

Jesus' Must

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- [0 : 0 0] Aaron is from New Zealand, which is a long way away from here. Let me ask you, brother, what brought you to Canada?
- Why did you come to Canada? To Regent College, to study. Good. Very good. Well, we're glad you came.
- And even though the New Zealand rugby team is much better than the Australian one, we're still glad you came. Let me pray for you and then you can tell us about God's word. Our Father, we pray now as Aaron speaks to us that we might hear your voice.
- And we ask that as we hear your voice, we would see Jesus Christ. And as we see him, that we would believe in him and follow him. And we ask this in his name. Amen.
- Amen. At St. John's, when you preach, you don't get to choose your topic or your passage.
- [1 : 1 0] You just sort of get it assigned to you. And so about a week and a half, two weeks ago, they assigned me my passage. And the first time I read it, to be honest, I was a little bit disappointed.
- I read it through and I thought, well, we've got an exorcism. We've got a healing, a bit of a multitude, Jesus speaking about the kingdom of God.
- I thought, well, that's some pretty well-trodden ground there, I think. What am I going to say about this? And so I thought, well, it is the word of God. So I read it through a few more times.
- So I read it through a few more times. And I started to notice a few things which I hadn't noticed before. And I thought, well, that's quite interesting. That's quite good. It's not too bad. So I read it through a few more times.
- And then I started getting a little bit more excited about it. And I probably read it through like maybe 40 times or something. And at the end of that, I thought, goodness, this is incredible.
- [2 : 0 8] This is an amazing passage. What was I thinking? In fact, at the end of it, I thought, if you don't understand this passage, you don't understand why Jesus came.
- It's a big call. It's a big call, I know. So let's get into it and see if you agree with me here. Okay, I want to start at the end of the passage because it's a bit of a summary statement.
- So we have Jesus. He's done some stuff. And the people in the area wanted him to stick around their neighborhood. And Jesus makes this huge statement.
- He says in verse 43, I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also because that is why I was sent.
- I mean, that's quite a big statement to make. That's why I was sent. I mean, it answers the question, what was Jesus about?
- [3 : 1 2] Why did Jesus come? Well, it would appear from this passage here, he came to preach. And when you look through the Gospels, you see that Christ's primary interaction with people is actually through the ministry of his word.

Him speaking stuff out. And that's kind of not like a super popular thing to sort of say, I don't think, because it goes against our sort of modern proclivity to sort of value actions over words.

St. Francis of Assisi, apparently, he didn't actually say this, but apparently, it's a very popular saying, he says, preach the Gospel at all times and if necessary, use words.

I mean, it sounds really nice, but it actually has very little biblical support. When you read through the Gospel, you see that the signs, the miraculous stuff, accompany Christ's preaching, accompany him saying something.

Not the other way around. Christ speaks and stuff happens. Amazing things happen. Now, in our passage before us, these things are a healing and an exorcism.

[4 : 45] And then a whole lot of healings and a whole lot of exorcisms. And one of the cool things about these is that they're not random kind of events.

It's not Jesus going, you know, I'm preaching, I'm preaching really good stuff. You better listen to me because I can do weird stuff. I can do crazy stuff.

You better listen to me because look at the cool stuff I'm doing. You know, that's not what's happening. It's not like Jesus preaching and then kind of crazy stuff going on. The stuff that happens, these miraculous things, which I'll call signs from now on, are there to help us understand what Jesus is actually preaching about.

And in our text before us, Jesus is preaching about the kingdom of God. And so these things here that happen because of God's powerful word that's going out are telling us something about the kingdom of God.

So, let's have a look at them. Let's have a look. So, our first little incident here, our sign, beginning in verse 33, verse 33 is Jesus is casting out a demon out of a man in a synagogue.

[6 : 08] So, what's that about? Is it Jesus going, I'm quite powerful. I can do cool stuff. No, obviously not. The clue to what this is, why this happens and what this is about is actually in what the demon says to Jesus.

Jesus says, or the demon says, have you come to destroy us? That's an odd thing to say. It was one of the first things I noticed. Have you come to destroy us?

It's not, have you come to cast me out? It's have you come to destroy us? The demon here is not talking about like him and the guy because the guy is clearly okay.

The demon is talking about him and all his little devil friends. This demon knows that Jesus has a much grander plan than just a few isolated exorcisms.

