

Jesus Has the Power We Need

Luke 8:26-56

If you are a fan of the original Star Trek you will no doubt recall those words often made by Captain Kirk hoping to get away from some enemy star ship: “Scotty, I need more power.”

Have you ever felt like you needed more power? In our message today we want to consider that when we lack power, Jesus has all the power we need.

In last week’s message Jesus was traveling with His disciples by boat from Capernaum across the Sea of Galilee. Exhausted from a long day of ministry He fell asleep somewhere along the 14 mile journey. Without warning a horrific storm whipped the lake into a frenzy so that all the disciples on board were terrified that they were in danger of dying. The scene must have been chaotic as the disciples frantically attempted to keep the boat upright and floating. Water was pouring over the sides threatening to capsize the boat and all aboard. Eventually they realized everyone was scrambling except Jesus who was still fast asleep in the back of the boat. They wake Him up and described their peril: “Don’t you care that we perish?” Jesus spoke and the violent winds and battering waves immediately stopped. The disciples were both amazed and afraid.

From Mark’s account they had left for the other side of the lake in the evening. Neither Matthew, Mark, nor Luke tell us when the boat arrived on the other side at their destination, but we can assume that it was in the morning because some local herdsman were out tending to their pigs.

With your Bibles open, turn to Luke 8:26-56 where we continue in our study of the life of Jesus through the pen of Doctor Luke. What we have seen and what we will continue to see is the authority Jesus displays in various situations. He has that same authority in the life situations we encounter. Within

this passage we see three evident truths that are just as valid today.

Jesus has power over demons

Jesus has power over diseases

Jesus has power over death

Within these three stories in our passage, each includes the same three components.

A worrisome plight is evident

A wonderful power is exhibited

A worshipful posture is expressed

Let’s take a look at the first story and consider that Jesus has power over demons.

I. JESUS HAS POWER OVER DEMONS – v. 26-39

A. A Worrisome Plight is Evident – v. 26-31

They were traveling to the region of the Gerasenes, the south east side of the Sea of Galilee. Back in the Old Testament when Israel was about to cross the Jordan river and enter into the land God had promised them, the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh wanted to remain on the east side of the Jordan River and settle there. They were granted that right, but as the nation of Israel fell into apostasy, they were the first tribes to be conquered and dispersed among the conquering nation of Assyria. Consequently Gentiles were relocated into the land and from that time on the region was predominantly made up of Gentiles.

Why is that important to you and me? It’s important because it gives evidence that salvation wasn’t just for the Jews. Jesus came to seek and save the lost and that includes Gentiles – us.

Jesus and the disciples had no more than pulled the boat up on shore and climbed out of the boat when they are met with an unexpected encounter. Running toward Jesus was a man described as being demon-possessed. Let’s understand the gravity of

this man's situation. We can ill afford to take at face value Hollywood's depiction of demons. While they let their imagination run wild about what they might look like or how they act, demons are not impish little creatures who pull devilish pranks on people. Understand that they are bodiless servants of Satan. From what we see in the New Testament especially in the Gospels they seek out a body in which to carry out their destructive orders. Theologian Lewis Sperry Chafer adds that "their power seems to be in some measure dependent upon such embodiment." Demons are wicked, unclean, vicious, and vile. And while they can appear as an angel of light, their intent is to mislead the unsaved and disrupt the work of God including waging war against the believer. Remember that like their master, they really are a roaring lion seeking to devour. Like their master, they promise something pleasurable only in the end to destroy.

This man was demon possessed and the true character the demons is evident in the man's appearance and behavior. How he acted showed that he was completely controlled by the demons.

Notice several things about him.

He was naked and he had been so for a long time.

The Bible says in Genesis two that when Adam and Eve were created they were naked and felt no shame, but when they sinned the Bible says they became aware of their nakedness and immediately were ashamed and covered themselves. The demons had so controlled this man he was no longer ashamed of his nakedness.

He lived in the cemetery, he lived among the dead. One author described it as a half-way house to the grave. It was an isolated place avoided by most people. He was living alone.

