

# OpenTheo

## Luke 4:31 - 5:11



### Gospel of Luke - Steve Gregg

In this discussion, Steve Gregg analyzes Luke 4:31 - 5:11, where Jesus went throughout Galilee casting out demons and healing the sick. Gregg counters common modern views that demon possession is merely a superstitious idea and argues that demons are real spiritual beings. He details the story of Jesus healing Simon's mother-in-law and the man possessed by legion demons, and highlights how demons recognize Jesus' authority and fear his power. Gregg emphasizes the importance of following Jesus and adjusting our thinking based on the inspiration of Scripture.

### Transcript

All right, we need to come back to Luke chapter 4. We got through the first 30 verses and we need to look at the rest of the chapter and maybe, I don't know, maybe even get beyond the rest of the chapter. It wouldn't hurt for us to take that much material given the shortage of our time. Beginning at verse 31, we have the first report of an exorcism.

Now Jesus' ministry was characterized by a large number of exorcisms. He encountered demons, possessed people everywhere he went. It was perhaps one of the most significant parts of his ministry.

We need to understand that the miraculous element in Jesus' ministry, especially the healing and the casting out of demons, but frankly probably all the miracles of Jesus, even of other sorts, they all had symbolic value. Jesus did these things literally, but he did them to demonstrate something spiritual. You see, the prophets had said that the Messiah would come and heal the sickness of Israel, but the sickness of Israel and the prophets was a spiritual sickness.

This is made very clear that God said in Jeremiah and in Hosea, I will heal their backslidings. Obviously, backsliding is not a physical condition, but a spiritual condition. Likewise in Isaiah, it often says that the nation is sick and needs a healer.

Not organically sick with diseases as we think of them, but the sickness is in their alienation from God. This is spoken figuratively of sickness, but it says in Isaiah 53 that with his stripes we will be healed and he'll bear our sicknesses and our infirmities. And

therefore, Jesus in coming and doing physical healings was showing that he is the one that God was sent to heal the nation spiritually.

The physical healings correspond with spiritual healing. Likewise, the casting out of demons was also something that indicated something spiritual. And Jesus said this on a different occasion than that which we're about to read.

In Matthew 12, he said, if I'm casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. In other words, Satan has been ruling, his kingdom has been prominent and unchallenged for thousands of years. These demon-possessed people under his power, they're a good example of his kingdom and its power and its authority.

However, the kingdom of God is more powerful. And as I come here and cast these demons out, I'm demonstrating that Satan's kingdom is not unchallenged anymore. It's not the only game in town.

The kingdom of God has arrived. The troops have landed. The enemy is being routed.

Me casting demons out of people is taking from the strong man his possessions, and it guarantees that he has been bound so that I can take his possessions from him. You can't enter a strong man's house and spoil his goods unless you bind the strong man, Jesus said. This is all in Matthew 12.

But the point is that Jesus' healings and his exorcisms, they really happened in the visible realm. Of course, they did happen. But they also happened in order to illustrate spiritual truths about the kingdom of God and about the Messiahship of Jesus.

Here we have the first of many exorcism stories. In Luke 4, 31, it says, Then he went down to Capernaum. This is after he was rejected in Nazareth.

He went to Capernaum. And we saw that in Matthew 4, 13, Matthew alludes to this Nazareth episode, but doesn't speak about it. He says, Leaving Nazareth, he came to Capernaum.

And so we read the same thing here. He's leaving Nazareth and coming down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. Now the fact that he has to say Capernaum is a city of Galilee is one of those indicators that he's writing to a Gentile who's not familiar with Palestinian geography.

Any Jew who had lived in Palestine would know and wouldn't need to be told that Capernaum is a city that's in Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbaths. And they were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with authority.

Now, in the synagogue, there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. A strange expression. We sometimes read of demons and we sometimes read of unclean

spirits and sometimes evil spirits.

They're all the same. In fact, the terms are used interchangeably if you compare the parallels in the different Gospels. An evil spirit is an unclean spirit is a demon.

But here, sort of, there's a combination of these terms. A spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice saying, let us alone.

What have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know you, who you are, the Holy One of God. 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.

So 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. And the report about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

Now, this was only one of many cases. We're going to read summary statements how Jesus went throughout all of Galilee casting out demons and healing the sick. But there are individual cases that are highlighted for us either because they're the first or because they're characteristic of what happened on many occasions or because there's some particular lesson to be learned in that particular case.

Now, it's interesting that Luke speaks about a person who has a demon of an unclean spirit and doesn't feel he needs to explain that phenomenon to Theophilus. Likewise, Matthew and Mark, when they talk about people having demons, they don't feel like they have to explain that. Their readers know about this.

Matthew writes to Jews. The Jews knew about this. Mark writes to Romans.

They knew about this. Luke writes to Theophilus. He knew about this.

He doesn't have to say, now when I talk about people being demon possessed, I'm talking about this particular phenomenon that sometimes happens where an evil spirit comes into people and they act strangely and so forth. He just says there was one of those demon possessed people there. Like a phenomenon, you know what that is.

I don't have to explain that because everybody in the ancient world knew what demon possession was and it's treated so matter-of-factly and yet we live probably in the only time in history and one of the only cultures that doesn't know what it is. We are more ignorant than the ancients and yet modern Western scientifically trained rationalists, they think, we think, we're smarter than the ancient people about these things. The common view of modern, even theologians, if they're not strictly biblical and evangelical, theologians often say these cases of demon possession, that was a superstitious idea.

