thing then Jesus sets free those who are oppressed the man who had been bound by the demon is set free. So that's the first big tick if you like that's the first manifesto commitment that's the first pledge of Jesus ticked off he has set the captives free.

[23 : 36] Secondly then we want to see the recovery of sight to the blind the recovery of sight to the blind and we see that in verses 38 through 41 now right at the outset as I said earlier on I need to be up front here and say that at no point does this passage no point to verses 38 to 41 tell us that there's anyone being born blind who has been healed I accept that but there are many people who are brought there are many people who are ill who are brought to Jesus and no healing if we take recovery of sight to the blind as a catch all term for sickness we can see quite easily how Jesus fulfills that promise here can't we if we take recovery of sight to the blind not meaning exclusively physically blind we can see how Jesus fulfills that promise so Jesus has cured the demoniac he leaves the synagogue and goes to Simon's house Simon's mother-in-law was ill in bed with a high fever again Luke the physician not just a fever not just a sickness not just an illness but this very medical term that

Luke uses this high fever and they appeal to Jesus well look can you do anything can you help her can you do something for her I mean we've just seen you drive out a demon we've just seen you set the captives free maybe you could help her as well so Jesus does as they ask he stands over her he rebukes the fever and immediately it leaves her and notice what happens verse 39 notice again the details that Luke records for us he stood over her and rebuked the fever and it left her and immediately she rose and began to serve them once Jesus has healed her she begins waiting on them now why include that detail is that detail included for us to show us that you know a woman's place is really in serving and making the tea and sandwiches is it to show us that the men couldn't

be bothered doing the serving and so they needed a woman to do it is it to show us that Jesus thought that serving was beneath him and so this woman had to be healed because well there was no other option was there no rather it highlights for us how immediately Jesus heals the woman how immediately Jesus heals Simon's mother in law it wasn't that the fever gradually left her it wasn't that she needed a few days bed rest and then she could get on with life no once Jesus had healed her she was perfectly healed once Jesus had healed her she was back to full strength when Jesus heals us when Jesus cures us this morning of sin it is an immediate thing when we come to him with repentance and faith when we come to him looking to him to forgive us for our sin when we come to him trusting in his death in our place when we turn to him from our sin at that moment at that moment we receive pardon and forgiveness for sin at that moment we are perfectly healed just like that penitent thief on the cross remember those words as soon as he looked to Jesus as soon as he turned to Christ what did Christ assure him of today you will be with me in paradise he'd been healed he'd been forgiven he'd been restored by Christ at that very moment so the word gets out people hear that Jesus is in town that he's healed the demon possessed man that he's healed perhaps Simon's mother-in-law and now as the sun sets people bring to him all of the sick we see that verse 40 now when the sun was setting all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him now why wait until the sun sets if somebody was sick why not bring them straight away if somebody was sick why not bring them there and then because it was the sabbath day as the sun sets the sabbath is over all of these strict rules no longer apply on the sabbath you could carry somebody so far but no further on the sabbath you could do certain things but not others you could only walk so far and so the people here as they hear that Jesus is in town they have to wait until the sabbath is over and then they can bring the sick then they can carry their friends then they can walk the distance to meet

Jesus and as soon as the sun sets we get this impression of a sort of invasion of people any who had diseases anyone who had friends who were sick came to him and Jesus laid his hands on them all and healed them now this was costly laying your hands on a sick person made you unclean unclean lay in his hands and all of these sick people made Jesus unclean according to the religious customs of the day and yet he did it and yet he healed them there's a man who comes into the drop-in who refuses to shake my hand I'm not sure why I've never asked him it could be because of his religion it could be because he's worried about the germs that might be on my hands transferring to his I'm not sure but he won't do it and that was how people at the time treated the sick they wanted nothing to do with them they didn't want to touch them they didn't want anything to do with them in case it infected them and Jesus casts all that aside and lays his hands identifies with that sick person and heals them notice what we're told then verse 41 so not only have the sick been cured verse 41 demons also came out of many crying you are the son of God the demons again we notice know who Jesus is but he won't allow them to speak verse 41 because they knew he was the

[30 : 29] Christ seems strange doesn't it if your enemies know who you are if your enemies are declaring that you are the Christ if your enemies are declaring that you are the son of God you would think that Jesus would want that you would think that Jesus would want the people to see well even the demons know that he's the Christ so why does he stop them well think back to verse 22 when Jesus first claimed to be the messiah that people were happy when Jesus first claimed to be God's chosen king when Jesus first claimed to be the saviour from sin that people were happy until Jesus told them what being the messiah would mean until Jesus told them what being the messiah would look like until he outlined to them that being the messiah wasn't a purely jewish thing it wasn't a purely nationalistic thing once Jesus told them that what did they do they tried to kill him Jesus here didn't want the demons professing him to be the

Christ confessing him to be the Christ raising this nationalistic hope and fervour when that wasn't the sort of messiah that he'd come to be Jesus had come to be the suffering messiah the one who would lay down his life for sin so that's the recovery of sight to the blind that's the second big box ticked on Jesus' manifesto promises if you like and then thirdly finally we see good news to the poor and we see that in verses 42 through 44 what was Jesus' purpose in coming what has he come to do well he himself gives us the answer in verse 43 I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well for I was sent for this purpose Jesus has healed their sick Jesus has cured their diseases Jesus has driven out the demons from many and they want to keep him close

by it's understandable isn't it here was a kind of insurance policy here was a helper for them and yet Jesus says no I can't stay I've got to get going because I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to other towns as well Jesus came not to be a miracle worker not to be a healer not to drive out demons but Jesus came to tell people the good news of the kingdom of God as we see Jesus this week then what do we see we see him fulfilling all of the promises all of the claims that he made last week we see him setting the demon possessed free we see him restoring the sick to health we see him preaching good news to the poor we see Jesus staking out his claim to be the Messiah this is what the Messiah will do this is what God's king will do we see him offering proof that he is the one whom God has sent and that's who Jesus is this morning don't miss that he is the Messiah he is God's chosen king he is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and he's proved it this morning he's proved it by dying and rising again but the question for you this morning is will he take away your sin has he taken away your sin have you come to him in faith and repentance and look to him to be your savior because he's proved that he is and proved that he will be amen serve and can...