Let's take a step back here. Okay? So the demon is responding very loudly and vocally to Christ's preaching in the synagogue. Screams out. In the Bible, it just, your version, it just says, ha.

[7 : 38] But it was, you know, it was a ah. It sounded like a pirate. It wasn't meant to sound like a pirate. You know, this demon recognized this voice because this was the voice that cast it out of heaven a long time ago.

What was Jesus preaching about? Well, he was preaching about the kingdom of God. We know that. And this evil spirit knew that this kingdom was really bad news for him and his mates. And this exorcism is a message to us.

It's telling us something about the kingdom of God. But what that means, and what it's telling us is this, is that God's plan is to completely destroy all of the demonic forces.

The demon's grants. Have you come to destroy us? And the answer is yes. How great is this passage?

This is a great passage, eh? This is good stuff. Straight away, good news. We're in the first couple of verses. Great news. Okay, what else does it tell us about the kingdom of God that Christ is preaching about?

[9 : 07] Well, it tells us that there are a couple of things. There's quite a few more things. Firstly, there's two kingdoms. There's the kingdom of God and there's the kingdom of Satan. And the kingdom of Satan is in total opposition to the kingdom of God.

The man is described as having a spirit of an unclean demon. The spirit of an unclean demon. It's a very clumsy and unusual phrase that you find in the text here.

I mean, the Hebrews had lots of different words for this kind of evil kind of entity, evil spirits, demons and stuff. In the Old Testament, the best description I found was they called a few places in the Old Testament the hairy ones.

Makes your mouth feel weird, like the hairy ones. The hairy ones. But this man, it says, he has a spirit of an unclean demon. Why this phrase? Well, I think there's a couple of reasons.

We'll get to one right now. It's to contrast against Christ. Christ, it says earlier, it comes in the power of the Holy Spirit and you've got this guy who's got this unclean spirit.

[10 : 10] So you've got this Holy Spirit guy and you've got this unclean spirit guy. It's trying to give us the idea that these things are in total opposition to each other.

Christ and this evil thing inside of this man. It doesn't let us think, you know, these spirits, look, they're just misguided.

Leave them be. They're not so bad, maybe. No, these devils exist in total opposition to the purposes of God and Christ has come to sort them out.

The other thing it tells us is that God's kingdom has total authority over the kingdom of Satan. this exorcism wasn't that difficult for Jesus.

In the ancient areas, they would have been familiar with exorcisms. This kind of stuff happened and there were people that did them and the exorcism rites were very different to what we see here.

[11 : 20] They were very long, they were pretty involved and not necessarily successful. The person had to do a whole lot of things. The guy in charge would come along and go, okay, spin around three times and eat some licorice or something.

I don't know. I don't know exactly what they'd do but it was quite involved and the person casting the demon out would do it in the name of somebody that was another human that might have been quite famous or something.

An exorcist kind of guy. I cast this out in the name of Larry who's up the road. He's quite a powerful guy. You should listen to him. But here, none of that sort of stuff is going on.

Jesus in this passage just says, be silent, come out. No other authority needed. The kingdom of Satan is totally opposed to God.

We've already talked about that. But it is not equal in power or authority. So we've got these two kingdoms and the goodies are going to destroy all the baddies if I can put it as simply as possible.

[12 : 34] And that's good news. That's very good news. And one of the reasons it's such good news is it puts to rest our...

You know, people often say to me in the new sort of Christians classes or pre-Christian classes, people go, you know, what about all the evil in the world? What about all the suffering? There's so much bad stuff going on in the world.

Why doesn't God do something about that? God is doing something about that and he will finally do something about that.

An ultimate solution to that. And to use a phrase from Western movies, there is going to be a reckoning. It's a great word.

There's going to be a reckoning. And Christ will end and destroy this kingdom once and for all.

[13 : 38] Before we leave this first little incident, and I'm spending quite a bit of time on this first one, the other ones will kind of race through a bit more. There is a nagging question I just want to address.

We could look at the question of why did Jesus tell them to be silent and not tell anyone? That's a boring question. You could probably work that out for yourself. But the other question though is this. Don't you think it's interesting that this all happens in a church?

This is in a synagogue. This demon manifested the first exorcism in Luke in a Jewish church.

That strikes me as a fairly scandalous place for somebody to manifest. It's embarrassing for this guy. I mean if we're in church right and Ken Moser whilst I'm preaching a powerful sermon about the kingdom of God fell on the floor and started flapping about like a pirate frothing at the mouth I mean that would be unusual.

