



Sermon Discussion Questions

January 14, 2024

Jesus in Galilee

WHAT IS THIS WORD?

Luke 4:31-37

1. Opening Discussion Questions

- a. Have you ever attended an event – perhaps a lecture or a book reading – where the author presented his or her own work? How did it differ from just hearing about what someone had written? Would you be more likely to believe and form opinions based on the first-hand report or what you hear second-hand?
- b. Star Wars is known for the “epic” battle between the two sides of “the force”. Share your opinion about the way good and evil are presented in the films. Do you think that the plot of the movie was shaped more by society’s values or that the movie has done more to shape what people believe (remembering that the first movie came out 47 years ago)?

2. Sermon Outline/Key Points

- a. Jesus Had Another Unusual Day at the Synagogue
 - i. Jesus amazes with His teaching.
 - ii. Jesus amazes with His power
- b. The Word of Jesus Has Total Authority
 - i. The point of this story isn't about a demon, it's all about the word of Jesus
 - ii. Believing in Jesus and His Word saves us
- c. Does the Word of Jesus Have Authority Over Your Life?
 - i. How well do you actually know the word of Jesus?
 - ii. Have you actually submitted to the authoritative word of Jesus?

This week's study will be a little different. At the end of his sermon Brian presented a series of "Have you ..." questions. Rather than focusing on the passage in Luke, starting Monday we will consider one of those questions each day. Additionally, if you want to study some of the amazing truths contained in Luke 4:31-37 questions are provided in paragraph 4.

3. Study/Discussion Points:

- a. ***Sunday Afternoon*** – As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to prayerfully consider the key question Brian asked: ***“Does the Word of Jesus have authority over your life?”***
 - i. If you are inclined to answer “Yes”:
 1. Are there one or more areas of your life that are exceptions – areas you want to control yourself?

2. Are you spending sufficient time in His Word (the Bible) daily so that you know what that Authority requires of you?
 - ii. If you must honestly answer “No” because you don’t have a personal relationship with Jesus, talk to one of the church staff or a Christian from the church about how you can have one.
- b. **Monday** – *Have you submitted your life to love God and neighbor?*
 - i. Read Matthew 22:37-39; also, Deuteronomy 6:5, Joshua 22:5, Romans 13:9-10, Galatians 5:14, James 2:8, and 1 John 4:20-21.
 - ii. What does it mean to you to love God with all your heart and mind?
 - iii. God has given us clear rules for how we should live. But living in a sinful world we will daily encounter people breaking those rules (as do we). Do you tend to be more judgmental or forgiving/understanding in such situations? Which is more Biblical?
 - iv. When you face a decision not clearly covered by Biblical rules (or where rules seem to conflict) what factors influence your priorities?
- c. **Tuesday** – *Have you submitted your life to make disciples?*
 - i. Read Matthew 28:18-20; also, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-47, John 20:21, Acts 1:8, Matthew 4:19 & 8:18-22, Mark 8:34-35, Luke 14:25-33, and 1 John 2:4-6.
 - ii. What is the absolutely mandatory first step if you are going to submit your life to making disciples? What must you do first?
 - iii. Carefully consider Matthew 4:19-20. What does “follow me” look like in your life? Following Jesus will lead us in different directions – not everyone will be a missionary – but according to this verse what will we all be? If you are not, what excuses do you make for not being a “fisher of men”?
- d. **Wednesday** – *Have you submitted your life to love one another?*
 - i. Read John 13:34-35; also, Romans 12:4-5, Ephesians 4:25, James 5:16, 1 Corinthians 12:25, Galatians 6:2, Ephesians 4:2 & 32, 1 Thessalonians 4:18 & 5:11, and 1 Peter 4:1 & 5:5.
 - ii. Since the command to “love one another” occurs more than a dozen times in the New Testament how important do you think it is to God? How important to you?
 - iii. There are many commands in the Bible which might be understood to apply differently depending on the circumstances, but in this case God gives us over 50 amplifying examples of what it means to “love one another”. A few are in the verses you read. Can you truly say that you are loving others if you disregard even one of these examples?
- e. **Thursday** – *Have you submitted your family life and priorities to serving Jesus?*
 - i. Read Matthew 10:37-39; also, Ephesians 6:1-4, 1 Timothy 5:8, Isaiah 6:6-8, John 13:12-16, Hebrews 9:14, Psalm 100:2, Deuteronomy 13:4, Galatians 5:13, 1 Peter 4:10 and 1 Corinthians 9:19.

- ii. What does it mean to you to “serve Jesus”? Is it primarily “volunteering” to perform a function at our church? How does Matthew 25:31-46 affect your answer?
 - iii. Our priorities are best measured by how we actually allocate our most precious commodity – time. Think honestly about how you use your time. Does it suggest that serving Jesus is a priority in your life?
- f. **Friday** – *Have you submitted your finances to storing up treasure in heaven?*
- i. Read Matthew 6:19-20; also, Mathew 10:8 & 19:21, Psalm 24:1, Job 41:11, Luke 6:38 & 16:10-13, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 & 7, 9:6-8, and Romans 12:8
 - ii. In a famous sermon J. I. Packer suggested that instead of asking “How much does God want me to give” we should ask “How much does God want me to keep”. Which approach more closely describes your attitude about giving? Which aligns best with 2 Corinthians 9:7?
 - iii. What does your attitude about money and possessions reveal about your values and loyalties?
- g. **Saturday** – *Have you submitted your thoughts to Jesus?*
- i. Read Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28 & 38-39; also Proverbs 6:21, Matthew 15:16-20, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 13:11, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Ephesians 2:3 & 4:23, Hebrews 3:1 & 4:12, Mark 7:17-23 and Philippians 4:8.
 - ii. In what ways do other religions with their focus on external actions fundamentally differ from what Christ taught? What is the only remedy for our sinful heart’s condition? Why is “trying harder” inadequate and even counterproductive?
 - iii. Compare the lists in Mark 7:21-22 and Philippians 4:8. Just between you and God, which list would you say more closely parallels your thought life? How would the old computer maxim “Garbage In – Garbage Out” apply to the lives of Christians live in 2024 America? What is the cure?
4. **Focal Passage:** Read Luke 4:31-37 several times using different translations if possible. Meditate on the passage and try to visualize what it must have been like to attend that synagogue service.
- a. What would you say was the main theme or message of these seven verses?
 - b. Compare Luke 4:31 with Matthew 4:13-16. Based on these two passages why do you think Jesus went to Capernaum? What significance do you see in the fact that the Bible never mentions that Jesus ever went back to Nazareth?
 - c. We often think of Jesus conducting His teaching outdoors (on a mountain or by the sea). Recalling last week’s passage (Luke 4:16), the location specified in verses 31-33, and looking ahead to verse 44 where does it seem that much (most) of it actually occurred? What lesson might we learn from this for today?
 - d. Why were people amazed at Jesus’ teaching? Compare verse 32 with Mark 1:22.

- i. In what ways do you think Jesus' teaching differed from that of the Jewish Pharisees to make it "authoritative"?
 - ii. Why was Jesus able to teach with an authority the other Jewish leaders could not (see Luke 2:46-49)?
 - e. Verses 33-34 introduce the conflict.
 - i. What seems amazing about this situation?
 - ii. Why do you think a demon possessed person might be in the synagogue?
 - iii. The evil spirit, speaking through the possessed man, asks Jesus two questions. Do you think a response was expected or were they rhetorical? In the broader sense, what is the only possible answer to the second question (see Revelation 20:10)?
 - iv. What do you think of the evil spirit's declaration about who Jesus is? What did that evil spirit not call Jesus (see verse 41)? What explanation might explain why the evil spirit correctly identified Jesus?
 - f. Jesus' rebuke of the demon contained two commands.
 - i. Why do you think each was important?
 - ii. Why did Jesus muzzle the demon when it clearly knew more about who Jesus was than the others in the synagogue? What might be a practical principle to us today?
 - g. Why do you think the demon was more obedient than many (most) Christians today?
 - h. Verse 36 again tells us the people were amazed. Which amazement – that resulting from His teaching (verse 32 (ESV uses 'astonished')), or His actions (verse 35-36) had the most immediate influence? Which was likely most lasting?
 - i. Compare Jesus' preaching in Luke 4:18-21 to His actions in this focal passage. How were the teaching and the action related?
 - j. If you are doing this study in a group, discuss what you believe about evil spirits, demons, etc. How would you respond to the modern view that there are no evil spirits and Jesus was just dealing with mental illness? Would evil spirits be a believable explanation for some of the truly horrific acts we've witnessed over the past years?
- 5. **Application:** If God has shown you that you need to grow in one or more of these areas as you have thought about Brian's questions and read associated scripture seriously consider joining the Grow Deeper study starting on January 22nd.

6. Prayer Points:

- a. Adoration – 1 Peter 4:16
- b. Confession – James 5:16
- c. Thanksgiving – 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- d. Supplications – James 4:2-3