He cried out. The Greek word is anakradzow and comes from a root word that means to croak. It's a guttural sound that is rough and raucous. It's an onomatopoeic word which means that the formation

of the word imitates the natural sound associated with the object or action involved such as buzz, boom and whoosh. In the *Lord of the Rings* Trilogy Gollum would be such a word.

The man shouted at the top of his voice. The demons knew Jesus and that He had power over them. The man's bazaar actions and appearance may have scared the disciples but Jesus stood His ground and the demons did what they must do, even though they don't want to, they bowed in submission before Him. But they asked "What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" Matthew adds "don't torture me before the appointed time."

It's the same thing as saying "what do we have in common?" Today we would say "why don't you mind your own business." They knew who Jesus was and they trembled because they knew He had authority over them. They know their doom.

Notice additionally the power of these demons that even though the local authorities had seized him and chained him, under the demonic power *the man would break the chains*. No man made authority could control or contain him.

Jesus learned that the man was possessed by many demons, not just one. In the Roman army a legion consisted of 6,000 soldiers. Let's just say that this man was possessed by many of demons. We don't know when or how, but over time many came to reside in him. No wonder his behavior was so bazaar. But the possession and power of the demons in this man were no match for the power of Jesus over them.

B. The Wonderful Power is Exhibited – v. 32-33

Jesus had commanded them to leave the man, but they didn't want to go the place of the dead before it was time. Jesus did not come to bring judgment on them just yet, He came to deliver the man. He came

to seek and to save the lost. He came to deliver us from the dominion of darkness and transfer our citizenship to His kingdom.

Satan and his demons will never stand a chance against Jesus who has all power over them. Though they may resist they must obey Jesus' commands. They didn't want to be cast into the place of the dead so they asked to be allowed to enter a herd of pigs. Jesus permitted it and we see that the pigs didn't want to be possessed by demons and hurled themselves off a cliff and were drowned. Some people refer to the abyss as a watery place so they ended up where they didn't want to go anyway.

Jesus demonstrates wonderful power over demons even when they indwell someone.

C. A Worshipful Posture is Expressed – v. 34-39

While the town's people reacted strongly against what Jesus did we see that the man was seated at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. "For if any man be in Christ he is a new creation, old things have passed away, behold all things are become new." (II Corinthians 5:17)

Such a dramatic change had taken place that this guy wanted to follow Jesus, but Jesus urged him to stay and share with others the great things Jesus had done for him. This section ends with the man going out as a missionary in his home town.

When we allow Jesus' power to change us a true transformation takes place in the heart that will be obvious and visible to others. People will see a difference.

Chafer sums it up nicely. "Demon possession means a demon residing in a person, exerting direct control and influence over that person, with certain derangement of mind and body. Demon possession is to be distinguished from demon influence (or oppression) and demon activity in relation to a

person. The work of the demon in the latter is from the outside in, demon possession is from within. By this, a Christian cannot be possessed by a demon since he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. However, a Christian can be the target of demonic activity to such an extent that he may give the appearance of demon possession."

It is possible for a Christian to place himself in a position that is vulnerable to the forces of evil at any time when they surrender themselves either to fleshly appetites such as anger or lust or bitterness or through some form of seemingly benign philosophy like eastern meditation. Folks we need to be wary of the subtle influence from TV or books or music that talk about such things as if they were normal or appealing. Stay away because they lure us into a realm we shouldn't enter and their influence affects our spiritual judgment. If our nation is truly some 70% Christian, why do we tolerate abortion, homosexuality, TV programs blatantly mocking Jesus and Christianity.

We are called to be vigilant against the wiles of the devil who roams around seeking someone to devour and defend ourselves with the armor of God that will enable us to stand against his attacks. Only Christ has the power to defeat demonic forces and we are to use His tools. In His power let's take a stand.

This passage illustrates for us that there is a real spiritual battle for the hearts of men.

Sin leaves us abandoned and without hope.

Sin is self-destructive.

God's power is greater than sin and its influence.

Sin may have you desperate but you can be delivered.

Romans 6:15-18

Accepting Jesus results in a change.

I Corinthians 6:9-11

(II Corinthians 5:17)

Following Jesus or sin always involves a choice.

Martin Luther's classic hymn encourages us.

A mighty fortress is our God
A bulwark never failing
Our helper He amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing

For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe
His craft and power are great
And armed with cruel hate
On earth is not His equal

And though this world, with devils filled
Should threaten to undo us
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us

The Prince of Darkness grim
We tremble not for him
His rage we can endure
We know, his doom is sure
One little word will fell him

If we have been delivered by Jesus, is a change evident? Jesus has power over demons.
Jesus has power over diseases.

II. JESUS HAS POWER OVER DISEASES – v. 42b-48

There is a story within a story here. With the exception of the man just delivered from demon possession, all the towns people demanded that Jesus leave. They were “overcome with fear.” They didn't want the transforming power of Jesus in their lives. They were content to stay as they were and sadly many people today, even some we know, are like that. No matter what evidence there is that Jesus can do a great work in their life, they choose to send Him away. The person who was at times chained, was set free while the people who thought they were free were the ones really in chains.

So Jesus got in the boat and headed back. When they arrived, they were warmly greeted by the crowd they had left the day earlier. Luke says the people had been expecting Him. In the crowd were

a man and a woman. Maybe they knew each other, maybe not. It's possible they may have been acquainted because the man was the ruler of the synagogue. Both were in the crowd because they each had a need and they believed Jesus was the only power that could help them.

The man had a daughter who was deathly sick.
The woman had a condition that rendered her a social outcast. Both sought out Jesus.

The man approached Jesus first. His name is Jairus. He was the ruler of the synagogue and it was his responsibility to oversee the maintenance of the facility as well and to line up those who read from the law and prophets each Sabbath. He may have known Jesus since Jesus spoke in the synagogue, even healed a man in the synagogue. He came and fell at Jesus' feet, again a sign of submission. He pleads with Jesus to come and heal his 12 year old daughter. She was his only child and she was dying. Something occurs that causes a delay.

Now keep in mind that what seems like a delay to us is God's perfect timing. If we truly pray as Jesus instructed us, that His will be done in heaven and on earth, then we need to take a back seat and not be impatient when God's answer doesn't fit our time table. By all means pray and seek God's will in the matter, but when we ask Him to do something, step out of the way and let Him do it – in His own time. He has a purpose in what seems like a delay.

We read in verse 42 that Jesus was on His way, so we make the inference that He had agreed to help, not because He was obliged to do so since Jairus was the ruler of the synagogue or deserving because he was a righteous man or a wealthy man: He did so out of His great compassion. And so He went. Luke notes that the very large crowd pressed so hard against Him that they were close to crushing Him. It was like a blue light special at Christmas.

If you have gone to a sporting event, you know what it's like. The game is over and everyone is exiting at the same time. You feel like a bunch of sardines packed in tightly as you shuffle out.

In the crowd was a woman who had a need. While Jairus made his need known she chose to remain silent. Again we see the same three components as we did with the man who was demon possessed.

A. A Worrisome Plight is Evident – v. 43-44a

Notice that her condition and the age of the child are the same. She had a bleeding disorder that according to Leviticus 15:25-33 rendered her ceremonially unclean. She was barred from entering the synagogue, of participating in the normal and regular experience of worshipping God. She was a social outcast not just because she was banned from entering the synagogue but also because if anyone touched her they would also become ceremonially unclean and would have to go through a purification ritual in order to enter the synagogue.

Mark 5 adds some additional details not found in Luke. He records that she had spent everything she had on doctors to find a cure, but they couldn't cure her. In their minds, her case was hopeless and she felt totally helpless – and alone.

This woman had tried anything and everything and nothing had worked. Not only was she not cured, she was now poor as a result. Mark also says that she suffered much at the hands of the doctors attempting to treat her. Some of the things they had her try left her in pain and Scripture says that she was worse off than when she started and keep in mind this had been going on for 12 years.

Here are a couple of remedies found by scholars. Drinking wine mixed with a powder made from rubber, alum and garden crocuses. Eating Persian onions cooked in wine and then telling the blood to stop.

She was desperate to be healed and return to society, to go to the market with friends, to sit alongside other worshippers, to invite folks over for a dinner party. How embarrassed and alone she must have felt. So she did the only thing that remained, Mark said when she heard about Jesus, she went to see Him. Maybe she went in a disguise of some kind so she wouldn't be recognized so that if someone bumped into her they wouldn't know it was the woman who could defile them with a touch. She didn't want to make a scene. Her plan was to get in, touch Jesus and get out. After all if she touched Him and nothing happened He too would be defiled, but to her it was worth the try. She had nothing to lose, but everything to gain. Without bringing attention to herself, she wiggled her way through the crowd to where Jesus was, reached out and touched His garment. The Greek word used indicates that it was more than just a sweeping touch but rather grabbing and holding on.

Let me pause here and ask this. How many of us have faced some issue, something extremely hard for us to deal with? It can be anything from illness or finances, to job loss, to divorce; something that has left us desperate and destitute. We know about Jesus, but we never go to Jesus with our issue. He can't help me. He's too busy. I'm unimportant. My case is hopeless.

You may know you need to be saved, and that He can save you but you don't go to Him. You may know you need His peace because He can give it to you but you don't go to Him. You may know you need His forgiveness because of some sin in your life, but you don't go to Him. What keeps you from going? Are you angry with God because He failed to answer your years of pleading? Are you afraid He may say no? Are you afraid He doesn't care? She put aside whatever fears she had and went to Jesus, the only one she believed could help her. True faith demands a response. She had a great need that only the power

of Jesus could help and she went. Here's where we see the wonderful power that is exhibited.

B. A Wonderful Power is Exhibited – v. 44b

She went in faith, took hold of Jesus' garment and our text states that she was instantly healed. Again the Greek gives us a better understanding. Going back again to Mark's account he writes that "she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering." The word 'felt' is the Greek word *ginoskow* which means *to know*. She not only felt it, she knew it and it was immediate. 12 years of suffering had ended instantly.

It's hard to believe but I am just a month away from my two year anniversary after back surgery. At my two month follow up from surgery, I met with the surgeon's physician's assistant. She asked me a series of questions and had me do some stretches and after a short visit, she stood up, stuck out her hand to shake mine and said "Congratulations, you're healed." Okay, so if I'm "healed" how come I still have periodic pain when I do certain activities like weeding or kicking a soccer ball? How come I still have constant numbness in my foot? Why do I need to watch the things I do to avoid repercussions?

Once again Jesus exhibited wonderful power over diseases. She was healed instantly. That may not be your situation. Maybe you're wondering why Jesus hasn't healed you and helped you. You have reached out and taken hold of Him in faith and your condition remains the same or worse.

Let me see if I can answer that as we look at this next point.

C. A Worshipful Posture is Expressed – v. 45-48

I want you to keep something in mind. There is no disease that Jesus can't heal. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) speaks of deadly viruses that could easily be epidemic and out of control for

which they don't have a cure. We can talk about HIV or ebola among many, but where man's attempts to treat fall short, diseases which can be fatal, Jesus has the power to heal. But keep this in mind whether healed or not Romans 8:28 is still true that God means it for good to all who love Him and are called according to His purpose as a way to grow your faith.

But where He may choose not to physically heal those who call to Him, He will in no wise cast out any who call on Him to be healed spiritually, to those who come to Him in faith to be saved. Grab a hold of Him and you will be healed from spiritual brokenness.

Jesus asked who had touched Him resulting in a rather patronizing question by the disciples who reminded Him that the crowd was so large and so eager to get near Him, why would He ask such a question. Jesus could tell the difference between those who were pressing to get close and someone who touched Him purposefully because He discerned that power had gone from Him.

Realizing she couldn't escape notice, the woman came forward and fell at His feet, a posture acknowledging submission to Him. Jesus did not intend to call her out and further humiliate her, but wanted her to acknowledge Him before the crowd. It was meant for her good and as a testimony to those around.

Romans 10:9-10 "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

He wanted her to tell others what had happened. His response to her acknowledgement meant more than just receiving physical healing, He meant that her faith had saved her. That He refers to her as "Daughter" is more than just a symbol of belonging to the same nationality, He meant that she had been

included as part of His eternal kingdom. But know this – Jesus has power over diseases. No disease is too hard for Him to heal.

Warren Wiersbe writes that “Her confession was a rebuke to the multitude. You can be a part of the crowd and never get any blessing from being near Jesus! It is one thing to ‘press Him’ and another thing to ‘touch Him’ by faith. We may not have strong faith, but we do have a strong Savior.”

