

Luke 4b: HG Bishop Youssef

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His Grace Bishop Youssef ~ فسوي ابن الالة فاين تاطع · LUKE 4: 23 - 44 ~ Bible Study

Galilean Ministry

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²³ He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.' " ²⁴ Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. ²⁵ But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; ²⁶ but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, *in the region* of Sidon, to a woman *who was* a widow. ²⁷ And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."

²⁸ So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, ²⁹ and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. ³⁰ Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

³¹ Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. ³² And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.

- Christ is telling the people of Nazareth what is in their hearts
 - In their hearts, they despised Him because of the poverty of His parents
 - In their hearts, they challenged Him with miracles - this is Your hometown, perform miracles here!
 - Usually a physician would cure himself, his friends, his family, his neighborhood before going and curing strangers
 - They challenge Him to work miracles as He did in Capernaum
- The Lord responds with the reason He did not do miracles among them
 - He responds with a proverb very well known to them: No prophet is accepted in his own country
 - He is also speaking prophetically by saying "country" and not just "town" because Israel, the chosen people of the OT, would not accept Him (He came unto His own and His own did not receive Him)

- When the Israelites reject Him, the innumerable Gentiles will accept Him
- He gives two well-known OT Examples to support this
 - Elijah and the Widow: Elijah did not go to any widows in Israel, but to a Gentile widow in Sidon
 - Elisha and Naaman: Elisha did not cure the lepers in Israel, but to a Gentile man - Naaman, the Syrian
 - Prophetically, both of these show that the Jews will reject Him and the Gentiles will accept Him
- They are filled with wrath
 - How dare He tell them that the Messiah will go to the Gentiles instead of the chosen people of Israel
 - The Lord wants to teach them that the mercies of God - even in the Old Testament - were not limited to Israel only
 - The people in Nazareth felt entitled to miracles
 - The Lord does miracles based on His economy and His will
 - Sometimes we ask "why did God cure this person but not me?" or "but not my grandma?" but we cannot question God because it is according to His will and His economy
- Any miracle He did was for a spiritual goal
 - The incarnation of Christ is beyond the limitations of human relationships and territories
 - God has no partiality between nations
 - He sent Elijah to do good for a Sidonian
 - He sent Elisha to do good for a Syrian
 - And in that same time, He did not do anything for the ungrateful and disbelieving people of Israel
- They intended to throw Him off a cliff to kill Him because He hinted that the grace of God would be offered to the Gentiles, and they probably judged Him as a false prophet because He refused to perform any miracle in front of them
 - He did a miracle by passing through the midst of them and this is the only miracle they would ever see
 - St Cyril of Alexandria said: "Christ passing through the midst of them and went His way was not because He was afraid of suffering but because His hour was not yet come." - there is still work that He has to do before He dies on the Cross
 - What happened in Nazareth is a foreshadowing of the whole future of His ministry
 - At first, the Jews would gladly receive His healings, His miracles, His teachings
 - But by the end, they will turn on Him until they crucify Him on the Cross
- Went down to Capernaum
 - Nazareth was a city on a hill, so he went down to Capernaum which is a city on the Sea of Galilee
 - He kept His custom of preaching every Sabbath in the synagogue
- The people were astonished at His teaching
 - Astonishment is one thing, and believing is another
 - Astonishment is not enough for one to believe

Miracles in Capernaum

³³ Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, ³⁴ saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

³⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in *their* midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him. ³⁶ Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this *is!* For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." ³⁷ And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

- St Luke first gives the general idea (verse 32) and then gives us a particular account of one Sabbath
- As soon as the devil saw Jesus, he became scared of His power... the demon expected that he would be dispossessed
 - Just the presence of God caused pain to the demons - like how a wounded eye cannot bear the light
- The devil gave a correct testimony that the Lord is the Holy One of God (and this is not the only time) - but the intention of the devil is not to reveal the truth... but that if the Lord agreed with the demons, then He might appear to the people to be in union with evil spirits. So this was a lie from the devil to tell the people that Jesus is in union with evil spirits.
 - The Lord rebukes him and casts him out
 - For this reason, we see that neither Christ nor His apostles take any notice of these testimonies of the demons
 - It happens with the Lord several times in the Gospels
 - It happened with St Paul in Acts 16 when a girl with the spirit of divination followed St Paul and St Luke saying "these are servants of the Most High God who proclaim to us the way of salvation" and she kept saying it for many days until St Paul rebuked the spirit
 - It was necessary for the Lord to assert His absolute power over evil spirits and show that He had nothing to do with them (especially since later in His ministry He would be accused of casting out demons by Beelzebub)
 - The time was not yet arrived when Christ was to be publicly proclaimed as the Son of God - but rather, this great truth was to be gradually unfolded with the people being persuaded of that truth by the preaching and miracles of the Lord.
- News of His word and His works spread throughout - not only in Capernaum, but throughout the region around Galilee (including Syria Matthew 4:24)

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.

- St John Chrysostom said it seems that He went to Simon's house to eat after preaching in the Synagogue which is why Simon's mother in law arose to serve them immediately

- Different sign of healing
 - Sometimes the Lord heals by a word
 - Sometimes by a touch
 - Sometimes by both a word and touch
- The Miracle is not just the cure of an incurable disease (high fever)

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.

- Why when the sun was setting?
 - It was the Sabbath! The people were not permitted by the Pharisees to bring their sick for healing on the Sabbath. But when the sun sets, the next day has started so they brought their people to be healed.
- The Lord laid His hands on those who were sick
 - Every one of them
 - The act of healing is not limited by privilege or sickness or anything. He was able to cure all, and no kind of disease was too hard for Him to heal or subdue
- The active power of the Holy Spirit is demonstrated here because the Lord offered physical healing AND spiritual healing. He purified both body and soul.
 - Healing and exorcism of demons come together
 - Again, He rebukes the demons despite that their testimony is true

Jesus Preaches in Galilee

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.

- Early in the morning, He went to have some time in solitude with the Father
- The people wanted Him to stay in Capernaum and abide with them
 - Most likely this was not out of their belief in Him, but so that He can do miracles and heal and they can benefit from the miracles
 - Miracles and healing were not His primary work, but they were symbolic and secondary work to prove His goodness and demonstrate His authority to preach the Gospel that He is the Messiah
- The Lord's mission was very clear to Him and He set boundaries
 - Some people try to manipulate the servants and clergy, but the Lord was able to say no - I have a mission from the Father and I came here for that purpose.

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