

## INTRODUCTION

It sure has been hot and dry in Texas this summer. One Texas farmer said, "It's so hot I have to feed crushed ice to my chickens to keep them from laying hard boiled eggs." Another Texas farmer prayed, "Lord, please make it rain, not so much for me, cuz I've seen rain before but for my 7-year-old boy." It's been so hot in Texas this summer many folks have been eating jalapeños just to cool off! It's good to laugh about it but we do need to keep praying for rain. If you pray for rain, don't forget to carry your umbrella with you.

Today's message is entitled "The Great Physician Is In." The face of health care in America has changed dramatically over the past fifty years. Some of you in this room are old enough to remember when doctors in rural areas still made house calls. Almost every doctor was a general practitioner and when they went out into the region making their rounds, a sign was on their office door that said, "The doctor is out." A sick person either had to wait or go away disappointed. But when the doc was in his office seeing patients, the other side of the sign read, "The doctor is in." Today as we study about some of the healing power of Jesus, we can give thanks that Jesus, the Great Physician, is in. He is available to help you right now—no waiting. You don't have to go away disappointed today.

I want us to examine three things about Jesus that make Him stand apart. We will look at the authority of Jesus; the superiority of Jesus; and the priority of Jesus.

### I. THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

Luke 4:31-32: "Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath began to teach the people. They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority."

I have stood at the very site of this synagogue at Capernaum many times. For centuries this city was lost. Early in the 20th century a group of German Catholic monks established a monastery on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. During WW II, these German monks were kept under "house arrest" by the British authorities and were prohibited from leaving the grounds of their monastery (in case they were Nazi spies). So with nothing better to do, they started digging in their back yard, and guess what? They uncovered the city of Capernaum. The site has been excavated and today there is a sign at the entrance that says, "Welcome to Capernaum, Hometown of Jesus." Remember, in the preceding verses, the residents of Nazareth tried to kill Jesus so He left his boyhood hometown and set up His ministry base in Capernaum. As Jesus taught there, the people noticed He was different. He spoke with authority. This was something totally new.

#### 1. The Old Testament Prophets said, "Thus says the Lord!"

In other words, they spoke *for* God. When God wanted a message delivered in the Old Testament, He would give that message to a prophet and the prophet would deliver it like a good messenger boy. Prophets never spoke from their own wisdom; they spoke the Word of God delivered to them.

#### 2. Scribes preached: "Rabbi Shammai says ..."

During Jesus' time, the scribes were the educated Jews who were considered the religious teachers (rabbis). They copied the scriptures as well as the huge body of oral tradition that surrounded the scriptures. When these rabbis taught, they were careful to *only* quote what other rabbis said about a certain topic. They never applied an original thought to a passage of scripture. For instance, their teaching consisted of saying, "Rabbi Shammai says ..." That's just an example. During the time of Jesus two of the most famous rabbis who were quoted were Shammai and Hillel but there were many others. The scribes didn't teach with authority, they only quoted others. They spoke *about* God.

### **3. But when Jesus spoke, He said, "I tell you the truth."**

If the prophets spoke for God and the scribes spoke about God, the thing that made Jesus totally unique was this: He spoke *as* God. Jesus spoke as the *author* of scripture! Do you see the connection between our English words author and authority? Have you ever read a book and then heard the author talk about it? The difference is like day and night! That's why the Bible says the people were amazed. The New Testament also says "the common people heard Him gladly." (Mark 12:37) Jesus took the deep truth of God and made it easy for everyday people to comprehend. He told stories, he used humor; he talked about common things like birds of the air and flowers of the field. The average everyday Joe loved to hear Him teach. Have you ever heard some intellectual speak and they are so obscure you don't understand what they are saying? Sometimes we hear someone who is so vague we just think they must be brilliant. Not so. Back in Alabama we used to say, "Just because you can't see the bottom of the river doesn't mean it's deep—it may just be muddy." That's true of preachers and teachers, too. But as you read the words of Jesus, you have to be amazed at the simplicity of what He said. Yet it was profound.

