

Sermon for The 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Date: February 3, 2019

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Jeremiah 1:4–10

Epistle Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:31b—13:13

Gospel Reading: Luke 4:31–44

Sermon Text: Luke 4:31–44

Sermon Title: Jesus is Truly God

Introit: Psalm 10:16-18; Antiphon Psalm 10:12

Hymns:

LSB 842 – Son of God, Eternal Savior

LSB 706 – Love in Christ Is Strong and Living

LSB 729 – I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus

Distribution:

LSB 468 – I Am Content! My Jesus Ever Lives

LSB 553 – O Christ, Our Hope

Liturgy:

Divine Service I, p.151



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Text: Luke 4:31–44

Jesus went to Capernaum {*ka-PER-na-um*}, a city in Galilee, and taught them on the day of rest—a holy day. The people were amazed at his teachings because he spoke with authority. In the synagogue was a man possessed by an impure spirit, an evil demon. He shouted very loudly, “Leave us alone! What do you want with us, Jesus from Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

Jesus ordered the spirit, “Keep quiet, and come out of him!” The demon threw the man down in the middle of the synagogue and came out without hurting him.

Everyone was stunned. They said to one another, “What kind of command is this? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits, and they come out.”

So news about him spread to every place throughout the surrounding region. Jesus left the synagogue and went to Simon’s house. Simon’s mother-in-law was sick with a high fever. They asked Jesus to help her. He bent over her, ordered the fever to leave, and it went away. She got up immediately and prepared a meal for them.

When the sun was setting, everyone who had family or friends suffering from various diseases brought them to him. He placed his hands on each of them and cured them. Demons came out of many people, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” Jesus ordered them not to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah.

In the morning he went to a place where he could be alone. The crowds searched for him. When they came to him, they tried to keep him from leaving. He said to them, “I have to tell the Good News about God’s kingdom in other cities also. That’s what I was sent to do.” So he spread his message in the synagogues of Judea.

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Grace to you, and peace, in the name of our Lord and God, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

There are some, even some who claim to be Christians, who say that Jesus is not God. They say, “He was only a good teacher.” Those who say these things fail to understand what is very clearly taught in the Bible. Today we are going to look, not only at our Gospel lesson, but also a few other places, to see what the Bible teaches us about who Jesus is.

First let’s look at our Gospel lesson. There are two type of things happening here of which we should take note. First in verses 31-37 we see that Jesus had power over the spiritual realm. At that time Satan was doing everything in his power to destroy the work of God. Spiritual possession was rampant. It was everywhere. This was not a case of mass psychological problems. This was a spiritual battle between Heaven and Hell. You can tell by the conversations. Listen to the words in Luke 4:

In the synagogue was a man possessed by an impure spirit, an evil demon. He shouted very loudly, “Leave us alone! What do you want with us, Jesus from Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

Jesus ordered the spirit, “Keep quiet, and come out of him!” The demon threw the man down in the middle of the synagogue and came out without hurting him.

Everyone was stunned. They said to one another, “What kind of command is this? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits, and they come out.”

So news about him spread to every place throughout the surrounding region.

By these words you must believe one of two things. Either Jesus had serious psychological problems including delusions of grandeur, incorrectly believing that He was God, or He is God. When the demons said, “You are God.” Jesus never said, “No I’m not.” He said, “Be quiet and come out!” Why did Jesus tell them to be quiet? They were telling the unbelieving people that He was God. Shouldn’t He have allowed them to continue talking? Wouldn’t that have helped the unbelievers and skeptics see the truth?

Jesus did not need help telling people that He is God. He said so Himself and had the power, works and miracles to back up His claims. Allowing demons to bare witness to Him would have only fueled the claims of some that He was empowered by Satan. Jesus did not need the help of Satan’s angels (demons) to tell people who He is. Jesus Himself claimed to be God.¹ Jesus was doing “God Stuff.” Stuff only God can do and He was doing it in His own name.

The other thing we should note in our Gospel reading is that Jesus had power over more than just the spiritual realm. He also had power of the physical realm. Listen to verses 38-40

¹ Luke 4:16-30 is one example.

Jesus left the synagogue and went to Simon's house.

Simon's mother-in-law was sick with a high fever. They asked Jesus to help her. He bent over her, ordered the fever to leave, and it went away. She got up immediately and prepared a meal for them.

When the sun was setting, everyone who had family or friends suffering from various diseases brought them to him. He placed his hands on each of them and cured them.

