

He Rules Over All

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 October 2008

Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 00] Let's turn again for a little to the chapter we read in Luke's Gospel, Luke chapter 4. And just looking at from the end of, I'll pick up at verse 31 to the end, And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and he was teaching them on the Sabbath day, 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, and so on. There's no doubt whatever, but that Jesus was a quite awesome preacher.

And one of the things that captivated people who listened to him was the power that accompanied his preaching and the authority of his words.

And there's something about truth that is convincing in and of itself. People will hear the truth, and there's always a reaction from truth.

I think, was it Augustine? I think we quoted that before, that when people hear the truth, that it either, if they accept that truth, and it enlightens their mind, they rejoice in it.

[1 : 22] But if they hear that truth, and their minds are not enlightened, they become angry with that truth. It rebukes, it hurts, it gets right in, and there's a reaction against it.

And you will find that that is one of the reasons why there is so much bitter opposition to the word of God. It is one of the reasons why people won't open their Bible.

It is one of the reasons why so many people try and suppress the Christian faith. Because it's the truth, and the truth hurts. And people don't want to be disturbed.

You will not find this reaction against other teachings in the way that you will against the Christian faith. Because the Bible is convincing in its truth.

Because it is the truth. And people are made to feel uneasy by it. And people say, I don't want to hear this. And so there's this inbuilt reaction from so many people.

[2 : 23] And so they don't want to be disturbed in any way. But Jesus, when he was preaching, the people were, they had to confess, they had to admit.

Even as we saw last week in his hometown, Nazareth, where they rejected him. They were so incensed at him. Although they marveled at the truth, they couldn't abide hearing him.

Because they were saying, we know who you are. We will not accept what you're saying. Even though they were convinced of the authority and the power that accompanied him.

You see, prejudice is an incredible thing. The blindness of the human heart is a quite extraordinary thing. And that is something that Jesus was having to face all the time.

And let us pray that we be delivered from the spirit of prejudice. And the spirit of spiritual blindness. Prejudice distorts our vision.

[3 : 25] You cannot see clearly. A prejudiced person cannot see clearly. So I would say, if you ever find that there is a prejudice within you.

And it can be very subtle. Ask the Lord to forgive you. Because it's sin. And you know, the prejudice that these Jews had in their heart towards Jesus ended up causing their own destruction.

They died in their sins. They died in their sins. So many of them. Because their prejudice closed their mind to the truth. Closed their eyes to what their eyes were telling them.

Closed their ears to the words that Jesus spoke. All they needed to do was to look at Jesus. Listen to his words. Go to the word of God. And they would be seeing there the word of God.

The Old Testament being fulfilled to the very letter. In the teaching of Christ. And in the life of Christ. But they wouldn't. Because of this inbuilt prejudice.

[4 : 29] Anyway, Jesus was here. We find that he's preaching in the synagogue. And they were astonished at his teaching for his word-possessed authority. Now, we find that in this synagogue, as

he's down here in Capernaum, a city in Galilee, that there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon.

And he cried out with a loud voice. Now, it must be an awful thing to be in. To have your mind in the grip of a demon.

Where the devil has, as it were, a hold upon a person's mind. But, you know, we've got to remember that in a very subtle way, Satan is already influencing and has a hold of people's minds as it is.

We're not talking here of demonic possession as such. But we've got to remember that there are two great spiritual forces at work in this world.

The spirit of God and the spirit of the kingdom of darkness. The spirit of the kingdom of God and the spirit of the kingdom of darkness. They're both at work. The two awesome forces. And one force, of course, is far greater than the other.

[5 : 39] But at the moment, the devil is at work and his many demonic angels. And when you look at the carnage and the chaos and the brutality, and you see this world, if we were to home in, and if history could be unfolded before us, and it was all there, and we would see so much of the horror of life.

There have been times and places where this world has almost resembled. I don't use the expression hell on earth, because hell is not on this earth.