The common people loved to hear Him teach, but He enraged the "religious professionals," because He didn't have the correct credentials. Jesus didn't have a formal education like most rabbis. Instead, He had the ability to hear His Father's voice. In John 7:15-16 we read: The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?" Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me." That was such a radical statement the Jews accused Jesus of being demon possessed! (John 7:20)

Did Jesus have power or authority? He had both. In the Bible the word for power is *dunamis*, that's where we get our word dynamite. The word for authority is *exousia*. It means "having the right to use power correctly." It's important for us understand that Jesus had both power and authority. One without the other is useless. It is possible to have power but no authority. Here's an example: You're sitting at a traffic light waiting for the light to change. On your left is a Dodge Viper, with about a zillion horsepower, just waiting to streak away like a shot. That's power! But just before the light begins to change, you see a policeman. His car is parked across the way. He is evidently filling in for the school crossing guard. He walks to the center of the street and holds up his hand. All the traffic comes to a stop. Then the policeman motions to the curb and a little girl wearing a backpack walks across the street. The car had much more power, but the little girl was under the authority of the policeman.

But it is also possible to have authority without having power. Here’s a funny story to illustrate. Once there was a federal geologist who had been authorized by the U.S. government to go around and conduct some seismographic tests at certain locations. He approached a farmer and said, “I need to go out into your pasture and take some readings.” The farmer looked at the government man and said, “You can’t go out in my field.” The worker got a little irate and pulled out an official government document signed by the Secretary of the Interior. He showed it to the farmer and said, “This piece of paper says I can go wherever I need to in order to conduct these tests.” The farmer said, “I don’t care what the paper says, you can’t go out in my field.”

Well, the federal employee was getting tired of this, so he just ignored the farmer and climbed over the fence. He walked out into the middle of the pasture and set up his equipment while the farmer was leaning on the fence. In a few minutes the ground began to shake and the geologist thought there was a minor earthquake—that is until he looked up and saw a huge angry bull charging across the pasture at him. The bull had his head lowered and was zeroed in on the poor geologist. The terrified guy forgot his equipment and started running toward the fence screaming to the farmer for help. The farmer hollered out to him, “Show him your papers!” You see, the geologist had the authority to go out in that field, but he didn’t have the power.

Jesus had authority and He also had power. That leads us to the place where you must ask yourself a

### **PERSONAL QUESTION: What is MY basis of truth?**

Only you can answer that question but the answer you give will automatically answer thousands of other questions in your life. To make it simple, you will generally have three choices. For some people their basis of truth is what other people say. Some just follow the trend of our culture and popular opinion drives what they do and what they believe. These are the people who read and believe all these “public opinion polls.” For others, their basis of truth is “what I think.” These people pride themselves on *not* going along with the crowd, instead they think for themselves. Their own intelligence becomes their god. The other major option is: What God says. The only place to find what God says is in the Bible.

How you answer this question is more important than ever before. For example, consider what has happened to the Boy Scouts of America. Dr. Albert Moehler writes: One of America’s most respected organizations is now ruthlessly targeted by social revolutionaries determined to transform the nation’s culture and morality.

In recent days the assaults have intensified. The Fort Lauderdale, Florida City Council refused the Scouts a grant because they will not allow homosexual scoutmasters. The U.S. Department of Interior threatened to forbid the Boy Scouts access to federal lands for jamborees and camping trips. Just this past week a group of U.S. Representatives pushed for the Scout’s federal charter to be revoked. Rep. Lynn Woolsey sponsored the measure, which was overwhelmingly defeated. “We are not saying the Boy Scouts are bad, we are saying that intolerance is bad,” she said.

Why do these proponents for “tolerance” show such “intolerance” to the Boy Scouts? Why do they hate the Boy Scouts? Because the Scouts are among the last organizations in society helping

children to be "morally straight" and value biblical principles upon which our culture is established. The Boy Scouts along with anyone who insists on biblical morality will become easy targets in the future. The Boy Scouts deserve our support and they will need it. We had better keep the Scout motto in mind: Be Prepared!

So Jesus had authority but we see in this text we are exposed to

## II. THE SUPERIORITY OF JESUS

Luke 4:34-41: In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, "Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

"Be quiet!" Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him. All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!" And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.

Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever and they asked Jesus to help her. So he bent over her, rebuked the fever and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them. When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.