Here Jesus shows that He has power over the physical world also. Here He did not confuse physical problems with spiritual ones. He did not call the fever a demon or an unclean spirit. He simply commanded that the fever be healed. It was a physical problem and Jesus healed that physical problem. This is not the only place where we see Jesus having power over the physical world. Consider these others:

- Jesus calming the storm² He proved He had power over nature.
- Jesus raised the widow's son,³ and Lazarus⁴ He proved He had power over life and death.

Jesus clearly claimed to be God when He said, "I and the Father are One."⁵ or "If you have seen Me you have seen the Father."⁶ Jesus often claimed to be God, in fact He went so far as to say that those who deny this fact are children of Satan.⁷ In Mark 3 He warned them to be cautious because they were committing a very serious sin.⁸ The sin of saying God's work was the work of Satan.

Further more Jesus accepted worship. Some claim Jesus is only an angel or some other kind of perfect being. Well perfect beings, angels or otherwise, would never accept worship that should be directed only to God. A perfect being would not violate God's Law which states "You shall have no other gods."⁹ Yet Jesus did accept praise and worship.¹⁰ Angels however do not.¹¹

Stepping outside of the Bible for a moment we have still further evidence. We have many, many, documents written around the same time, or shortly after, the New Testament books of the Bible were written. Some of these documents attack the Christian faith saying Jesus was not

2 Mark 4:35-40

3 Luke 7:11-17

4 John 11:1-44

5 John 10:30

6 John 14:8-11

7 John 8:39-47

8 Mark 3:22:30

9 Exodus 20:3

10 Jesus accepts worship often. Some are:

- Matt. 8:2 - A leper came to Jesus and worshiped Him without rebuke.
- Luke 24:52 - As Jesus ascended into heaven, the apostles worshiped Him.
- John 9:38 - The blind man who was cured by Jesus worshiped Him.
- Matt. 14:33 - The apostles who were in the boat worshiped Jesus without rebuke.
- Matt. 28:9 - Jesus' disciples took His feet and worshiped Him without rebuke.
- Matt. 28:17 - Jesus' disciples saw Him and then worshiped Him.
- Mark 5:6 - The man with the unclean spirit ran to Jesus and worshiped Him.
- John 20:28 - Jesus accepts Thomas' statement, "My Lord and my God!"

11 Revelation 19:9-10

God but rather only that He claimed to be God. Even His enemies acknowledged that He made these claims. They also never claim that the miracles did not occur. They admit the miracles did occur. Some attributed them to Satan, other to magic, other could give no explanation.

We however do have an explanation. We know the truths of Scripture. We know that Jesus is God. We know that because He was doing “God Stuff.” Things only God can do. We know that because He claimed to be God. We know that because those who followed Him, and learned from Him, tell us that He is God. We know that because His enemies corroborate that both Jesus, and His disciples and students, claimed that He is God.

When analyzing the evidence placed before us there are only three possible resolutions. They are:

- 1) Jesus was a brilliant liar.
- 2) Jesus was a complete lunatic.
- 3) Jesus is Lord.

Jesus could have been a very charismatic man followed by many people; able to lie to the people for all of the profit and fame. Of course the Bible says this is not true. Isaiah tells us He had no particular attraction for people.¹² He also was not rich. Luke tells us He was poor.¹³ He also died for His lies. No one is going to stick to His lies when the most gruesome and horrible death is before Him and simply admitting to the lie will get Him out of it. Unless he is a lunatic.

This is the other possibility. Perhaps Jesus was a man with serious mental or psychological problems. Perhaps He only believed He was God. If that is true you have to explain away all of the miracles which were described as too numerous to write down.¹⁴

If you use simple basic logic to evaluate the evidence and if you come to the conclusion that Jesus was not a liar, and not a lunatic, then He must be who He claimed to be. Jesus is the Christ. He is the Son of God. He is in fact God, just as He claimed to be. Just as He taught His disciples and students. Just as He has commanded us to be taught and to teach. Jesus is God.

Scripture is clear on this. Those who deny this need to listen to Jesus own words of warning. To deny Jesus as God is to deny Jesus’ own teachings as well as Scripture – the Holy Word of God.

Knowing that Jesus is God should give all of us the greatest assurance that our salvation has been secured for us. We do not need to worry about these things because it is God who has done them. All that was required to ensure your salvation was done perfectly because God who is perfect did them, and He did them perfectly. We don’t need to worry if enough was done, because God who can do all things, did all that was required.

We can have perfect and absolute assurance of our salvation because God absolutely, and perfectly, earned our salvation for us. In that we can take our comfort as we rest in the arms of Jesus.

Amen.

¹² Isaiah 53:1-6

¹³ Luke 9:58

¹⁴ John 21:25