And there are even where it's like the powers of hell have been unleashed on this earth. There is still on this earth God's mercy and his grace and his compassion.

So I don't like using the expression hell on earth. However, having said that, there are times where it seems to be that the powers of hell have unleashed themselves in an awesome way.

That's what happened at Christ's death. Jesus made that very statement. But there have been times, like the death camps in Nazi Germany, where there was just wholesale slaughter every day.

[7 : 07] Wherever you see what they term, I think it's an awful word, they use ethnic cleansing. It's where they murder men and women, and boys and girls, and grannies and babies, because they don't like the color of their skin, or the language they speak, or whatever it is.

It's happening all over the world, and it has happened throughout the centuries. Is that not a picture of what hell, the powers and the fires of hell is?

And when you think of even this world, and even within our own nation, and you can see that so many people today, they act irrationally. So many young people are in the grip.

And people say, well, it's drink and drugs. But there's an unreasonableness, an irrational behavior among so many people. Don't get me wrong, I'm not having a go at the young.

I think our young people are so many great young people today. And very often it is what is wrong that is highlighted. And there is so much that is good, and worthwhile, and admirable.

[8 : 11] And if we were to see another side, I believe that the vast majority are a credit to the nation. But the point is, that there is a spirit afoot within our land, that I believe is coming, because as the gospel influence moves away, other powers and other forces are in the ascendancy.

And that, I believe, is one of the reasons why there is so much that's irrational, so much that is wrong, so much that you cannot get your head around. And you say to yourself, this is not the power of darkness at work.

Anyway, one other thing I'll say. Remember this, my dear friend, if you're here today without Jesus Christ, the devil has a grip of your mind. You're not under demonic possession.

But he has a grip of your mind in this way. That's what the Bible says, that those who don't believe, that the God of this world, that's one of the terms used for the devil, hath blinded your mind.

The Bible tells us that. That Satan has an influence. He has an influence on everybody. The Christian as well as the non-Christian. He influences wherever, as has been wisely said, wherever the gospel is preached, Satan will be there as well.

[9 : 33] He's in the pulpit, he's in the pew, he's everywhere. He's trying to, in every way, to hamper and to hinder and to disturb and to do all these things, because he hates a good seed going forth.

Hates it. And so he will try and keep people from believing, because he hates God. Well, here we have this occasion, in this, when Jesus is preaching, and again we see the disturbance.

That's what Satan does. He tries to disturb. He tries to hinder as Jesus preaches. And this demon cannot bear being in the presence of the spotless purity of Jesus.

The devils cannot bear that, because they are evil. There is no good thought within them. There is no desire for any act of kindness.

There is no desire for any mercy or love within the heart of the devil. It is sheer evil all the time.

[10:44] And an evil against God in whatever shape or form they can perpetrate or get people to do. So, this demon couldn't bear being in the presence of Christ.

And so we find that he begins to call out. But you know, it's very interesting, and we've got, we've highlighted, when we were going through James, we highlighted this very fact. that the devil believes completely in God.

Believes in the Father, believes in the Son, and believes in the Holy Spirit. Doesn't believe savingly, but believes the reality of them. Knows the reality of them.

And does more than know, we're told, trembles. Satan today, and all the demons, they know the reality of God, and they tremble because of their knowledge of who God is.

And that's quite an awesome thought. And that shows us that a knowledge in and of itself does not save a person.

[11:52] Knowledge in and of itself does not save a person. Knowledge, I believe, is an essential towards our saving faith because we have to know in whom we believe.

But a knowledge in and of itself does not save. You see, a person could have an almost encyclopedic knowledge of the Word of God and yet still be lost. A person could know their church history inside out, could give you the dates and the times and the seasons of all that took place right throughout the years of Scripture, in the years or the early church fathers all the way down.

They could talk about the men of the north. They could talk about sermons. They could quote sermons. They could have a most retentive memory and still go to hell.

