

TRINITY

BIBLE CHURCH DALLAS

The Sermon

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Luke 4:38-44

"The Tireless Savior"

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TRANSCRIPT

The title of this message is "The Tireless Savior." I want to begin by reading our passage, Luke 4:38. What a journey we're on going through the gospel of Luke as well. This is tremendous.

"Then He got up" - referring to Jesus - "and left the synagogue, and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him to help her. And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and waited on them.

"While the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on each one of them, He was healing them. Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, 'You are the Son of God!' But rebuking them, He" - Jesus - "would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ.

"When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from them. But He said to them, 'I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.' So He kept on

preaching in the synagogues of Judea." This is the reading of God's word. Let's go to the Author in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, this is Your word. We ask that You would grant us understanding. Give us insight. Pray Your Holy Spirit will come alongside of us and apply the passage to our lives; we would know how to best live this. I pray that Christ would be magnified, that Christ would be exalted, that He would have the place of supreme preeminence today. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

In these verses, we are given insight into the tireless life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we see in this passage, He is relentlessly healing the sick, casting out demons, preaching the word of God. And Jesus was constantly on the move and giving Himself away. Jesus said, "I've come not to be served, but to serve, and to give My life a ransom for many." It was Jesus who said, "We must do the work of Him who sent Me while it is day; night is coming when no man can work."

Jesus understood He had a limited amount of time to do the work that the Father had given Him to do, and He must be about His Father's business, just like God has given you a limited amount of time to do the work that He has assigned to you to do. Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."

God, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, foretold of the coming of Christ. And God identified His own Son as "My Servant" in Isaiah 42:1, "Behold, My Servant." Isaiah 49:3, "He said to Me," - the Father said to the Son - "You are My Servant." And then Jesus responds and says, "I have toiled and I have spent My strength," - meaning, "I have poured out Myself in the service of My Father, and there is nothing left in Me to give. I've poured out My life's strength." In Isaiah 52:13, the Father says, "Behold, My Servant will prosper." And in Isaiah 53:11, "My Servant will justify the many." At His first coming, Jesus did not come to sit, He came to serve and to sacrifice and to pour Himself out like a drink offering upon the altar.

As we find ourselves in these verses, we see Jesus, the Servant of Jehovah, pouring Himself out. What we are looking at here is less than a 24-hour period of time. It's one day, less than one day in the life of our Lord; and it was on the Sabbath, supposedly the day of rest; and He's serving, serving, serving, serving, working, working, working. This should challenge our socks off today to be actively involved in serving and sacrificing and giving. It's been well said that ministry that costs nothing accomplishes nothing, that all true ministry requires great sacrifice.

And so as we look at this, here's not only our Savior, here's our pace-setter. First John 2:6 says that "we ought to walk as He walked." We're going to have to run as He ran. We can't be idle spectators in the kingdom of God, we've got to be active servants with our shoulder to the plow serving the Lord.

So, let's walk through this passage. It really almost takes my breath away to try to keep pace with our Lord. The disciples could not even keep up with Him. Later at the end when He set His face like a flint towards Jerusalem and He was bound and determined to go to Jerusalem to die, His disciples had to walk behind Him because they couldn't walk fast enough to keep up with Him.

So, three main headings - and I hope we have time for all of this: Jesus healed the sick; Jesus expelled the demons; Jesus preached the word, the gospel. Those are the three headings. Very simple.

So, beginning in verse 38, "Jesus healed the sick." Verse 38, "Then" - stop right there. Then. Same day. He's been in a synagogue casting out a demon. He's been in a synagogue preaching the word, reading the word, expositing the word. It's the same day.

"Then He got up and left the synagogue," - there's no grass growing under His feet. He's moving out - "and entered Simon's house." He went directly to Simon's house. It's still the Sabbath. And we know from Mark's gospel that He is accompanied by Simon, who you know is Peter, as well as Andrew and James and John.

"Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering." So obviously Simon was married. His wife had a mother, most probably the father has passed away, and she is living in Simon's house. He's caring for her as a fulfillment, really, of the fifth commandment, "Honor your father and mother," and he's honoring his wife's mother by caring for her in his own home, and she was suffering. This word "suffering" actually means to be imprisoned with. She is held captive in pain, not just a disease, but the pain of the disease as well, and there is no escape possible for her. She's held in the chains of this disease with suffering.

And we read "from a high fever." The word "high," *megas*, mean intent. And the word "fever" literally means fiery heat. Her skin is burning. No doubt, her complexion is red, as she has a scorched dry throat. She has this high fever. She's on fire.

"And they" - referring to the disciples who were with Jesus (Peter, Andrew, James, and John) - "they asked Him" - they entreated Him, they urged Him, they pleaded with Him - "to help her." This is the best thing you can do for anyone is to ask Jesus to help them. This is really what intercessory prayer is, is to ask Jesus to help someone else. And Jesus hears those prayers, and He answers those prayers according to His perfect wisdom and timing.

So, verse 39, of course, Jesus steps in. He's the Servant of Jehovah. Here is a need. So, verse 39, "And standing over her," which indicates she's laying down in bed on some type of bedding or sofa too weak to stand, too weak to be caring for the needs in the house, unable to even get up and to greet them at the door. She's laying down without an ounce of strength. Just her life's energy has been sucked out of her.

"And standing over her, He rebuked the fever," - it's the only time in the Gospels where Jesus addresses a disease; He confronts and charges the fever - "and it left her," - vanquished - "and she immediately got up." That's how quick and immediate this miracle - it's a miracle - this miracle occurred. It wasn't a gradual gaining her strength back and gradually kind of stretching her legs and her arms and kind of gradually becoming well. Instantly at once, strength just surges into her and the fever is completely gone, and she immediately got up.

She's completely well as if she's never even been sick, "and she waited on them." She now begins to serve them in some ways immolating His service to her. And this verb "waited on them" is the same root word that is translated "deacon," which means to serve tables. She gets up and begins to serve them at a table and to serve them food and drink and to care for them. This is an amazing thing, this example to us, that the very first thing she does is serve - not sit, not listen: serve.

Verse 40, "When the sun was setting," - that means the end of the Sabbath day which goes from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. So it is now late afternoon, early evening. On Saturday evening the sun was setting. It's been a full day. I mean, Jesus has been in the synagogue, He has been ministering the word of God, He has been casting out a demon, He's now healed Simon's mother-in-law, but the day's not over. He, no doubt, is exhausted in His humanity.

Verse 40, "When the sun was setting," - He doesn't go hide - "all who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him." Just when you think the day is over, just when you think, "Hey, it's an 8:00 to 5:00 job, just when you think, "Hey, this is personal time, this is private time, this is time out," - "all" - which means a large crowd of people - "who had any who were sick" - and the word "sick" here means to be weak, to be feeble, to have no strength left in them. This isn't people who have the sniffles, this is like Simon's mother-in-law laying down. They have no strength. In fact, they can't even walk to Jesus, this says they have to be brought to Jesus, like the paralytic on the pallet who had the four men carry

him to the house and remove the roof and lower him down in. The paralytic couldn't even get there on his own.

"All who had any who were sick with various diseases" – meaning not just fever, but all kinds of illnesses – "brought them to Him," – now watch this – "and laying hands on each one of them, He was healing them." This isn't a group healing. Jesus, taking time, each one individually, personally, laying hands one at a time on each one in this huge gathering speaks to the personal pastoral care of our Lord.

What does this healing ministry of Jesus convey? What's the purpose of this? Well, there's four things. Number one, "It is to prove that He is the Messiah." Everything Jesus did had a purpose, had a reason, and it was foretold in the Old Testament that the Messiah when He comes, He would perform miracles. In Matthew 11:2 it says, "Now when John," – referring to John the Baptist – "while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to Him, 'Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?'"

