



**Thy Kingdom Come  
Luke 4:38-44**

38 Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon's house. But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her.

39 So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them.

40 When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them.

41 And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" And He, rebuking *them*, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.

42 Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them;

43 but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent."

44 And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee

In 1660 Charles the Second was restored to the throne of England, and the Puritan revolution in England came to a decisive end. Two years later in 1662 the act of uniformity was passed requiring that all the ministers of the realm accept Episcopacy, the headship of the King over the Church, the mandatory use of the Prayerbook and countless other changes or be ejected from their churches. As a result, over 2000 Puritan ministers, their consciences held captive to the Word of God, lost their positions and were ejected from their ministries. The King quickly set about replacing them with men whose convictions were more in keeping with his way of thinking.

In 1665 Bubonic Plague, the "Black Death" as it was called at the time, broke out in the city of London, and thousands died. Almost immediately, the royalty left the city, followed quickly by the rich, and then as one wag put it in his history of the time "Most of the clergy suddenly decided they could best minister to their flocks from far, far away." The scenes of horror recounted in the various plague journals kept by those who stayed are piteous. Hospitals were crammed full of the dying and quickly overwhelmed whatever doctors and nurses had not either fled or died themselves.

But then in the midst of all that terrible sickness and sorrow, and death, who do you think it was who heard the cry of those suffering and returned in droves to minister to the sick and dying, to pastor congregations whose ministers had fled with the king to country estates, to go day by day into the hospitals and read the Word of God to those who were lost and dying without hope and without a Savior? *It was the ejected ministers.* When the king and his hirelings had all fled, it was the men they despised most who heard the call of Christ and returned. Thomas Vincent, ejected from the living of St. Mary Magdalen, Milk Street, in 1662 was but one of many ministers long remembered by the inhabitants of London for his fearless preaching amidst the dying multitudes in the Great Plague.

Now why did those men do that? They didn't have the power to lay hands on the people and heal them, in fact, many of those ministers themselves became sick and died. The answer is that they knew Jesus Christ, and they knew his Compassion, because He had worked it in their hearts by His Holy Spirit.

Matthew 9:35-36 tells us "35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like **sheep** having no **shepherd**."

Those ministers saw the multitudes in London, weary and scattered, sheep without shepherds, and as faithful servants of the master who saved them and called them, they took up the call and they went amongst them preaching the good news of the Kingdom, bringing light where there was only darkness and hope where there had only been despair. Although they could not cure their bodily ills, yet they could *and MUST* point them to Jesus, the great physician of the soul. Through faith in him, death could not hurt them. Its sting was gone, and the grave was forever robbed of its victory.

Now, in the passages which we read we actually have three separate *pericopes* or incidents. First we have Jesus healing Peter's Mother-in-law on the Sabbath in verses 38-39, Second in verses 40-41 we have Jesus healing and casting demons out of many of the people of Capernaum, and third in verses 42-44 we have the narrative of what happened when Jesus went away into a deserted place to pray. While these are separate incidents, they are all related, and I mean more than just because they occurred at same place over a short span of time. I mean they are related because they are all signs of the coming of what Christ calls the kingdom of God.

Let us look at them in turn, first the healing of Peter's mother in law.

Jesus comes to the house of Simon who lived in Capernaum where he and his family earned a living as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus is informed that Simon Peter's mother-in-law was very sick and they ask the Lord to help her. Christ heals her, and immediately she rises up and serves him.

You should note here 2 things in passing:

A) **the agent of her cure** and B) the **immediacy** and C) **completeness** of her cure. Jesus does not say to her, "Now I can do most of this for you, but you are going to have to do the rest, and gradually you'll get better and better, till one day you're well." Christ knows this woman has no power to heal herself, and if she is to be healed he must do it. You have here an analogy to your salvation. ***If you are to be saved, then Christ must do it.*** He is the one who takes you who were spiritually dead and regenerates you, i.e. brings you to life, only Jesus the Son of God has that power. You have no more power to bring yourself to spiritual life, than Peter's mother could have healed herself.

You also do not co-operate in the process of salvation— can you imagine how ridiculous it would have been in Peter's mother had said "Here, let me assist you in the process of curing me – I know you've done your part, now I must do mine" and yet how many people insist that they must play a role in bringing themselves to spiritual life?

Also, see how quick and complete her healing was, normally when we recover from a fever we are weak and unable to do much at all, and yet Peter's mother is completely recovered. She gets up and

begins serving at once. Again here is another truth about salvation: ***The process of spiritual rebirth is immediate, and happens as soon as that Spirit works in you.*** You are not gradually being brought from death to life, you are Justified at a moment in time! Washed in the blood of Christ the savior, you are forever freed from your sins, and clothed in the righteous of Christ you are once and for all declared not-guilty before God. **What Comfort there is in this!**

Peter's mother did not linger in bed wracked with doubts. "I wonder if I am well?" No she was cured in a moment, and immediately she began to serve them. Just so, if by faith in Jesus Christ you have been saved, do not doubt! Would you doubt the ability of Christ to make you completely well in a moment where he physically present? Then DO NOT DOUBT HIS ABILITY TO MAKE YOU spiritually whole in the same manner. Instead get up and serve! Ponder this for a moment: No corpse ever wondered if it was alive. Your very ability to do so, is a strong evidence of Christ's work in you.

True the process of Sanctification by which you are being conformed to the image of Christ is life-long, but your Justification before God either happens in a moment, or it has not happened at all.