Knowledge in and of itself does not save. The devils have knowledge and the devils tremble and the devils are lost.

So let us remember that, that knowledge, while it's a great blessing, in and of itself does not save.

And it is only coming to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

[13:11] We must place our lives in Him. And of course, that knowledge is important in order for us to trust because that's what trust is. You trust, don't you, what you know to be true.

What you know is sure. it's a very, take it in its most simple form. If you go and you're going to sit down and you look at this chair and it looks all wobbly and you think to yourself, I don't know if these legs will support me if that chair, you won't initially trust yourself to the chair.

You might sit down very slowly, very gingerly to see, will this take my weight or not? because you don't have this implicit trust.

But normally when you go home, you know what your furniture is like and you're ready to throw yourself, you flop down. That's life in its most basic fault. You threw yourself back in the couch because you knew that that couch should support you.

And when we apply this and take this to our knowledge of who God is spiritually, we are able, because of who we have come to see who he is, we are then able to throw ourselves and to cast our lives upon him.

[14:31] But anyway, here's this poor man and he's in the grip of this demon. And I do not know how the demon worked within the man, but the one thing we do know is that he would have exerted an influence upon this person's mind.

And I would believe that many times this man would have been unreasonable, he would have been irrational. I think if we wanted a clearer picture we could go to look at Legion.

And remember Legion, although he was an extreme case and he had many demons in him, he was out of control. They tried to chain him, they tried to hold him. It didn't matter what they did, he terrorized the whole neighborhood because he was in the grip of demonic power.

Anyway, here's this man. And he is in the presence of Christ. And of course, the devils realize that whatever power they do have, that it is limited.

And that they always have to submit to the greater authority of Jesus Christ. And so this demon crying out bears witness to who Christ is.

[15:44] Quite amazing. and Jesus silences. And Jesus silences this demon. Jesus does not want that it will be the powers of darkness that are bearing testimony to who he is.

And so he silences this demon. Now the effect upon the people was quite extraordinary because demon possession was common at that time. and when they saw Jesus cast this demon out of this

man, they were just awestruck.

It was quite remarkable. And they realized that the word, they had been marveling at his teaching, and they realized, this man, there's an authority and a power in his word.

But then, all of a sudden, they realized, this word is actually extraordinary. Because they realized it was the same word in his teaching that he used to cast out the demons.

And they were awestruck. I think you and I would have been as well. Because all of a sudden you realize that this passion is really no ordinary passion at all.

[16:59] The people knew that they were in the presence of somebody quite extraordinary. And we find that his fame and reports about him went into every place in the surrounding region.

Now, you'd think at this particular moment that there would now be a national turning to Jesus. And that as people, the word would be going around, you should have seen this man. And they would be linking up scripture with scripture and saying, yes, it is the Messiah.

But no. They continued, to reject. You know, there are many people who say, and you hear it said, if I was alive at the time when Jesus walked this world, I would believe.

I find it very hard being a Christian today. I find it very hard to accept. But if I had been alive 2,000 years ago, and I had walked this world, and had met with Jesus, and I had been in the crowd, and heard him preach, ought to have been different.

I would have believed. No, you wouldn't. No, it wouldn't be any different, and Jesus himself makes that very clear. And faith, my dear friend, this faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

[18:09] And it doesn't matter which era, or which generation, it's the same, the teaching, the words of Christ, which were spoken verbally by him, are the same words that we have today, and the same spirit of God that applied the word savingly of Christ 2,000 years ago, it's the same spirit that will apply the word savingly today as well.

No change. It's the same way, the same method, the same power, the same influence, 2,000 years on. And if you're here today without Jesus Christ, my friend, you ask him today, right here, right now, personally, that Jesus Christ will come into your heart.

Will you ask him that? Lord, please save me. Come into my heart. Whatever resistance is there, whatever is holding me back, Lord, take me over these things, so that I may close in with Jesus, and have him as my Lord and my Savior.

Will you ask him to do that for you? Well, anyway, we find that Jesus then moves on from there, 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. Now, it's quite interesting that just in passing, I've never understood or I have never discussed it with any person from the Roman Catholic Church as to why priests do not marry, why the insistent celibacy.

[20:04] And I suppose it is because that Jesus Christ was never married. But it's very interesting that Peter, who they lay great store by, is spoken about as being married.

I'm sure more than Peter of the disciples were married, but actually Peter, it actually highlights here this instance that is about his mother-in-law. So Peter, you see, was somebody who was married.

So it's very interesting, and it's something that I would really like to discuss and find out as to why they hold to that. But anyway, that by the side, we find that they besought for her, or they asked, and they appealed to him on her behalf.

Now, Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. Now, I think that's worth noting as well.

When Jesus walked into the house, Peter's mother was really ill with a very high fever. Jesus didn't automatically go and say, well, I'm going to go and heal her. They came to him and asked, please, will you help?

[21:19] And that's important for us to take on board. Jesus wants us to have personal dealings with him. Jesus wants us to tell him how things are.

And I do not know what you're experiencing today. You might be in here today and you might be hurting in your heart. You might have experienced really irrational behavior from people this week that has just passed.

Maybe at work, maybe at home. There are situations maybe that are beyond you and you're really hurting. I want you to go to Jesus and tell him how things are.

Jesus wants us to tell him everything. Maybe you are in financial difficulties. Maybe there are distresses in your mind. Maybe you're fighting against addictions.

Maybe there's 101 different things. Maybe you're being bullied at school. Maybe there's a fear in your heart. Maybe you can't sleep because anxiety starts.

[22 : 20] The list is endless. Well, the Lord doesn't want us just to try and deal with these things on our own. He wants us to bring everything. We're told in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

In other words, go to him with everything. Everything. Don't hold anything back. And so they went to Jesus and they said, look, please can you help here in the home?

And so we find that's what he does. They appeal to him. And we find that Jesus in response to them, that he heals Peter's mother-in-law.

And it's quite a remarkable healing. And he stood over her and rebuked the fever and it left her. And immediately she rose and began to serve him. Notice what happens. It's like the stilling of the storm.

You and I know that if you have a really high fever, if you've been really ill, and the fever subsides, your temperature drops, and supposing you've had a high fever for a few days, you're like a wet rag.

[23 : 38] It's not true. You feel you've got absolutely no energy. And it takes a wee while to build up again. Well, here we find something quite extraordinary.

She gets up from being really, really ill, and she goes and prepares and tends to their needs. Quite an amazing thing what happens. She rose up and began to serve them.

I would imagine she got up and prepared a meal and brought it to them. Humanly speaking, you couldn't do that. You couldn't get straight out of bed where you've been really, really ill and go and make a meal for somebody.

It's exactly the same as happened when Jesus stilled the storm. Remember, there was a raging storm. The waves were heaving and the wind was howling.

And he said, peace be still, and there was a great calm. It wasn't just that the wind dropped. You know, particularly if you go down northerly, the wind can drop and yet there's still that swell, isn't it?

[24 : 38] It goes on for, and sometimes go on for almost a couple of days. That kind of swell. You can see it in the minch. It goes on at least another day. Well, there was a great calm when Jesus said, peace be still.

Because it wasn't just the wind that he stopped. It was the sea went flat calm. That's exactly what he said. Jesus is showing that he has power over nature. Beforehand, he just showed that he had power in the spirit world, in the demonic, that he rules over all things, that forces of darkness and forces of nature are subject to him, and that he rules over all.

People will say today, can I go to Jesus to ask that I might be healed if you're ill, if you're sick? Well, I would say yes, of course. But I do not believe, I do not hold to this idea that a Christian, some people say, Christians should never be sick.

