

# The man with an unclean spirit

△ Luke 4:31-37

## Intro

Today's passage may sound strange in our western ears

What is this talk about evil/unclean spirits?

Surely our medical profession as advanced well enough now

These must be mental diseases

Sychrophenia, perhaps?

But evil / unclean spirits do not exist, surely

And this attitude has closed our eyes to the normal Biblical worldview

A worldview that the people witnessing the acts of Jesus did not find strange

Or where countless Christians in Africa, Asia or Latin America find this perfectly normal

For the western world these experiences are relegated to the fictional world

## Fictional world

There are countless fantasy novels out there that portray a world where unclean spirits exist

And there are many people today in the western world who pay attention to wigi boards, tarot cards, horoscopes, chrystals

And they are drawn to this, because it is real

## Spiritual Survey example

Last year we did a spiritual survey

One question: Have you ever investigated spiritual matters?

Many in their 30ies,40ies responded yes: crystals, tarot, budhism, hinduism

But not Christianity!

Even the people in our generation are realising the spiritual is real

Even of science cannot prove it

And they don't realise how bad these spiritual practices are for them!

## Luke context

Start of series: Jesus in Nazareth

The last few Sundays:

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor

to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom  
for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,  
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's  
favor.”

The prophecy from Isaiah that Jesus  
claimed as his

This is me!

Nazarath could not see him like that,  
but saw him as the man from the village

And he had to leave

But what does it mean, proclaiming  
freedom, recovery of sight, setting  
oppressed free

In this passage Jesus teaches  
that in Capernaum

Not only by speech

But also a demonstration of his power

## Man with an unclean demon

### Unclean demon

Luke cannot make it more specific

Not only was this man possessed by a  
demon

It was unclean and it would have made the  
man unclean

**In the eyes of the religious authorities**

And the demon is in charge

It controls the man

It even speaks through him

Shouting really

Grabbing the attention from Jesus' teaching

## Jesus' authority

Jesus speaks with authority

as he told the unclean demon

"Be silent, and come out of him!"

And the demon obeyed Jesus

With a bit of drama

But not harming the man himself

One thing we hear often in the gospels is that Jesus spoke and acted with authority

This is because he is the Son of God

Many people, especially the younger generations, are looking up to people who speak with authority

Because they are lost, and do not know what to choose and do in life

They seek direction, and the older generations tell them: you can do what you like!

But they don't know what they like

**There is too much choice**

So they search for those who claim to know

If only they were looking to Jesus!

As he has the ultimate authority

## Jesus sets people free

This was a demonstration of  
Jesus purpose

To set them free

But from what?

Jesus demonstrates

what he has declared before

To set the captives free

What he promised he would in  
Nazarath

He is the promised Messiah

And he does this not by freeing  
them from the Roman occupiers

But by freeing them from the bondage  
to evil

In this man case of bondage to an evil  
spirit

but in other cases bondage to physical  
ailments or bondage to religious  
practices

He sets them free so that they can  
choose

## Jesus' word's

The passage ends with the  
crowds commenting with  
amazement

## AMAZEMENT

What kind of teaching is this? (NIV)

What kind of utterance is this (NRSV)

In Greek the word used for teaching/utterance is 'word'

And we are reminded of John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

Jesus words in teaching as well as commanding demons has the authority of God

He heals by speaking the Words that spoke creation into being

This is our God

For us today?

But what do we with this today?

Accept that this is a story that explains the divinity of Christ, and his authority

As we get to know more of Jesus during this season between Christmas and Lent?

But is there more?

Going back to the Gospel of John:

<sup>12</sup> John 14:12-14

<sup>12</sup> Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than

these, because I am going to the Father.

and

<sup>13</sup> And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Or in Matthew

^ Matt 28:18-19

<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Jesus commission to his disciples

All authority has been given to me

Therefore go and do what I have been doing

You are working in and under my authority

Do we accept that authority?

As you know we have a prayer ministry group

And there are occasions that we also need to tell evil spirits to go to from a person

Just like Jesus did

And we do this in the name and the authority of Jesus

If you believe in Jesus Christ, you have his authority

To speak against evil

Do we take it?

**Are we free?**

Or do we find ourselves like the man with the unclean Spirit?

Do we need to be freed from something

It could be addictive or compulsive behaviour

Not being able to withstand temptations of life

Finding ourselves overwhelmed by emotions that are not justified for the situation

**Anger, fear, guilt, shame**

If that is you, then you may also want to have prayer ministry

As there we ask Jesus to reveal to you what is underneath that all

And he can then heal your pain, hurt, anger, fear or whatever it is

By speaking his Word into your life

**Amen.**