In this brief passage, we learn Jesus has superior power over two forces. First, He has superiority

### 1. Over Satan

While Jesus was delivering His synagogue sermon, a disturbed man interrupted Him. Immediately Jesus recognized this man was in the grip of Satan's power; he was demon possessed. Notice the demon recognized *exactly* who Jesus was. There was an ancient myth that said a demon couldn't be cast out unless the demon's name was called but if the demon is able to first call out the name of the person attempting the exorcism, it would be a failure. That's why the demon in the man cries out the name of Jesus first. But that was a foolish myth that wasn't true and the demon gained no advantage over Jesus. In fact, the demon asked Jesus a couple of questions. "What do you want with us?" meaning there was more than one demon and "Have you come to destroy us?" Did you notice Jesus refused to answer either question? As you study this gospel account, you'll discover Jesus didn't always answer questions. One of His favorite responses was to answer a question with a question of His own. So, don't you get uptight if all your questions aren't answered. Jesus only reply to the demon was, "Be silent and come out of this person!" Of course the demons had to obey, because Jesus' power is superior. Look at the second question the demon asked Jesus. "Have you come to destroy us?" Why do you think he would ask such a question? Because He knew *who* Jesus was, the demon was expressing his greatest fear that indeed Jesus had come to destroy Satan's handiwork. Although Jesus refuses to

answer that question at that point, the Bible answers it clearly elsewhere. In 1 John 3:8b we read "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's works."

Is there demon possession in our world today? I believe there is. In America, we don't see too many visible examples because I think Satan is so happy with the direction of our morally depraved culture that he doesn't want to risk being exposed. But there are many evidences of modern demon possession on the mission fields around the world where Satan isn't so disguised.

Scott Peck, psychiatrist and author of the well-known book *The Road Less Traveled*, has also written a book, which is a study of human evil, entitled, *People of the Lie*. In this book he professes to be a Christian, and he also testifies to at least two experiences of exorcism in his career. Demon possession, according to Peck, is a reality, even in the United States. Dr. Paul Tournier writes, "There are many doctors who in their struggle against disease have had, like me, the feeling that they were confronting, not something passive, but a clever, malignant and resourceful enemy."

Let's remember that Satan is nothing more than a fallen angel. He is not a minor god who is almost as powerful as the Lord God. Satan does, however, command an army of fallen angels who are intent on carrying out his plan for your life. Jesus revealed Satan's plan when He said, "The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy ..." (John 10:10) Satan's plan for your life, for your health, for your family is to kill, steal and destroy.

I do not believe a Christian can be demon possessed, because a true Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. However, a carnal Christian can be demon oppressed, depressed or suppressed!

However, Satan is a defeated foe, and we don't have to fear him. I heard about an attendant at a zoo who entered the cage of a lion while people stood and watched. When he entered the cage he had nothing in his hands but a broom. Carefully closing the door, he proceeded to sweep the floor of the cage. One of the onlookers noticed the Zoo employee had no weapon to ward off an attack by the beast. In fact, when he got to the corner of the cage where the lion was lying, he poked the animal with the broom. The lion growled at him and then lay down in another corner of the enclosure. The observer remarked to the attendant, "You certainly are a brave man, either that or the lion is tame." "No, I ain't brave" he said, "but I know something about that lion that you don't." He chuckled and said, "I know that this lion is old and slow and he ain't got no teeth."

The Bible does say Satan "roams about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8) About all he's got left is a roar, because when Jesus died on the cross He rendered Satan toothless and clawless. Not only is the devil truth-less; He is toothless. And while the devil is clawless, he isn't clueless; he's shrewd and tricky. But rejoice today that Jesus is *far* superior in power. Rejoice today that "Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:4)

Also, we see in this passage that Jesus has superiority

## 2. Over sickness

In this passage, when Jesus leaves church, He goes to Peter's house for Sunday (Saturday in this case) lunch. However, upon arriving, it is learned Peter's mother-in-law was in bed with a major fever. Dr. Luke uses a medical word describing it in what we would call a "raging fever." If it wasn't for this account we wouldn't know Peter had a wife because she is never mentioned elsewhere. Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law. Someone has said facetiously, "That's why Peter later denied the Lord three times!"

But seriously, Jesus goes to the bedside of this dear lady. Mark tells us He takes her by the hand. Dr. Luke tells us He rebukes the fever; just like He rebuked the demon earlier that morning. She was instantly healed and got up to start serving lunch.

Then later that afternoon when the sun sets, multitudes of sick people are brought to Jesus. They waited until dusk because it was the Sabbath until sunset so it was unlawful to carry sick people or to walk more than half a mile or to heal (Jesus had already broken that one). Can't you hear as the news spread around that region? "The Great Physician is in Capernaum. He is at the house of Peter. There is hope. Let's go see Jesus!" Then I can just picture Jesus healing people and casting out demons late into the night.