How did Jesus prove His messiahship? What were His credentials? What was His calling card? "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up. I am the Messiah.'" So as Jesus performs these healing miracles, it is a testimony that He is exactly who He claims to be.

Second, "It showed Jesus' supreme authority over the entire created order," that each miracle of healing was an evidence that His is Lord over all. Each miracle testifies that He is the Sovereign over the universe, over disease and over every life and every destiny.

Third, "It reveals the loving compassion of Jesus for people, for individual people." Here is demonstrated His tender compassion, His affectionate mercy for people who are hurting and afflicted. He chooses to get involved.

And, fourth, "It pictures the true healing that must come to the soul," because we all suffer from the deadly disease of sin. And there's only one cure for your sin problem and for mine, and that is the touch of the Master, the grace of God in salvation: Jesus Christ.

Now before I go on, no one today has the gift of healing. If you see someone who has a healing crusade, run away as fast as you can and grab your checkbook as you run. Does God heal today? Yes, through your prayers, through medicine, through doctors care, through a body that it is designed many times to heal itself, through time and providence. God still heals, just not through some huckster. No one on planet earth alive today has the gift of healing. I wish I had time to fully develop that.

Second, in verse 41, "Jesus expelled the demons." Verse 41, "Demons were coming out of many." Now this indicates that in many of these cases, the diseases were caused by the demons, that the demons had moved into people's lives and had power to inflict great harm to the people in whom they were indwelling. And so as Jesus is healing people, demons are coming out of people.

From this, we are not to infer that every time anyone is sick is because a demon is hiding behind a bush; but in this case, it does. "Demons were coming out of many," great numbers, great numbers of demons. This is a clash between light and darkness. This is a clash between heaven and hell, and God and Satan. This is like a violent gathering storm. There is the clash of kingdoms here.

"And demons were coming out of many, shouting." Now I'm not going to shout this Sunday like I did last Sunday and made some of the adults cry. But this word "shouting" literally means screaming, crying out with a shrieking voice. It would send chills up your spine.

And notice what they're shouting. This is a better sermon than most churches will hear today: "You are the Son of God!" That is a declaration of His deity, a declaration of His sovereignty, a declaration of His coequality with the Father: "You are the Son of God!" Not a son of God like you and I are a son or daughter of God, "You are" – the definite article, the one and only, *monogenés* – "the only begotten Son of God!" That's strong.

And again we are reminded that the demons know exactly who Jesus is, and that He is on their radar because He is invading their turf because Satan is the god of this world (small "g") and the prince of the power of the air. No, Jesus has now invaded enemy territory. And you and I are still living in enemy territory. First John 5:19 says, "The whole world lies in the power of the evil one."

Hollywood is under his power. Washington DC is under his power. Disney is under his power. The court system is under his power. The abortion mills are under his power. The political leaders around the globe are under his power. They're crying out, "You are the Son of God!"

"But rebuking them, He" – Jesus – "would not allow them to speak," – why? – "because they knew Him to be the Christ." It would have seemed like that would be the reason for them to speak because they are bearing witness to the truth of His identity who He is. "You are the Son of God. You are the Christ." And Jesus now says, "Because you know the truth, you may not speak."

Why is this? Because Jesus does not want hell's testimony concerning Himself, and He does not want to be perceived as working in league with demons to be His frontman. He would be unequally yoked, so He would not allow them to speak. And as we saw last week, He says to them, "Shut up. Be quiet."

And we see here again the supreme authority of the Lord Jesus Christ over all the forces of darkness. And Jesus is the Light of the world, and the

forces of darkness cannot withstand the entrance of light into the darkness. The darkness can never expel the light, but the light can always expel the darkness.

But all this builds now to verse 42, the third main heading, "Jesus preached the gospel." Verse 42, "When the day came," what that means is sunrise the next morning, Sunday morning, the day after the Sabbath.

"When the day came, Jesus left," which indicates that Jesus has spent the night here probably in Simon's house. We're not told. It's a reasonable assumption to make that Jesus left from where He was. And, no doubt, Simon's mother-in-law probably would not allow them to leave. She must express hospitality to them.

And so, the day came, the sunrise the next morning, and Jesus left. No doubt, exhausted and weary from the previous day of ministry. When I was a younger man in my first pastorate in my thirties, Sunday was such a huge day, that I would wake up every Monday morning at exactly 4:00 with a splitting headache and have to crawl to the bathroom. It's like a spike driven into your skull, just the demands, the pressure, the stress.

Jesus has been under that kind of a demand upon Him even more so. But He left because there's work to do. "I've come not to be served, not even by Simon's mother-in-law; I've come to serve." He's back in the race. He's back after it.

"He went to a secluded place." The word "secluded" here means isolated or lonely. We know from Mark's gospel it's to pray. But more than that, if that's what Luke wanted us to know, he would have inserted "and to pray." But that's not the focus of Luke. It was of Mark, but not for Luke. And we're left to assume that He goes to a secluded place just to decompress from the heavy demands upon Him from the previous day, which would say nothing of the entire previous week, and the week before that, and the week before that. He went to a secluded place.

The more you are in front of people giving, giving, giving, the more you have to be by yourself to recharge physically, emotionally, psychologically, spiritually. And Jesus has toiled, and so now He retreats to a secluded place for just a parentheses in time. Remember, He's fully, truly, perfectly human while He's fully, truly, perfectly divine. But in His humanity, He hungers, He thirsts, He needs rest.

And so as He's in this secluded place, "the crowds were searching for Him." He can't get away. The way this worked, the disciples knew where He would probably be. Peter, Andrew, James, and John, piecing the gospel accounts together, find Him. But the crowds are smart enough to follow the disciples because they know where He is.

"And so the crowds" - please note, plural (not a crowd), "the crowds," plural - "were searching for Him." They were scouring the area. They were screening the terrain. They've got to have more of Him.

Verse 42, "and came to Him," - They at last found Him alone in this secluded place, no doubt, regathering Himself. And notice what they attempt to do - "and tried to keep Him from going away from them." This verb "keep" means almost to apprehend someone physically, to possess someone, to hold on, to hold fast to someone physically. I mean, they are trying to block any path of exit that He would try to withdraw. They are surrounding Him.

And this is not a bad thing that they necessarily are doing. They want to come to Jesus; that's not bad, that's good. And they want to be healed; that's not bad, that's understandable. But it will be keeping Jesus from something far more important.

You see, many times something good becomes the enemy of what is best. Most of life's choices for us are not between good and evil, though we face

many temptations like that; it's between good, better, and best. And that's why it requires wisdom to know what is best, not just what's good; that's kind of the easy one. The hard one is to discern what is better, what is best.

And so they tried to keep Him from going away from them, verse 43, "But He said to them," - and the word "but" at the beginning of verse 43 indicates that there's going to be a pushback and that His response is going to go in the opposite direction that they want Him to go: "But."

"But He said to them, 'I must.'" That word "must" ought to just leap off the page. It's an individual word in the original language. It's the word *dei* and it is a word of absolute necessity, of divine necessity. It's not a preference, it's a deep conviction. It is necessary. "I must preach," not heal, not perform exorcisms. That's all secondary stuff at best. There's only one divine imperative, there is only one primary mission, and nothing must distract from this, not even individual needs of individual people on a physical level. He's come not to heal the body, He's come to heal the soul.

So He says, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose." Today we might say, "Jesus, how rude of You. You need to come meet with the elders. How dare You just walk past that person. Can't You see there's a whole crowd of people?" And Jesus just pulls away. "That would be good, but it's not best. What's best is what's necessary, and what is necessary is that I preach the kingdom of God." People can be healed physically and go to hell. People can have an exorcism performed and go to hell. No one believes the gospel and goes to hell, it's a matter of priorities.

Now let's look at this more carefully: "I must preach." And in the original language, it's literally, "preach the gospel." It's one word: *euaggelion*. It's a compound word. "I must preach good news." And I hate to admit it, but the ESV translates it a little better here at this point. The ESV says, "preach the good news of," and that's the most accurate, literal translation here.

"I must preach the gospel," not just preach. There's a lot of hot air in churches coming from pulpits, but they don't preach the gospel. Jesus said, "I must preach the gospel. I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God."

What is the kingdom of God? Well, I've told you, there are different aspects of the kingdom of God. There is the universal kingdom of God in which He rules and reigns over every molecule in the universe. He is Lord over the created order. He causes all things to work together for good. That's the universal kingdom of God over believers and unbelievers, over everything and everywhere.

There is the millennial kingdom, which will come after His second coming, where Christ on this earth will rule and reign for a thousand years. I believe that. But there is also a redemptive kingdom. It is the reign of the King in the hearts of men and women who have entered into His kingdom. It is the domain of His saving grace inside of a person's soul. It's the kingdom of God.

I mean, the question for you today is, "Is the King reigning in your heart today? Is the King administering His saving grace, His sanctifying grace, His strengthening grace in your soul and in your life?" Jesus said, "I must preach this message, the reign of God and the hearts in lives of people." This clearly implies that when you are born into this world, you're born outside the kingdom, and there is no kingdom within you. And there must come a time and a place when you are born again and you enter into the kingdom, and the kingdom enters into you. So Jesus said, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities. I've got to go everywhere. I've got to go far and wide in the land of Israel because there's so many lost, perishing people who need to hear this message."

And then He ends verse 43, "for I was sent for this purpose. I was sent. The Father sent Me. I didn't come on My own, I didn't come with My own agenda, I didn't come with My own philosophy of ministry in how we're going to do this. No, I was sent by God, and He has prescribed the work

that I am to do and how I am to do it, and He said I was sent for this purpose."

The word "purpose" is not in the original, and it's really far more emphatic the way Luke records this. "I was sent for this." And the "this" refers to the preaching of the gospel. The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing, right? And the tip of the spear of any God-blessed ministry is the preaching of the word.

In verse 44, "So He kept on preaching," relentlessly, tirelessly, day after day, hour after hour, proclaiming, heralding, declaring, announcing constantly, continually. "He kept on preaching." Do you see that? It's present tense active voice. It just means He took the initiative "and would not be deterred by someone else's agenda for My ministry, someone else's plans for My life. No. I was sent by the Father to preach the gospel of the kingdom, and ultimately to go to the cross and to die for those who will believe in Me."

"So He kept on preaching in the synagogues" - plural - "of Judea." Here references to the land of the Jewish people I think to be taken as Galilee. This says something very important to us this morning about this church, that the preaching and teaching of the gospel must always be Job Number One - not small groups, not counseling, not social welfare, which have their place. But according to the pattern of Jesus' ministry and according to the pattern of the apostles' ministry, it is the primacy and centrality of preaching. Nothing must ever be allowed to compete with it, to distract from it, not even crying babies in a worship service. It is that the word of God would go forth.

And we always have a decision that must be made. As people come to our elders, "Can we have this program? Can we have this program? Can we have this program? Can we have this program?" And we'll have a few, but not many because we will never be a program-driven church, ever. We will always be a preaching and teaching-driven church. And we'll have better fellowship after the preaching and teaching of the word than if we

intentionally tried to get together to have fellowship. And there will be greater interaction among us over and in the truth than just talking about the ballgame or grandkids, which is fine. But it doesn't rise to the highest level.

John MacArthur said - and I looked this up last night - in 1972. He's been there 55 years. This was said in the second or third year of his ministry as he's preaching on Acts 2:14 and following on the primacy of preaching. He set the gauntlet down early.

He said, "There have been many things that have come along to try to supplant preaching, and the sad part of it is most people, and therefore most churches, just let it happen. You open your newspaper, and today we would say we go online and scroll through the social media, and instead of seeing men preaching the word of God, you read about musical extravaganzas and movies, and this and that being shown in churches."

MacArthur says, "They may all have a place, but they must never have a place in supplanting the powerful, Spirit-energized preaching of the word of God. We can talk all we want about radio programs and TV programs and Christian movies and drama." I'd rather not talk about drama. "I'm not discounting the place of all these things, I'm only establishing the priority of preaching."

Now listen to this sentence: "A holy man gifted to preach by the Spirit of God and prepared in the word of God has no equal in power presentation of the truth. That is the pattern of Scripture. If the preaching does not make it, it's not the fault of the method, it's the fault of the man. Social work and pastoral work are all important, but they never compensate for a lack of power in the pulpit. This is a thing that God uses abundantly."

And then MacArthur concludes. He says, "Where are the preachers? I mean, we've got CEOs, we've got marketing experts, we've got real estate guys in the pulpit. Where are the preachers?" He says, "I do not know where they

are, they are few and far between. Where are the men of God who are lost in their message with no gimmicks, just firing out the word of God in the energy of the Holy Spirit."

This is precisely what we see in the ministry of Jesus Christ. There's no counseling ministry. The only small group He had was twelve disciples, and that was like a seminary class to prepare them to go out and preach after He left. We see the timeless pattern established here even in the life of Christ Himself. "And it was for this," - He said - "for this, preaching, that I have been sent into the world by the Father." He already told us in verse 18 of this chapter, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me" - to do what? - "to preach the gospel. He has sent Me to proclaim. He has sent Me to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord."

So this is an important text for us here at Trinity. What kind of a church are we going to be? God has blessed abundantly. It wasn't that long ago we were across the street in a coffee shop. We were like BBs in a barrel just bouncing around in that little coffee shop, and now we're close to packing out two services. And with every person who comes, there is always a desire for us to add more things.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones before he went in the ministry was a physician, an outstanding physician, then called into the ministry. He assumes the pastorate of Westminster Chapel, blocks from Buckingham Palace, after World War II, and everyone has fled the city, and he's trying to see God build the church back up through his preaching. And people were coming to him to say, "Well, we need this program. We need this program. We need this. You're emphasizing too much on preaching." Lloyd-Jones said, "When I was a physician, I never let the patient write the prescription, and neither will I in this church."

So we'll follow the example of Jesus. We'll follow the example of the apostles. We'll just keep on preaching the word of God. We'll have other ministries, and we'll have a few programs. We'll have a picnic at Flag Pole Hill, and you'll see me without a coat and tie on. But there's not going to be

a whole lot. We're just going to be going out witnessing and teaching and preaching the word of God. That's how God builds a church with depth and maturity and growth.

So, have you believed the gospel? Have you entered into the kingdom of God? Is the kingdom within you? Does the King reign within you? If you have never believed in Jesus Christ, I plead with you this moment, this day, right where you're seated, to bow your head and commit your life to Jesus Christ. I can't do that for you. The person sitting next to you cannot do that for you. This is one-on-one, you and God. Commit your life to Christ, and He will save you. He will save you forever. Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father in heaven, we bless Your name for the gospel, for the good news of salvation that we can enter into Your kingdom, and that Your King can enter into us. I pray that You will give us a great sense of our salvation that is in You. For those who are without Christ here today, remove any assurance that they would have cause terror to be in their heart that they are separated from You and without hope until they turn to You. Cause panic, conviction, and alarm to go off in their heart. May they find no rest until they find their rest in You. For those of us who are saved, we are so grateful that You sent Your Son into this world not only to preach, but to die for our sins. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

The closing benediction from Ephesians 3:20, "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."