And you'd go I didn't expect that. And the reason you wouldn't expect that is because you'd be thinking like hang on he's one of us. He's one of the good guys.

[15 : 06] He prays. He reads his Bible. He's part of the community. I didn't in here. Really? I mean if this story was more like this.

If this story was more like you know Jesus is walking walking through the town and he walks past a brothel or a strip club or something like that and some guy runs out foaming you know being all lustily demonic or something you know you'd probably go wow you know that'll happen if you go to those places.

You'd be sort of thinking well of course that's you know that's what'll happen there you go. But this is in a church and I think the writer of Luke is trying to tell us something there.

I think that's significant. So he's in a synagogue. Now a synagogue wasn't the temple. There's one Jewish temple would do the sacrifices and all that kind of carry on.

And the synagogues were like small Jewish churches in the neighbourhood where people maybe couldn't get to the temple. So it's a place where they could practice their Jewish faith.

[16 : 15] So that's quite good. And what do people do in a synagogue? Well all about the Torah. All about the teaching of God's law. And a good chunk of the Torah is about purity, about cleanliness, about spiritual cleanliness.

And this guy, a member of this community probably spent there every week because he's part of the community, he's been hearing the Torah his whole life and he had an uncleaned spirit.

the Torah, the law, the rules could not make this guy clean. Only Christ could do that for him.

If you think Christianity is about keeping the rules, you're in trouble. You're in danger. Ravi Zachariah is an East Indian theologian, he's a great guy.

He's got this, he talks about very well about this whole idea of Christians who think it's just about keeping rules. He says this, rules are like a mirror.

[17 : 36] All they can do is show you that your face is dirty. They can't clean your face. Christ. Only Christ can do that.

Only Christ can do that. This man was in a synagogue. We're in a church today. Your location can't save you, your denomination can't save you.

You come to church every week and you sort of think, well that's, you know, I want to be a nice person and that's what nice people do. Try and be nice to people.

If that's all it is, you know, that stuff can't save you. It's only when you put your faith in Christ, your trust in Christ, that you'll be saved.

And if you don't understand all that I'm talking about right now, I'd love to talk to you about this after the service. But let's move on. Let's move on.

[18 : 37] Okay, let's go through pretty quickly these other encounters. Okay, so the mother-in-law, in Simon's house, she gets healed. That's very good. It's a very short story. Once again, we see the power and the authority of Jesus.

Did Jesus feel sorry for this woman? I'm sure he did. Did he want this woman healed because this was a really bad thing for her, to be really sick? Yes, of course.

Is there a lot more going on here? Yes, there is a lot more going on here. Jesus was not just a miracle healer.

If he was all about just miraculous healings, his ministry would have looked a lot different. It would have been a lot more like Benny Hinn. If I can say that.

It would have just been lots of campaigns. Let's get a whole lot of people together. I'm going to touch a whole lot of people now. Touch, touch, touch, heal, heal, heal, heal.

[19 : 40] Huge garment running through towns. Touch my garment. Just touch my garment. Blind people over here. Withered hands. Lepers back over there a little bit.

Sort them all out. This is not, look at Jesus, he can heal, that's cool.

Like the exorcism, this healing is part of the announcement of the kingdom of God. It's telling us something about this kingdom. Interestingly, here's something else I noticed, is that it's, the healing is kind of framed kind of like the exorcism.

It uses some of the similar words like rebuked the fever and it left her. The exorcisms, rebuked and left. And it's not saying that sickness is all demonic.

What it's saying is that it's trying to highlight the authority of Jesus over all of our injuries, whether they're physical stuff or whether it's spiritual stuff.

[20 : 52] When Christ speaks his word, stuff happens. Great things happen. What else can we learn about the kingdom of God from this incident? Well, a couple of big things.

First one is just great news. There is restoration in God's kingdom. There is restoration in his kingdom. We see it in this woman's life.

God wants to restore our brokenness. God wants to give you back life. God wants to give you what is striking about it is what happens afterwards.

She is restored and she gets up and she starts helping out. Again, I don't think Luke was a clumsy writer. He's not just going, I better give her something to do at the end here.

Maybe she just starts helping out or something. No, no, there's reasons these things are included. She serves. And here's the thing.

[22 : 07] God is building his kingdom, but we aren't the people that build it. This is God builds his kingdom, but he asks us to serve in it. Which is the right response to God giving us life.

Which, if you're a Christian here today, is what God has done for you. He's given you back life. So it's a fabulous little story.

The kingdom of God has come to this household. There's restoration and there's service. Let's stop for a moment and ask a very challenging question.

I hope you don't mind me asking this question. But what would it look like if the kingdom of God came to your work or your school or your household? What would that look like for your relationship with your wife or husband?

How would it impact on the people you chose to hang out with at your school? How would it impact on your attitude towards your work and your colleagues?

[23 : 21] It should impact it profoundly. I especially want to highlight the one how would it impact on who you chose to spend time with?

How would you serve the people in your community who don't quite fit in? What would that look like? I remember in New Zealand quite a few years ago going to a small town and small town New Zealand is interesting and going to this Christian kind of event and this story makes me look really bad.

So I'm at this Christian kind of event and I'd gone to this church which was really cool. Lots of cool people in it.

It was called the church of the beautiful people. I had people say to me I can't go to your church I'm too ugly. And I'd be you're right. So I went to this small town Christian event and I walk in there and I'm involved in it somehow.

I can't remember. I think I might be speaking at it. I can't remember what I was doing there. I walk in with this friend of mine that I knew from the small town. I'm looking around and it's lots of young people and it is just the biggest bunch of misfits you have ever seen in your life.

[24 : 56] Like I just feel like dancing. I don't know why. I don't know why that just came upon me just then. It's foolishness I know.

it's a high context joke. I'm looking around and there's a bunch of misfits and I just go oh man you are some odd looking people here.

I remember thinking thank goodness I didn't bring any non-Christian people. They would have been so put off Jesus by seeing how uncool you people are and how weird you guys look.

So I'm thinking this. Spirit of unclean thing. Anyway so I'm thinking this and I turned to the guy I went with and I said wow this is embarrassing.

this is an embarrassing portrayal of the church and he looked at me and he goes really? You see I think this is church operating at its absolute best.

[26 : 09] The kingdom of God came to this place and people served each other in a very simple way in friendship. In this story it's hospitality but just served each other.

But when that guy said that I think this is church operating at absolute best. Man I felt like a nice person. Alright moving along.

The multitude healing. This is really just the re-emphasis I think of the two previous stories. Jesus healing, he's exercising, the demons are freaking out and rightly so because they have encountered the instrument of God's final purposes in the world.

we have such great hope as Christians. There is a dark intelligence out there and its goal is to injure all of creation but God has a plan and in Luke for the first time here he gives that plan a name and it's called the kingdom of God.

God that's great news. That's fabulous news. Unfortunately our people in this story don't quite get it.

[27 : 35] The last little incident I'll look at very quickly is right at the end. Jesus goes off to be by himself. the crowd find him and say come on come on mate come on just stick around here he's keen to go he's sitter I've got to go to his other towns oh no come on stick around here it's really nice it's great just keep doing what you're doing we need more of it around here come on mate now what's the problem here they failed to understand who Jesus is and they failed to see the scope of his mission they wanted to limit it to just their neighborhood and it's a tragic story and there is a caution for us you know how do we limit

God's mission what do we see it for so long God's mission was just to get me to heaven that's all I kind of thought I thought great done check God's mission check I'm going to heaven the passage before us makes it very difficult to have that narrow view of God's mission in the world and what the kingdom of God is Christ's mission is expansive the kingdom of God is huge and it impacts a lot more stuff than just you getting into heaven at some point let me wind this up now so last week the passage that was preached on

Christ gave us sort of his program for the future here's what I'm going to do he's quoting Isaiah I'm going to set the captives free I'm going to give sight to the blind it's fabulous and this week we see Christ rolling up his sleeves and he's like okay let me show you what this is about I'm going to preach it I'm going to show you it and it's great stuff it's great stuff as soon as I've finished preaching we are going to have some intercessory prayer and then like every week we're going to pray the Lord's prayer and there's a line in that which relates to what we're talking about here and the line is your kingdom come your kingdom come and I'd like to remind you and imprint this on you don't run past that don't just talk through that prayer you are praying something enormous when you're praying that you are praying for the total destruction of another kingdom you're praying for your restoration and the restoration of the rest of the world and you're also praying for the opportunity to serve in that kingdom which is the right response to Christ giving you life so yeah your kingdom come that is it's a very big prayer scripture and you're segurança and to speak as the you