Jesus has power over sickness. He is still in the healing business. Every time there is healing, Jesus does it. I had a doctor in one of my churches that sewed up my thumb after I had almost cut it off. He said, "I can clean it and I can suture it but only God can truly heal it." Sometimes God heals gradually through wonderful medical care provided by doctors, nurses, and medicine. Sometimes He heals instantly without any human assistance. And sometimes God doesn't heal at all. I don't understand it. I just believe it, claim it and teach it.

But I am certain the most serious kind of sickness and disease in mankind is sin. This congenital moral cancer afflicts every one of us. If not treated by Jesus, it will result in eternal death. For millions of us, Jesus has touched us and healed us of this sin sickness and now we are whole. To me, that is still the greatest miracle!

Years ago, when the Billy Graham team was in London, George Beverly Shea was the featured singer. He sang an old gospel song. "It took a miracle to put the stars in place / it took a miracle to hang the world in space / But when he saved my soul / cleansed and made me whole / it took a miracle of love and grace." After the crusade service, a British lady accosted him and criticized him sternly for the song, which she considered to be totally inappropriate. She quoted the words of the song back to him saying, "how dare you sing 'It took America to put the stars in place ...'" When he corrected her misunderstanding, she felt pretty embarrassed! It doesn't take America to be saved but it does take a miracle! Fortunately, the Great Physician is in and He is still touching people and healing them.

Look back at Peter's mother-in-law for a moment. Jesus went to her bedside, touched her and healed her. Jesus still makes bedside visits. He still makes house calls. He is here today ready to step up to your side and heal you of your sin sickness; won't you let Him?

Now for the **PERSONAL QUESTION: Have I ever been touched and changed by Jesus? If so am I joyfully serving Him?**

You say, "Can I be saved and really not know that it happened?" Not really. That's like saying you can get married and not really know about it! It's always a life-changing moment when Jesus touches you and heals you. Did you see what Peter's mother-in-law did when Jesus touched her? She got up and started serving Jesus. That's a pretty good sign you have been touched if you have an overwhelming sense of gratitude that makes you want to joyfully serve Jesus for the rest of your life! Let's notice next

### **III. THE PRIORITY OF JESUS**

Luke 4:42-44: At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, "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 synagogues of Judea (the Jews).

We are going to see the priority of Jesus can be expressed in two ways. First it was His desire to

#### **1. Get alone with God for prayer**

After an evening of healing people and casting out demons, Jesus got away from the crowd to pray. Luke tells us that at daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. In the parallel passage, Mark gives us the reason why Jesus got alone.

Mark 1:35 says, "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." It had been a busy Sabbath. Jesus had preached in the synagogue. He had lunch at Peter's house. Then all evening, He was busy taking care of the needs of people. In spite of this, Jesus still knew it was important to get alone with His heavenly Father and to pray. Worship is connecting with God and you must be doing that privately before your public worship is meaningful.

In Luke 3 we see Him praying alone before His baptism. In Luke 6 we see him praying all night before He chooses the disciples. In Luke 9 we see Him praying alone before His transfiguration. In Luke 22 we are going to see Him praying alone in the Garden of Gethsemane.

You may think you are too busy to get up early every morning and spend time alone with God. Jesus was on the most important mission in the history of this planet. He knew He only had three years to accomplish His ministry before He would die—and yet it was a priority for Him to spend time alone with His Father in prayer.

The lesson is obvious. The very best way to start every day of your life is to find a solitary place and spend a quiet time alone with God. Talk to Him and listen to Him. If you think you are too busy to do that, then you are too busy. It is a matter of setting it as a priority and then managing your time.

Once a business leader was leading a conference on Time Management. He had a large glass jar on a table in front of a room full of eager young business people who wanted to learn how to better manage their time. He placed six or seven large rocks into the jar until it was full. He asked the seminar attendees, "Is the jar full?" They all nodded. Then he took some pebbles and poured them into the jar until they reached the lip. Again, he asked, "Is the jar full?" By now they were catching on, so nobody dared to say it was full. Then the leader took a container of fine sand and poured it into the jar until it reached the top. "Is it full?" This time some of them answered, "Surely the jar is full now." To their surprise, he took a container of water and there still room in the jar for a large amount to be added to the rocks, pebbles, and sand. He certainly had their attention. Then he asked the class, "What does this jar tell us about time management?" One bright young man raised his hand and said, "It means that no matter how busy you are, there is always a way to add more to your schedule." Everyone nodded in agreement. The leader said, "Wrong. The point is this: If I hadn't put the large rocks in first, there wouldn't have been room for them." He went on to explain that much of what we do is water, sand, or pebbles. But really useful people make sure the few important things are done *first*. In the life of Jesus, one of the "big rocks" was spending time alone with God is prayer. Is that a priority in your life?

