

Authority Over Diseases Luke 4:38-44

When was the last time you went to the doctor?
Was it just a routine checkup or did you go because
you weren't feeling well? Did the doctor prescribe
some medication for you?

According to the 2008 Statistical abstract of the US
Census Bureau there were 661,400 doctors, which
represents only 12% of healthcare officials.

Our nation has approximately 67,000 pharmacies.

Earlier this year the American Hospital Association
posted the results from its 2012 survey about
hospitals. Keep in mind this does not include
doctor offices, urgent care or other similar facilities.
In 2012 there were 5,759 registered hospitals that
met AHA registration requirements.

There were 4,999 community hospitals. Community
hospitals are defined as all nonfederal, short-term
general, and other special hospitals.

There were 211 Federal Government hospitals.

There were 413 Non-federal psychiatric hospitals.

There were 89 Non-federal long term care hospitals.

There were 11 Prison or college infirmaries.

Registered hospitals have over 900,000 staffed beds
that accounted for over 36 million admissions with
total expenses close to \$830 billion.

Community hospitals have over 800,000 staffed
beds that accounted for over 34 million admissions
with total expenses of \$757 billion.

Again that does not include emergency, urgent care
or doctor visits.

These hospitals treat any variety of injuries and
ailments from broken bones to heart conditions to
cancer to you name it and there is someone out
there who will treat it. It is big business.

What do you suppose it was like in the days of
Jesus, medically speaking? We know there were
doctors. The author of the book we are studying

was a doctor. We learn from the passage about the
woman who for 12 years had a bleeding condition
spent a lot of money on doctors who could not heal
her. Then there was Jesus. We know that He did
not study medicine yet, He has been called the great
physician, the one who, from a medical perspective,
used unconventional methods to heal. He spoke, He
touched, He used a little mud/spittle concoction.
His methods were miraculous.

Last we looked at the authority Jesus had over
demons. Today, please turn in your Bibles to **Luke
4:38-44** where we find that Jesus had authority over
diseases. Yet in this passage we will also see that
Jesus had a greater ministry to accomplish than
merely healing people of physical abnormalities.
The following is what I notice. These are the
essence of His earthly ministry.

The intervention of Jesus

The intercession of Jesus

The instruction of Jesus

I. THE INTERVENTION OF JESUS – v. 38-41

Our passage today is a continuation of the event that
took place in our message last week. Jesus had just
cast out a demon from a man attending the service
in the synagogue. As you can well imagine, it
caused quite a stir. We read in our text for today
that the service has ended and He is headed to the
home of Peter. In **Mark 1: 29-31** we also learn that
Andrew, James and John were with them. It was
dinner time and Jesus has been invited to the noon
meal.

Back in 1968, “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner”
starring Spencer Tracey, Katherine Hepburn and
Sidney Poitier was a comedy hit. If you could
invite anyone to dinner who would it be? Here we
find that Jesus was coming over to dinner after the
service.

All Mother-in-law jokes aside, when they arrived
Jesus found that Peter’s mother-in-law was in bed

sick. I don't know about you, but when I'm sick the last thing I want is company in my home. And if I've been invited to a home and find out someone is not well, then I feel awkward, like maybe I shouldn't be there, not just because I don't want to get sick, but because the person probably needs rest rather than having to entertain.

One summer when my Mom was quite sick from her cancer and chemo treatments a cousin of Dad's happened to be up in the Mio area doing some bird watching for the Kirtland Warbler. He and his wife decided to stop in and visit even though they knew she was not feeling well, making the excuse that it had been a long time since the last time together.

It was around lunch time and even though Mom was not well, she and her sister who had come up to help take care of her fixed some hamburgers for lunch. As Mom related the story, he was just sopping up his hamburger with lots of mustard. They visited a while and then left. A couple years later at my Grandfather's funeral Mom was talking about that incident with another cousin of Dad's and come to find out the cousin who visited was a vegetarian. They did what their mother's had taught them: do what you can to entertain with what you have even if you aren't feeling up to it and eat what's put in front of you.