Let me give you four points about faith from her story.

Faith is born out of need.

Faith demands a response, some action on our part.

Faith cannot remain anonymous. Tell others.

Faith revealed is faith rewarded. Jesus received her. Jesus has power over diseases.

Let’s consider our final point – Jesus has power over death.

III. JESUS HAS POWER OVER DEATH – v. 40-42, 49-56

Like the other two accounts, this also bears the same three components.

A. A Worrisome Plight is Evident – v. 40-42

We have already taken a brief look at his plight. His only child, a 12 year old daughter was dying. Probably like the woman, she had been taken to doctor after doctor with no cure. There was no human intervention that could save her from the inevitable and all the father could do up to this point was wait.

But there was a delay. The time Jesus was taking with this woman was, in his opinion, not as urgent as his plight. Surely her issue could have waited, after all, he got there first and she was cutting in line. Jairus was probably growing more frantic knowing that every minute wasted brought his child

that much closer to death. As they continued their journey he saw someone coming toward them with the news he feared. “Forget about bringing the Master, it’s too late your daughter has died.” Those are the words that tear at the heart of any parent. They are penetrating and paralyzing words.

B. A Wonderful Power is Exhibited – v. 50-55

Let the words of Jesus comfort your anxious mind today – “Don’t be afraid, only believe.” Jesus was asking the man to trust Him.

Folks, do we believe Jesus? Do we trust Him? Do His words today give us peace no matter how hopeless our situation may seem, even when we see a delay in God’s response?

They continued on to the home of Jairus and with authority He put out all the paid mourners who thought His comments were a joke. They ridiculed. They laughed. They mocked. But they left.

With only Peter, James, John and her parents, Jesus reached out and took her hand. According to the Law, this action would defile Him because she was dead. But He took her hand and spoke. Four simple words – “My child, get up.” Mark’s account states that He spoke in Aramaic words that mean “Little lamb, arise.”

His words were personal.

His words were purposeful.

His words were perfect.

His words were powerful.

Maybe you have stood at the bedside of a loved one and prayed for a healing and they were not, but instead slipped into death. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan shares words I hope will encourage you today. “I can hardly speak of this matter without becoming personal and reminiscent, remembering a time forty years ago when my own first daughter lay at the point of death, dying. I called for Him then, and He came, and surely said to our troubled

hearts, 'Fear not, believe only.' He did not say, "She shall be made whole." She was not made whole, at least on this earthly plane; she passed away into the life beyond. But He did say to her 'Talitha, cumi,' in essence, 'Little lamb, arise.' But in her case that did not mean, 'Stay on the earth level,' it meant that He needed her, and He took her to be with Himself. She has been with Him for all these years, as we measure time here, and I have missed her every day. But His words 'Believe only,' has been the strength of all the passing years."

Even though our prayers may not bring a physical healing as a loved one dies, we know if they had faith in Christ as their Savior He did heal them, they did rise up by being brought into the presence of Jesus. When Jesus told Jairus not to be afraid, only believe the tense means start believing and don't stop believing. "Faith is not the belief that we will get what we want, but the belief that God knows what is best."

What seems to be a delay is merely God's way of bringing about what is best. Time is of no concern to Him, whether it's a matter of minutes as in this case or a day as in the case of the widow of Nain's son or four days as is the case with Lazarus, His timing is always perfect.

C. A Worshipful Posture is Expressed – v. 56

In a word, they were astonished. It's a word that means totally besides themselves, filled with emotion.

The same power that created the universe is the same power that raised this little girl. It was a miracle and Jesus wanted them to be quiet about it, but how can you keep something like that quiet when all the people who had just been in the house knew she was dead? We don't have that restriction. Because Jesus has done something great for us we have to tell someone. The One who is the resurrection and the life, has power over death.

The One who is the Great Physician has power over diseases.

The One who is the Light has power over demons and the forces of darkness.

When you come to Jesus sit at His feet, come humbly, be in awe of Him.

Are you experiencing some plight that brings you to Jesus? Don't be afraid, only believe. Oh, and go tell somebody what great things Jesus has done for you.