In the events in verses 40-41 things are much the same, with one minor difference – we nowhere read that those whom Christ healed or cast demons out of in Capernaum (one) *served him*, (two) *followed him*, (three) *believed in him*, or (four) *spread the good news*. And as we go through the Gospel of Luke I want your attention to be drawn to that. Christ does many miracles that display both his status as the Son of God and his awesome Compassion, and yet there are so few examples of the proper response to that display.

The people are eager for the temporal benefits that they can obtain from Christ, and yet, they reject the Gospel he was preaching. They are content with the healing of their bodies – and bodies that I might add eventually died and went down to the grave, and seem oblivious to the gospel message. How profoundly sad that is! How our hearts should be wrenched at his later declaration:

Luke 10:15 "And you, **Capernaum**, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades.

16 "He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."

Capernaum, so greatly blessed by the ministry of Jesus, nevertheless rejected him and so, in the final judgment, those blessings will be curses, for they will be called to account for them.

Once again I note in passing, that the demons themselves know who Jesus was, and their terrified declarations as they quaked in the presence of God, the Son will someday be the terrible lament of so many men who rejected Him in the final judgment.

Jesus silences the demons, He desires no unwilling proclamation of His Messiahship from the demons of Hell with whom he has nothing in common and it is no coincidence that we read according to Romans 3:19 in the final judgment that every guilty mouth will be stopped.

Christ then retreats on the third day to the a deserted place. We read in Mark 1:35 that his purpose in doing so was that he might pray. You should note well that Christ, the sinless Son of God was not preserved and upheld in His ministry **without** the ordinary means of grace. Christ needed to retreat to His own prayer closet where he could be refreshed and renewed in communion with the Father. And here we have a direct application: if Jesus found it necessary to be often alone in prayer, how much

more so should you who are not sinless or perfect as he was be seeking the face of your father in prayer?

The crowds and the Apostles though, are not having any of this. As soon as He is gone they go looking for Him. Why? So they can worship him? **No**. So they can put him back to work. Again and again in the Gospels, we will see the crowds attempting to get the Messiah to do *their will* instead of doing what He came to earth to do – *His Father's will*. And what was Christ's Father's will? What did He send Christ to do? Jesus tells us in verse 43 To preach the kingdom of God!

What is the Kingdom? Well that is tough to define succinctly because it implies so much. The kingdom implies the ruling activity of God, which is seen in both how God sovereignly and mercifully redeems some and righteously judges others. We also see it in the way that area where the rule of God is being exercised is being reclaimed. How the effects of sin and the fall are being wiped out as God's plan of redemption advances.

The miracles that Jesus did are signs of the coming of the Kingdom. Isaiah had prophesied that in the day of the coming of the Kingdom the deaf would hear and the blind would see. And when John the Baptist, sitting in jail, begins to wonder if Jesus was really the coming King, and asks "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" "**what does Christ tell John's followers to tell him?**" "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that *the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them.*" (Luke 7:22)

We have in these signs a foretaste of what the fully consummated kingdom will look like. They are shadows of what things will be like when Jesus comes again, and the effects of sin and the fall are finally forever wiped out and we dwell with him in the renewed heavens and earth:

Rev. 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.

4 "And God will **wipe** away every **tear** from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

How Joyous that will be, how this foretaste of that glory should have made the people to whom Christ ministered hungry for more, but sadly Capernaum, wants the **signs** not the thing **signified**.

Well let me leave you with a final application.

I remember reading in the Washington Post, a really thought provoking article written by a secular writer. He was writing because he was angry. And I think rightly so. He had been to the funeral of a young woman who had died of AIDS. What he was angry about was that all the minister had done throughout the service was rail against the government for not devoting enough money to AIDS research and exhort the people to go home and write their congressman, etc.

The writer said how that had in a real sense totally failed to minister to the grieving family and to all the people there. The amazing thing was how the writer grasped here were a group of people desperately sad and uncertain and looking for answers and meaning and hope, and all the minister could give them was a party-political broadcast.

Let me contrast that one funeral with another, Chuck Colson wrote the following a little while ago:

"I met this young man, Marquis, in Philadelphia a couple of years ago when his grandmother came up to me after a public event and said, "Mr. Colson, thank you for sending my grandson to Angel Tree camp last summer. He was saved there—and now he's preaching the Gospel to the other kids in our neighborhood."

I talked with Marquis that day, and I was so impressed. There was a sparkle in his eye as he told me what Jesus meant to him and how he was leading others to Christ in the project in which they lived.

His grandmother told me that if it wasn't for Angel Tree, he would have been caught up in the neighborhood gangs, doomed to follow in his father's footsteps—straight to prison. Instead, having come to faith in Christ, he was taking Jesus to the streets, sharing Christ in Camden, New Jersey, one of the toughest inner-city neighborhoods in America.

He also worked in a church, feeding the poor—and, we've just learned this past week, talked another kid out of running away from home or maybe even suicide. He was a wonderful Christian witness to everyone he met.

Then, two weeks ago, we received a phone call. Angel Tree volunteers who had helped lead Marquis to Christ told us the tragic news. While walking his little brother to school, Marquis—this vibrant, young evangelist—was shot and killed.

At the funeral, our volunteers gave their condolences to Marquis's grandmother and turned to leave. But as they did, she began to shout to the hundreds of people in attendance, "You see these people? They are the reason Marquis is in heaven—they took him to camp. He met Jesus there! They are the reason I have hope!" "

What should that minister have done? What should you who are Christians do in those situations when they come up? You should DO exactly what those Puritan ministers did in London in 1665. You should reach out to the lost and suffering with the only message that can bring true hope and comfort, **the message of the King and His Kingdom.** The Good News of JESUS CHRIST!