I've actually met somebody who, and I found it one of the most, it's a good number of years ago, but a very distressing thing. A lady who was a fine Christian, and she was dying of cancer, and she had been told that if she had sufficient faith, that she would be healed, and she was in terrible distress, because I remember her saying to me, I cannot have any faith at all.

And that is so wrong. That's not the case. The Lord has not told us that we are going to be delivered from every disease. This world is a world of sin.

[26 : 21] death. We cannot avoid it. And the wages of sin is death. And unless the Lord comes first, we are all going to be taken away by death.

We don't know how that will be. We don't even know when it will be, but it will happen. We cannot avoid it. It's a date we all have to keep. So it's absurd to say that if our faith will keep illness at bay, it won't.

God will be. However, having said that, I do believe that there are times, and I'm sure we've all known of times, where the Lord has healed, where things have happened and it is nothing short of a miraculous healing.

And I believe that it's what any person would do. If some member of your family was struck down, I believe you would pray that the Lord would heal.

part of the way that he does heal us is he often heals our mind. He heals us in the sense that he gives us grace to cope with these things.

[27 : 31] Because if we didn't have that grace, I don't know how we would deal with these issues. But for the Christian, of course, there will come a day when that body will be raised far more gloriously and wonderfully than it ever was in this world.

It will be raised in perfection to be reunited with the soul. Every believer is open to all the troubles and all the afflictions of this world.

So I'm just saying that the Lord can heal and the Lord does heal. And there might be people in here today who recognize that.

And we've also got to remember, this was a special time. I'm going to say two things just here. This was a special era. There were special times in God's timetable where there were wonderful manifestations of his power.

This was one. And the Bible told before Jesus came that when he did come that this would be one of the things that would highlight who he was.

[28 : 40] That he would be opening the eyes of the blind. That he would be opening the ears of the deaf. these were things that the Bible told so that people would understand that when the Messiah did come, this is him, there would be wonderful manifestations of his power being demonstrated all the time.

And that's what he was doing. So you see, it was a special time. Now again, in God's goodness and God's providence, God has opened people's minds in such a wonderful way.

when we look at medical science today and we see the tremendous advances that have been made, we've got to acknowledge God's goodness. And God in many wonderful ways is opening up the ways of recovery and the ways of dealing with these diseases in ways and manner that had never been, say, a hundred years ago.

Completely different. And so we've got to acknowledge God as the one who is ruling in this area as well. And so we find, and just to conclude here, just moving on quickly, that it says, verse 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.

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. And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

[30 : 15] Preaching, my friends, is unbelievably important. Some people have this idea that preaching is something that's past its cell by date. Well, it was what Jesus was all about.

Yes, he healed, but he healed when they brought. His main ministry was preaching. He said, this is why I've been sent. He went to tell, to proclaim the miracles were, as it were, manifestations that were testifying to who he was.

But it was his preaching. This he said, that's why he said to them, I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God, for I was sent for this purpose, to preach.

And we must never lose sight of the importance of preaching, because faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

And I would say to you, my dear friend, if you can, I've said it before, make it your aim to bring somebody new each year to come under the gospel.

[31 : 29] They might not continue to come, but can you imagine imagine if all of you managed to bring somebody new in. And maybe the majority may come and say, it's not for me.

You don't know what that one sermon or that one meeting with God's word may do in time to come. It might be years down the line that the word that has gone in there, that something may happen. it may be that someone might be converted, as has happened, first time they've come in. It may be that they continue to come.

And there are a lot of people throughout, not just saying here, but throughout the church in its widest sense, who are now very active within the church, and their introduction to church was being brought by a friend.

Never be ashamed of the gospel. Never be ashamed of the plainness of it. Because this is, remember what Paul said, I'm not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.

[32 : 45] Let us seek then to come under the word and to bring others under that word. Let's pray. O Lord our God, we pray that we might indeed come to appreciate this word more and more, the