In addition, we can see the priority of Jesus can also be expressed as His desire to:

## 2. Go to the people and share

In Nazareth, they ran Him out of town. But in Capernaum, they did just the opposite. They begged Him to stay only in Capernaum. After all, there was a long line of people who were waiting to be healed. In Jesus' reply, we see the other side of His priority. He shared that His main mission was not just to heal sick people; it was to go to people who were spiritually sick and share the good news to them. Again, Mark gives us the exact theme of the message Jesus preached. In Mark 1:14-15 we read: After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" Jesus shared the good news that the kingdom of God was near. You are a subject in the Kingdom of God when you are submitting to the King and doing His will. In the model prayer Jesus taught us to pray "your Kingdom come ... your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Those are two separate requests, they are asking God for the same thing. In heaven, God's will is done perfectly. When you are doing God's Will, then His kingdom has come into your life.

Do you see both sides of Jesus' priority? First, there was withdrawing from people to develop intimacy with His Father. Then, there was going out to people to announce the good news. First, there is *worship*, spending time focusing on God and then there is *work*, going out for God. Bill Bright used to say these two aspects of the Christian life should be as natural as breathing. When you inhale, you are receiving God's presence. When you exhale, you are sharing God's word with others. In the Christian life this two-fold priority should become as natural as breathing. When you read through the letters of Paul you can see one grand priority captivated his life: To know Christ and to make Him known. (Philippians 3:10)

Here's the **PERSONAL QUESTION: What is my priority in life?**

Now, don't just give some reflexive spiritual answer. Be honest. Take a moment and think about it. I believe I can help you see what your priority really is.

### **YOUR PRIORITY IS THAT TO WHICH YOU DEVOTE THE MOST:**

- 1. Thought**
- 2. Talk**
- 3. Time**
- 4. Treasure**

When you find that person, purpose or possession that demands most of those four areas in your life, write it down: that is your main priority.

What is God trying to say to you today? Listen to Him: His authority is the only source of real truth. Trust Him, He has power to save you and heal you. The Great Physician is in. Will you allow Him to touch you today? Seek Him and serve Him. Make that your primary purpose, your main priority in life.

### **CONCLUSION**

Once the great pianist, Paderewski was preparing to give a concert. In the audience, a mother brought her young son who had just started taking piano lessons. Before the concert, the little boy was bored so he wandered away from his mother who was busy talking to friends. When he saw the beautiful grand piano on stage, he walked to it unnoticed and sat down at the bench. Then he began to play an out of tune version of "chopsticks." Immediately the audience went into an uproar. "Who let that boy on stage! Stop him, children shouldn't be allowed at that piano!"

Meanwhile, the great Paderewski was offstage and saw what was happening. He quickly slipped up behind the little boy and whispered. "Go ahead, keep playing. I'll help you." Then he put his arms around the boy and began to accompany him. His ability turned the simple "chopsticks" into music so beautiful the audience was enthralled.

A lot of what we try to do in life is like trying to play chopsticks in a concert hall. We just aren't up to the task. We find plenty of people who criticize us. About the time we are ready to give up, Jesus comes alongside and says, "I'm here. I'll help you." And suddenly our discordant life becomes full of beautiful music.

## OUTLINE

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1. Old Testament Prophets: "Thus says the Lord!"
2. Scribes preached: "Rabbi Shammai says ... "
3. Jesus: "I tell you the truth."

The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?" Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me." *John 7:15-16*

Personal Question: What is MY basis of truth?

### II. THE SUPERIORITY OF JESUS (33-41)

1. Over Satan

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. *1 John 3:8b*

2. Over sickness

Personal Question: Have I ever been touched and changed by Jesus? If so, am I joyfully serving Him?

### III. THE PRIORITY OF JESUS (42-44)

1. Get alone with God for prayer

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. *Mark 1:35*

2. Go to people and preach

After John was put in prison, Jesus went to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" *Mark 1:14-15*

Personal Question: What is my priority in life?

YOUR PRIORITY IS THAT TO WHICH YOU DEVOTE THE MOST:

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For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes