

The Healer Sent to Preach

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[0 : 00] This is the morning service of Holy Trinity on the 20th of July 2003. The preacher is Ken Perry.

His sermon is entitled The Healer Sent to Preach and is based on Luke chapter 4 verses 38 to 44.

May the words of my lips and the thoughts and the meditations of all our hearts be now and always pleasing in your sight, O Lord our strength and our Redeemer.

When the disciples were called to follow Jesus, he made a promise to them. And the promise was that he would make them fishes of men.

Now this process of making them into fishes of men was going to take time. Some of the making was learnt quickly, but some of it very slowly indeed.

[1 : 16] The way in which they were made was also very varied, as we shall see as we study our passage for today in Luke's Gospel.

I remember one of the Bible studies that I attended as a young man in the parish church.

That the Bible study leader drew our attention to this question of being made. And it's something that I've never forgotten and has been a great help to me.

He said, don't try to make yourself a Christian. That's the job of Jesus, to make you.

And that's what he promised to do. And it changed my life and the direction of my Christian life. Because I'd been struggling, I'd been striving, I'd been doing everything I could to make myself into a good Christian.

[2 : 30] But it just didn't seem to be working. I wasn't satisfied with what was happening. But knowing that this was the job of Jesus to make me, it made all the difference.

I needed now just to submit to my life to Jesus day by day and to seek his will that I might indeed be made a fisher of men.

Let's now look at the passage. Jesus had reached the stage in his ministry and it was very early in his ministry that Luke tells us at the end of the section before our reading for today in verse 37 that news about him, that's Jesus, spread throughout the surrounding area.

And I thought to myself as I read these words and thought about them, that that would be marvellous if it happened in our own district, the surrounding area.

Oh that it might happen that people began to talk about Jesus and all that he has done and said. Because I believe that this is what the world wants to hear.

[4 : 02] that there is someone who indeed as creator of the world knows all that happens, particularly in every one of our lives.

Now this popularity and this news about Jesus followed very much on his attending the synagogue, which again we read in last week's passage.

passage. We are told in that passage that Jesus taught with authority, much to the amazement of the people.

the authority of Jesus Christ is tremendously important and we need to recognise it continually in our own lives and in the lives of people around us and in the world.

After all, he is the creator. He is the Lord of lords and King of Kings and King of Kings and he taught with this kind of authority, an authority which amazed the people.

[5 : 19] We are also told that he dealt with a demon-possessed man causing further amazement. This latter work that he had done of healing the demon-possessed man brought a lot of questioning to the people in the synagogue.

who is this man that he can cast out demons? They really had lots of questions to ask and it's good that they were asking them and perhaps it is that we need to ask a lot more questions about our faith and see that they are grounded upon the word of God and God's will.

I recall vividly when I was in the state school at Kew my mother invited one of the teachers to come for tea one night.

We lived in a two-storey house. I was sent to bed of course or sent up to my room upstairs but I just wanted to see what this teacher had to say about their pupil and so I stuck down the stairs and got out of view and behind the barrier that was there and I listened and the teacher said to my mother the trouble is with your son is that he asks too many questions.

Well that doesn't do any harm. What about the disciples in all of this because they had not yet spent a great deal of time with the Lord?

[7 : 12] How were they feeling about all of these things his casting out demons and his speaking with authority? Well there must have been a certain amount of excitement and amazement among them for they were seeing something quite new something which was going to prove of tremendous value in the future.

They must probably also have been wondering what their commitment to this man was going to mean for them. Goodness gracious me they said if we've got to follow this man he's going to be like this what's it going to mean?

but they were certainly learning that their master Jesus Christ was proving very popular and it must have excited them to think that they were following someone who was so exciting but they were soon to find that that fact would soon face them with some interesting and challenging questions because popularity can sometimes prove very costly in regard to Christian things we're not meant to be popular we're meant to indeed bear the cross and that means sometimes we will be most unpopular we did not in our time overseas in missionary work discover that we were unpopular that often like some missionaries do in some instances but the times that we were

I recall one time I was crossing the bridge over the river in Clang where we were and another chap came up on a bicycle beside me as I pedalled across the bridge and he spat on me and he said you dirty yellow bellied Christian and that's the sort of thing that a follower of Jesus must be prepared for to be unpopular and the disciples were going to learn this in the things that happened as they followed the Lord Lord I've already mentioned but one of the lessons that the disciples learnt was that Jesus spoke with authority and they were to learn this very forcibly because it was illustrated over and over again in his ministry that he was a man who spoke and acted with authority the authority of God the Father and it was something which was clearly and gloriously declared in the final words that our disciples said our Lord said to the disciples and what were they

Jesus said all authority all authority in heaven and on earth is given to me therefore go and make disciples of all nations when we go out to do the work of God to spread the good news we don't have to do it on our own we have to do it with the authority and the presence of Jesus with us I remember in the parish where I grew up I joined a team that did some visitation in the parish and I was filled with fear and trepidation about doing this visitation I didn't know how I was going to face it and the vicar said very kindly to me he said Ken when you go and knock on the door it's not you knocking it's the

[11 : 28] Lord Jesus Christ he's with you and he's there beside you you're not doing it on your own you're doing it with his authority if you have put it into his hands let's move on the story begins today in verse 38 tells that Jesus left the synagogue this had been his first appointment for that day on the Sabbath to be in the synagogue and he went straight to the home of Simon there as they entered into the home they were greeted with the news that Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever the question must have arisen what do we do what can be done that this may be dealt with now because of what the disciples had already seen

Jesus do and teach they decided that one thing that they could do would be to ask Jesus to help her that's not a bad idea when we're faced with sickness when we're faced with something beyond our control it's a jolly good idea to pray to Jesus that he would help because surely he knows what is best he it is who created us he knows our body he knows all about us and so they said let's ask Jesus he will help us in my ministry over the years and dealing with sickness and people who have faced problems in regard to that I have sought to help people to make sure that they have put it into the hands of Jesus because otherwise they're doing it in their own strength and we all know when we're facing health issues that very few of us know a great deal about them even the medical profession doesn't know about certain things but let's put it into the hands of

Jesus let's pray that he would help us in this case what did Jesus do we're told that he bent over her and rebuked the fever and it left her that was his response to their request Jesus he is our request and in his own way which is best for us and for the person or persons concerned he will work his healing power or give knowledge to us of what it's all about this seems to indicate that as she rose up from being healed that the healing was complete for we learn that she got up at once and began to wait on them now over the coming years and months following this incident in which the disciples were involved they were to learn that Jesus healed in many many different ways and we'll see some of those in a moment or two we now move on to the next event of what was turning out to be an extraordinarily busy day

Jesus must have come out from the synagogue and gone to Simon's house thinking that he might have a restful sabbath afternoon but verse 40 tells us when the sun was setting the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness not just one sickness but various kinds a whole range of them now remember that this was the sabbath and the sabbath ended at sundown which was about six o'clock up until then according to the tradition of the elders the Jewish elders Jews were not permitted to travel more than about two thirds of a mile and they were not allowed to carry a burden these were the laws as they were set down and we've seen some of the incidents recently in Israel with the

Orthodox Jews seeking to enforce some of these ideas of what can be done and what can't be done on the sabbath so because of these laws only after sundown could they carry the sick to Jesus but they were so eager to get to Jesus after what they'd seen and heard that we are told in this verse that they went carried these people with their various sicknesses while the sun was setting it hadn't set but it was setting and they wanted to make sure that they would get there first now notice that in this instance Jesus healed not by bending over the person like he did with Simon's mother-in-law but we are told he healed them by laying his hands on them not only on them as a general thing but we are told that he laid his hands on each of them in other words it became very personal between

[17 : 51] Jesus and the person concerned and it was an act of personal compassion and that is with what Jesus is like he's concerned for you and for me and for those who are sick there's nothing that I've discovered in my ministry that is like the personal touch I can give many many instances where that personal touch the taking of a person's hand or some other act like that has meant so much to the person and has done so much towards their being healed it can be a very powerful act in the healing process verse 41 now Jesus moves on to deal with all the people who are demon possessed now we may think that this is something that only belongs to those days demon possession indeed was widely recognised in the ancient world and there were people who purported to cast demons out but I would suggest to you from my own experience that the casting out of demons is not something that is like that it is very very new it is with us now and those of us who have served in Asia and Africa and other countries know that is a reality in those countries particularly more than it is here just around the corner from where we lived in Borneo there was a group of witches and one of our parishioners came to me one day with the results of what these witches had done to her they indeed were demon possessed and the things that they had done were terrible and indeed

I had to pray with these people that these demons may be cast out and could we not even describe if I may what about the demons of sin in all its forms we talk about don't we the demon of drink and the causes of what trouble that has brought we talk about other evil acts and demon possession is something which is common in our community I would suggest to you these demons in this incident were many we are told and that they were shouting and what were they shouting they were shouting you are the son of God now Jesus response was to rebuke them and he would not allow them to speak because they knew that he was the Christ now here is a revelation the demons knew who this man was the son of God they knew also that he was the

Christ and so it seems that the demons were well aware of who Jesus was long before the disciples even knew they didn't realise that they were following the son of God that was to come maybe it is with some people when they talk about Jesus and they want to have some engagement with Jesus that they don't really know who it is that they are having their dealings with that he is indeed the son of God and the Messiah it took the disciples a long time to learn this truth that indeed he was the son of God and the refusal to allow the demons to disclose that Jesus was the Christ was probably to forestall those nationalistic messianic movements which were evident in the country at that time

Jesus did not want his identity disclosed at this time he was not ready to be revealed and so we come to the end of this time where Jesus has been healing into the evening where he's been casting out demons and well might we say that Jesus has had an extraordinarily busy day he'd been to the synagogue in the morning the Sabbath and he'd been teaching he cast out a demon from a man in the synagogue and demons from others he'd healed and he'd done many things in this day and he was indeed probably very tired but as we go back over his day's activities it demonstrates too if we look at it carefully it demonstrates the compassion of

Jesus to those who have called on him for his help his healing power had been demonstrated by various means he rebuked he touched he bent over and he showed his power and authority over evil he reached out to both the individual and the crowds and so the day ended but at the end of that and reaching into the next day we read that after such a busy day Jesus was up at day break on the next day and seeking out a solitary place on his own to commune with his father now anybody we've just seen from the children's talk anybody who knows about prayer knows that the early morning is a good time to pray and also in the evening but Jesus demonstrated and set us this example of getting up at day break and spending time there's been a story in the paper recently about someone

[25 : 22] I can't remember all the details but used to wake up every morning and thank God that they were still there in the morning and they had another day that God had given them and so he went to commune with his father but this fact of Jesus entering into prayer with his father reveals his relationship he shows that he is indeed the son as he talks to his father and as we know from the gospels Jesus sought only to do the will of his father and to speak his words and to do his works Jesus was dependent upon the father father and if he was dependent surely we are it's our independence which robs us of the wonderful things that Jesus has for us however after all that the people had experienced the day before when they'd seen Jesus healing and hearing him they weren't going to let him go they made sure that they kept him if they could it's a bit like that expression that says when you're on a good thing you stick to it and when they had someone like Jesus around they wanted him near and when we've had the experience of knowing the blessing of Jesus it's something that we want to carry with us day by day if we indeed seek further blessing and so when they found him we are told that he refused to stay with them and this is the reason that he told them why he said in verse 43

I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also because that is why I was sent and he kept on preaching in the land of the Jews there is a varied translation of that last part but it is thought that this is the general idea I must preach the good news now notice particularly the compelling necessity Jesus says I must preach the kingdom of God not I may or if conditions are good I must preach for the kingdom of God it is essential there was an urgency to preach this news because he knew that the world needed the kingdom of God now this became a favourite theme of Jesus the preaching of the kingdom of God in fact in Luke's gospel the expression occurs over 30 times it would take a long time to cover all the aspects of what the kingdom of

God means but Dr. Leon Morris in his commentary on Luke says this suffice it to say that the kingdom of God is God's rule in action he must become king for where God is king his will is done isn't this what we pray in the Lord's prayer your kingdom come your will be done on earth as in heaven and as we pray for the world's trouble spots are these the prayers that we pray that God's kingdom may come that his will be done the theme of Jesus having been sent which he says here I must go because I've been sent for this purpose the theme of him being sent is often mentioned particularly in John's gospel at the end of his ministry

Jesus said this to his disciples as the father has sent me I am sending you I remember being challenged by this particular statement very much as a young person realising that Jesus was sent by the father to bring in the kingdom of God and in the same way I was sent as you go out in missionary work you think you're being sent you are being sent but Jesus is there before you and you're just simply following him but not only that he said as the father has sent me I am sending you he then we are told breathed on them the Holy Spirit when you go out to do God's work to share the kingdom of God to share Jesus when you go out you don't go on your own you go if you prayed and prepared you go with the help of the Holy

Spirit so in this story the disciples and that includes all of us learnt from our Lord the following truths which we are to share they learnt that he was a man of compassion he was a man with healing power he was a man who spoke with authority he was a man who cast out demons he was a man who in prayer revealed his relationship with the father and particularly through prayer the urgency to preach the good news and to keep on preaching it in the nations for again that is mentioned I must go and I will keep on preaching there is no time that we don't give up

[32 : 01] I often tell the story of the little child who came to his grandfather because he often saw his grandfather reading his bible and the little child said to his grandfather grandpa you're always reading your bible and grandpa said yes I'm studying for my finals he was not going to let a moment pass or age deter him from indeed coming to know God better need I tell you need I say that there is a world out there waiting to know and to come to love and to follow this same Lord Jesus a world that is waiting to hear the good news not the bad news the good news about this man the question arises isn't it are we sharing it are we telling them that they may know but we've been so privileged to know ourselves let us pray we thank you dear

God for your word that it is a light unto our path and a lamp unto our feet may it indeed guide and direct us in all our ways that we may be your faithful servants unto our lives end for Jesus sake our time we are them