



The Bible says in Genesis 1, "God saw all that he had made and it was good!" People were in harmony with God: no pain, sickness or death till humanity fell whereupon God promised to send one who would make everything right again. As we have been reading through Luke it has become clear that Jesus is the

fulfilment of that promise, the Messiah. In Luke 4:18-21 we read of Jesus' first set of healings and exorcisms as Jesus proves who he is by words and action.

Power of Preaching (vs31-32) The people in Capernaum were amazed at his preaching because he taught with authority and not as the teachers of the law. (see Mark) Apparently they were only reciting from some ancient human wisdom that was repeated over and over again. This is not a perfect illustration but when I worked in South Wales part of my work was to preach in the little chapels round about. Their preachers were culled from many different sources. It seemed that when I preached at the end of the month people looked forward to me coming, not because of my preaching but because I always preached the gospel that carries the authority of the good news that we are sinners, God offers salvation through Christ that can be received through faith in Jesus. As we saw last week not everyone will receive the gospel but this week in Capernaum they respond to Jesus' words. They were not recycled clever words or edgy reinterpretations of scripture but the words of God. This applies not only in Capernaum or South Wales but in Mold too. People are starved of hope and good news. Many are ready to hear some now. What have they been listening to: Politicians, celebrities, social media influencers? Here is an invitation to listen to Jesus, to trust and obey his word.

Power Over Evil (vs 33-37, 41) We are told of two exorcisms. We do not hear very much about demon procession in modern UK and it is not commonly written about in the Bible. One possible explanation is that Satan's aim was to frustrate God's plan of salvation. We cannot put these occurrences down to mental or physical illnesses. Luke was a doctor and he would know the difference. And he records the conversations between Jesus and the demons signifying the reality of the evil spirits. "Go away! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God!" "Be quiet!" Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Even the demons knew the identity of Jesus. "Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah." The book of James tells us, "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that and shudder." (Jm 2:19) Jesus rebukes the demons and tells them to be quiet. He will not have demons speak for him and distort what he came to do with lies. So he casts them out and silences them. They have no choice but to obey which in turn amazes the people. Demons are still out to frustrate the plans of God. "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (1Cor 4:4) You may be a slave to sin and can't break free, But Christ reigns. He is sovereign. Call out to him for rescue and he will come! The daily struggle against temptation, sin and doubt, unbelief and guilt do not come from God. They are from Satan and his demons who are trying to undermine the work of Christ in our lives. Run to Jesus. He can and will set us free. God has the final say. Satan will face his doom. He will not be in the final new creation. Isaac Watts wrote, "Sin my worst before/ shall vex my eyes and ears no more;/ my inwards foes shall all be slain,/ nor Satan break my peace again."

Power Over Sickness (38-40) Perhaps nothing reminds us more personally and closely of the brokenness of this world than sickness and suffering. It often leads to death or at least reminds us of our own mortality. Dr Luke would have known this better than most. Here we see yet more evidence that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah through whom God is remaking our broken world. In the next chapter Simon who will be called Peter is called to be a disciple. But after leaving the synagogue, Jesus goes to Simon's house where his mother-in-law has a high fever. Jesus treats the fever in the same way he treats the demons. He rebukes it. It is where it shouldn't be. Sickness and death are foreign invaders into God's good world. And see how well Jesus heals her. Luke includes the little detail, "She got up at once and began to wait on them".

Then, "At sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah" (v40-41) These healings show us that Jesus is fixing what is wrong in us, namely our sin that separates us from God. These healings were not meant to be permanent. These people would eventually get sick and die. Jesus is pointing to a better place where sickness and sin are not allowed. We know that when he returns and gathers his people into himself in his new Heaven and new earth we will be fully and finally healed.

Mission Continues Jesus needed the support and strength of his Father so he withdrew for a quiet time of prayer and meditation. Jesus said. "'I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.'" This is not something he can leave to someone else. The Spirit of the Lord was on him. (v18) When he returned to Heaven he commissioned his disciple to do the same and that commission is passed down to us. Throughout every age of the church preaching has remained the supreme means by which God awakens sinners from death. Do not despise it! The very same Jesus we meet on these pages is alive today, reigning as king, He uses me to continue what he started. We hold out hope to a broken world'

Conclusion The world is broken! There is no denying that. But Jesus is in the process of fixing it! It began when he came to earth as Messiah and preached and healed. He sealed it through his death and resurrection where he deals with the root cause: sin itself! And it continues through us as we hold out the hope of the gospel to a dying world. And it will be complete when he returns to rescue his people fully and finally, and all things are made new again! Friends, this is true! Jesus really is fixing the world as bleak as things might seem right now. If we are in him, this is the sure and certain hope that we have. If not, then this hope can be yours! Listen to Jesus! Receive him as Saviour and he not only fix what's wrong in us but give us the hope of eternal life which starts now, and when he returns it will be fully seen and known, a life free from the pain and suffering. Once more as Isaac Watts writes,

'Then shall I see, and hear and know,
All I desired or wished below,
And every power find sweet employ,
In that eternal world of joy!'

AMEN