Peter's mother-in-law was sick, with what we don't know. We don't even know if other medical interventions had been sought but were ineffective. The only thing we know for sure is that she had a fever and Dr. Luke wants us to know that it was a high or great fever. We think of a high fever as being something greater than 102. The Greeks to whom Luke was writing differentiated between low grade and high grade fevers to indicate their seriousness. Luke was not saying this for dramatic effect. The woman was seriously ill.

Let's not forget that diseases are the result of sin's curse on humanity.

According to the Centers for Disease Control a fever can cause acute or chronic illness. High fevers can cause any number of things from chills or sweats to nausea to vomiting and diarrhea, abdominal or chest pain. Fevers can come from pneumonia, typhoid, UTI, flu, heat stroke, malaria, septicemia, and many other illnesses, infections and so on. With high fever there is the risk of brain damage and even death.

As I was reading about fevers on the internet I learned that the length of the fever can tell the doctor a lot. It helps to narrow the possibilities and make a diagnosis. So when you go into the doctor's office and have a fever and they ask you how long you have had it, they can determine what you might have based on your answer. If the fever is ongoing it can be any number of things. If the fever comes and goes it can be something else.

Medical language of Jesus' day divided fevers into great and small. Hers was great. We don't know how long she had it and we don't know any other symptoms. Greek scholar A.T. Robertson states that the sentence structure in the Greek stresses the continuous nature of the fever, adding that it was perhaps chronic and certainly severe.

There were three types of fever common in that day. Malta fever was characterized by weakness, anemia and wasting away. It lasted several months and usually ended in death. The second was intermittent fever and was similar to what is known today as typhoid fever. The third was mosquito-born malaria, bred in the plain where the Jordan River winds into the Sea of Galilee. It was a problem for the lakeside towns of Galilee. Whatever she had it was threatening.

Jesus had three options. He could have said "I see that your mother-in-law is sick, so why don't I come back another time" and then turned around and left. He could have stayed and done nothing.

But he chose a third action. Our text says that they, and we assume the “**they**” in this case to be Peter and his wife, asked Jesus to help her. The word “**ask**” in the Greek is more than just a polite request. This word carries the idea of an urgent pleading, almost begging that Jesus help her because of the serious nature of her condition. It’s the same word that is used when Paul asked the Lord to deliver him from his thorn in the flesh.

(II Corinthians 12:8)

So Jesus went over to her bedside and bent over her. Mark’s account indicates that He took her by the hand and lifted her up.

I have been working on a memory verse of late from **Matthew 9**. Let me read **verses 35-36**.

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

Compassion is to feel pity or to sympathize with the plight of another. It is to have sorrow for the sufferings or trouble of another, and then deciding to do something about it. **Do we have the same compassion as Jesus?**

A number of years ago, Robyn and I were in Ann Arbor when we came to a stop light. On the corner was an older man probably in his late 60’s weaving as he walked to the corner about to cross the street. His appearance gave the impression that he was drunk. That’s what I thought. Then the man fell down on the curb. Robyn quickly put on her nurses hat and jumped out the car as did the man in the car in front of us nearest the man. They went to his side to help him. Annoyed motorists behind us honked their horn because the light had turned green. They helped the man get into the other motorist’s car and Robyn got back in our car and we

drove off. Come to find out the man was homeless. He had a broken hip and was trying to walk to the hospital and the other man agreed to take him.

I’m ashamed to admit that all too often when traffic is backed up I get a bit annoyed that it isn’t moving the way I think it should. After all I have a schedule and I’m being inconvenienced. As traffic slowly moves past the bottle neck I find out there was an accident, police cars and wreckers are on the scene and sometimes an ambulance or fire truck. Now I’m not a total lost cause. I’m learning that when traffic slows down, most likely due to an accident, I’m trying to remember to pray for whatever is ahead. It’s just a simple prayer “Lord, whatever is ahead you know about, I pray that the people are okay.” If I pass an accident or even when an ambulance is going down the road with its lights on believing they are on their way to the hospital I try to remember to pray for the victims that they might know the presence of God and pray that nothing is serious.

Jesus entered the home of Peter, found Peter’s mother-in-law seriously sick with a fever, and while it’s not stated I’m sure it is implied that Jesus had compassion for her. Luke tells us that He rebuked the fever. It’s the same word used when Jesus rebuked the winds and waves and told them to be still.

And when Jesus rebuked the fever, we read that it left her. Jesus shows us the power and authority He had over diseases of all kinds. *If He created us, He can cure us.* It’s no problem for Him. **Would you agree?**

There are two things I want you to see about His healing. It was *immediate* and it was *complete*. He didn’t tell the woman to take it easy that afternoon, that she needed to rest for a few more days. **When I had shingles the doctor gave me something to make me feel better and it took a number of days for me to feel better. I went back another time because I**

had a rash. I found out I'm allergic to penicillin. Here, take this it will make you feel better and in time the rash will go away.

Don't you get tired of hearing the doctor tell you to just take this and in a few days or a week's time you'll be feeling better. I want to be better now. "Here, take this and wait a few days. If you don't feel better by then, come back."

When Jesus healed someone there was no prescription, no wait and see if this works. He didn't advise her to call back in a few days if His interventions didn't work. When He healed it was immediate. And there was no question that it was a miracle, and that He was the one who did it.

Second, I want you to see that it was complete. I can count on one hand the times I know Robyn has been really upset with me. Maybe there's more, but she's not telling me. When I initially had my back problem before I knew that it was a herniated disc and bone spurs, and I was writhing in pain, Robyn would tell me to take ibuprofen. Later on she would ask me if I had taken any and I would say no. Now, I can be pretty stubborn about such things. I don't like taking pills and would rather suffer than take a pill. **Do you know anyone like that?** Well one night when I was in agony after however many nights of telling me to take some ibuprofen and my telling her I didn't need it, she had had enough of my whining and not listening to her advice and she let me know it. From her nursing experience she knew the ibuprofen would help – it wouldn't heal but it would help and yet I refused. And now even after surgery I'm not a 100%. But you already knew that about me.

The healing Jesus did was complete. When He healed the man born blind, he could see again. When he healed the deaf, they could hear, if the person was mute, they could talk, when he healed the lame, they could walk again, when he raised Jairus' daughter from the dead, she became alive.

Lepers were made whole. When Jesus healed someone it was a complete healing. He never left someone with partial paralysis or a limp or with a speech impediment or poor vision. They were made whole again. Jesus rebuked the fever and it left her immediately and she was healed completely. This will fulfill **Isaiah 53:4 "surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows."**

You can well imagine how quickly news spread around the surrounding area when people heard about what Jesus had done both in the synagogue and in Peter's home. **Verse 40** tells us that when the sun was setting people came from all over bringing to Jesus every kind of disease imaginable and the passage says He touched them and they were healed.

Why didn't they bring them to Jesus earlier in the day you might ask? Well the answer is that it was still the Sabbath. To carry any kind of burden on the Sabbath was to commit a sin against the law and they didn't want to be guilty, so they waited until sundown when the Sabbath was over. Later on the Pharisees will condemn Him for healing on the Sabbath, but not this day.

We see not only His power and authority over diseases of all kinds, but once again we see His power and authority over demons as He cast them out as well. We also see that as He did early so here He silenced the demons from speaking about Him. As we noted last week, Jesus did not want their witness about Him. He did not want others believing there was any association between Him and these demons. Besides, He did not come to earth to be acknowledged by demons, He came to earth to be acknowledged by people. The tense of the sentence also indicates that it was a continuous refusal on His part to reject their identifying Him, something He did over and over again. He didn't need or want their witness of Him. He wanted people to acknowledge that He was the Messiah.

Later in His ministry, after the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus will ask His disciples who others think Him to be. They'll toss out various answers and then He will ask them who they think He is. Peter will respond that He is the Christ of God, meaning that He was the Messiah.

Now before we move on, I want to come back to Peter's mother-in-law for a moment. We quickly passed over an important point. We need to notice her response to Jesus' healing touch. It says that she immediately got up and served them. Here's what I want us to keep in mind. She had a high fever and anyone who has ever had a high fever, even for just a short time, knows that it can leave you physically exhausted for days. You feel run down and drained. That she got up and had the energy to serve them right away speaks to the completeness of Jesus' healing. She didn't need a few days to recover. She was ready to serve.

Here's my point. Anyone who has experienced the touch of the Master's hand will have the same response. You will want to serve Him in some way out of gratitude for what He has done in your life. Maybe His touch was a physical healing. Maybe His touch was spiritual healing. Whatever the case maybe you want to, maybe you need to serve Him. **Has that desire ebbed away? Has the joy of that experience faded?** Begin to serve Him again.

Now there is something else I want us to see from this section before we move on. It is an important underlying principle. Bring the sick and afflicted to Jesus. Pray over them. Pray for them. Pray with them. But by all means bring them to Jesus. He can and does heal miraculously. Now that's not to say that we should bypass the doctor. I believe that God does heal through medical intervention. J. Vernon McGee says that all healing is divine (even if it's not instantaneous). One doctor adds that God does the healing, he just sends the bills.

Bring them to Jesus. He is compassionate. They asked Jesus to do something for this woman and He answered by healing her. He is able to intervene.

Next we see the intercession of Jesus.

II. THE INTERCESSION OF JESUS – v. 42

Did you notice verse 40 saying that it was sunset when they began to bring to Jesus everyone who had various kinds of diseases? He met the needs of everyone who came to Him. He didn't turn them away, but took whatever time necessary to help them. Jesus spent all night ministering to people and then in verse 42 we read that it was daybreak. He was at it nonstop and when the night was over He needed some rest. He needed time alone. I begin to imagine how nice some sleep would be and look forward to some shut eye, but not Jesus.

Mark 1 tells us that He went off to a solitary place, not to sleep but to pray. We don't know what it was He prayed about. Maybe He prayed for all those that He just healed that they might see there is a greater need beyond physical healing, that their soul needed spiritual healing from the disease of sin, that they might truly see Him as the Savior who came to seek and save the lost.

Earlier I read from **Matthew 9:35-36** about the compassion Jesus had for those around Him. The end of the passage reads **“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.’” (v. 37-38)**

Maybe that's what Jesus prayed about. They didn't need more medical doctors to meet physical needs. As important as vaccines are, I don't think He prayed that someone would find a cure to prevent some of their diseases or develop new technology to help them through life. I think He prayed about their soul and the need for others to be workers in the great harvest of souls, so He spent time praying.

But, whatever it was He prayed for, we know that often He sought solitude not to get away and sleep, but to pray, to commune with His Father and through that time to be refreshed in His own spirit.

Jesus is so much different than me. After I'm done preaching I'm spent. I've given myself and poured myself into the preparation and delivery of a message and it's draining. Most Sundays I go home physically tired as well. My legs are tired just from standing as if I had run a race. It is difficult for me to come back out for other activities. I want to just stay home and recover.

Jesus had been up all night serving others and needed some time of intercession. What a great lesson for us to learn, to intercede, to pray, to get some time alone with the Father and pour out our heart to Him. But even that was short lived as the crowds sought Him out. Our text tells us that they tried to keep Him from leaving. They didn't want Him to go. This was a different reception than the one He had received at Nazareth. There they wanted Jesus to leave. In Capernaum they wanted Him to stay. Maybe they wanted to set up a clinic where if others got sick or hurt, they could be brought to Jesus. Maybe they wondered if their illness returned, who would treat them. The idea conveyed by Luke is that they tried to hinder Him. Literally it means to hold fast or to hold back. You get the mental picture of pulling on His arm so that He can't get away or standing in His way to block Him from leaving.

We have noted the intervention of Jesus.

We have noted the intercession of Jesus.

We conclude noting the instruction of Jesus.

III. THE INSTRUCTION OF JESUS – v. 43-44

As we move into our final point, a couple of thoughts come from the pen of Chuck Swindoll that I think are worthy of mention as it relates to ministry. It is in these two verses that we identify

the primary ministry of Jesus. The healing ministry of Jesus was a means to an end not a means in themselves. His miraculous healing was a way to substantiate and authenticate that He was the Messiah and to authenticate His real message, that of the gospel. Jesus clearly told them that His primary ministry was not to heal but to preach the gospel. It is ok to say no to some things in order to focus on your primary calling. His mission never changed because of the urgency of others.

Swindoll notes:

1. Time alone, away from the demands of ministry is never selfish nor unimportant. Jesus would tell His disciples to come aside and rest. Some of you have been at ministry for a long time. You may need a rest, but remember a rest does not mean retirement from involvement in the work God has called you to do.
2. Others may not always understand the need to get away. People won't set boundaries for us, we must set them ourselves. Jesus came right out and said that there were other towns He needed to go, not just to heal the sick but to preach. There will always be more things to do and we need to be careful not to take too much on where we are spread so thin we aren't effective in the primary task we have been given. Set boundaries. Jesus did.

I once read about someone who said they would rather burn out than rust out for Jesus. While I understand what the person was saying, there is also the danger of doing too much.

Last week I was gently rebuked for cleaning the church. The thought was that I have other more important things to do than that. To that I have two thoughts. Yes, there are other things that I could be doing related to ministry, but sometimes that is ministry. It may be my time of rest away from the mental grind of study by immersing myself in something physical. It is also a time to show you that I am willing to do what I ask you to do.

There are other times when I need to get away from the daily routine of ministry to rest and spend time thinking and praying.

3. We must guard against a limited scope of ministry (tending only to the immediate and urgent which sucks away time from what we have been called to do). Jesus told them He had other places to go and couldn't only remain in Capernaum. The Lord may lead you to other places or areas of ministry within the church and we must go. It may be that He wants you to let go of something in order to do something else. We have talked for a couple months now about VBS and how Kathy and Linda who have headed that for years would like to take on another role within VBS so we are looking for others to step in. That may be you.

Jesus could have stayed in Capernaum and been very busy and the people would have been happy. But the rest of Judea would have missed out. They would not have been privileged to hear Him or be confronted with their need of a Savior. Jesus told them that His primary purpose for coming was to preach about the Kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is the rule of God in man's heart when he repents of sin and trusts Christ as Savior. The Kingdom of God is literally the good news or what we commonly call the gospel. He was called to preach about this kingdom that through Him as the Messiah, people could become its citizens as they allow Him to rule their heart. It is the kingdom we enter through the new birth.

John 3:3-8, 16

The new birth is the only way by which we can be part of the kingdom of God and that comes by grace through faith in God who loves us and sent His Son Jesus to die for us. This kingdom is eternal. And the chapter ends by noting that Jesus preached in synagogues around Judea.

He has come to seek and save the lost.

He has come not to be ministered to, but to minister and give His life as a ransom for many.

The Messiah has come to heal us of the spiritual disease of sin and the completeness and instantaneous nature of His physical healing is but a picture of the complete and instantaneous spiritual healing in the person who by faith places their trust in Him to save them and forgive them of sin. He doesn't save partially; He doesn't save over time. It is both complete and instantaneous and there is no sin so great that is too great for Him to forgive and save from. He can save anyone from any and all sins.

Maybe today you need His healing touch from sin. Seek Him and He will be found. Trust Him to forgive and He will forgive completely, right now.

Maybe today you are exhausted from serving. Find some time to rest in Him. If Christ needed some time of solitude then so do we. Come aside and rest.

Maybe you need to get up and begin to serve. If Christ has done a miraculous work in your life then your desire should be to serve out of gratitude.

There are a lot of places and people you can see to get help. Let's remember to go to the great Physician. He has authority and power over both demons and diseases. He is the Messiah.