People held in the old times there were demons, you know, that got into people and stuff. But we realize now these are just mental illnesses. We would take care of these people differently.

We'd give them some kind of medication. Yeah, that's what we would do. We'd manage their demon.

We wouldn't deliver them. That's the problem. You see, because we live in a naturalistic society that has to explain everything naturally, the supernatural, demons, are one of the first things to go.

I mean, people who are tending toward naturalism, they may give up their belief in God last of all. They'll give up their view of demons first, then probably angels, and then eventually God. But demons are the first to go.

When you go in the direction of naturalism, demons are the scariest, weirdest, strangest things in the supernatural world that people want to forget about or pretend aren't there or explain away. And our society, for many decades now, has explained demon possession away as a psychological or psychiatric malady, mental illness, or something like that. Now, no doubt there are brain problems that cause people psychiatric abnormalities and so forth, but that's not what these are talking about.

Our society is the first to become ignorant of demon possession, which means we're going backward, not forward. The world is still full of societies that know about this. You go to India, you go to China, you go to Africa, you go to South America, you go to tribal peoples anywhere.

They know about demon possession. It's just a matter of fact to them. They've got witch doctors and such who try to cure it.

And one of the main things that proves the gospel to be true when the missionaries go to these countries is the gospel is the only way by which people seem to be successfully delivered from demons. The witch doctors can't save them. The Jews even had exorcists before Jesus came along.

He makes reference to them from time to time. And even Luke mentions them in the book of Acts, the seven sons of Sceva. They were sons of a Jewish priest and they were exorcists.

Even the Jews had exorcists before Jesus came and so do pagans. But only Jesus really scared the demons. Only Jesus really delivered from demons.

Jesus is the only one that the demons really respected and feared. Jesus and his disciples. And that's why missionaries can go to other countries right now and cast demons out of people and sometimes the whole village will get saved or at least they

know that the power of the gospel is greater than the power of the local witch doctor or whatever who couldn't do anything about this situation.

The demons fear Christ and they often fear the believer who is moving in the power and authority and faith in Christ. We remember that in Ephesus in Acts chapter 19, the seven sons of Sceva, they tried to cast demons out in the name of Jesus but they didn't know Jesus. They knew this guy Paul was using that formula so they said we command you in the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches to come out.

And what the demons say is that we know Jesus and we know Paul but who are you? We don't have any respect for you. You're not anyone that we have to pay any attention to. Jesus, yes.

Paul, yes. But not you. It's interesting that they would list Paul with Jesus in that respect because Paul isn't Jesus but he's a disciple of Jesus.

He has the spirit of Jesus. Jesus cast out demons by the Spirit of God. We have the Spirit of God.

Paul and the Apostles cast out demons in the name of Jesus. Even the disciples did that before Pentecost because Jesus sent out the 70 with authority to cast out demons and in Luke chapter 10 they return and say, Lord even the demons are subject to us in your name. So the name of Jesus rightly owned by a true disciple and especially a disciple who has the same spirit of God through whom Jesus cast out demons is more than a match for demons and I believe that the only way the devil gets away with as much as he does with as many Christians around as there are in this country for example is that he redefines demon activity as something else so that we don't know what it is and so we don't deal with it for what it is.

Or he does something else. He makes Christians superstitious and fearful. It's funny sometimes he makes us overly rationalistic so that we deny the supernatural and and render all the cases of demon possession we encounter as some medical condition or mental illness or something or we go the other way we get so superstitious and fearful of demons that we want to avoid them altogether.

That was my experience at first. I was raised you know knowing very little about these things though I was a Christian. I remember when I was maybe 13 or 14 I was at the Baptist Church on a Sunday night when a foreign missionary was there from Africa telling I guess it was a missionary our church supported and they were telling reports and and he made some reference to casting demons out of somebody.

It crossed my mind whoa you mean there's demon possessed people today? I knew I'd read about it in the Bible. I just said it never crossed my mind that there are demon possessed people today and when this missionary from Africa mentioned it it really was

a wake-up call like wow you mean there are that's still going on in the world today? Thankfully it's over in Africa because it seems spooky to me. I remember thinking I'm glad it's over there in Africa not here.

Well when I was 17 and in a Christian band we were playing up in the mountains here in Southern California at a camp Christian camp and one of the members of our band a lady wandered off into the woods and saw something really freaked her out. She thought it was the devil. I don't know if it was or not I won't make I won't describe it right now we don't have time we're talking about Luke not about this but the point is that she described to us what she had seen and she was freaked out she was really scared and it seemed to me that she had seen the devil or a demon and I knew very little about this but it made me realize whoa there are demons here too not only in Africa they're over here in California too.

In fact there's a lot of them in California it seems to be one of their favorite party places and I I didn't know that at the time but I remember him really spooked. I actually actually was really afraid for a few weeks thinking wow you know the devil appeared to her I couldn't handle that if he appeared to me and I was a kind of afraid didn't want to be alone didn't want to look anywhere in dark corners lest he'd be standing there you know and I really was genuinely freaked out because I didn't know much about demons I just thought whoa this is really spooky stuff but after a couple weeks of being paranoid about this remember thinking I can't live the rest of my life paranoid like this well what what if it is what if the devil does appear to me what's the worst-case scenario what's he gonna do to me I'm a Christian what can he do if I'm trusting Christ greater is he that's in me than he that is in the world so let him be afraid of me for a while you know I'm tired of being afraid of him let him have his turn to be afraid and and I just decided I don't I don't have anything to fear from the devil it's the demons that fear it's the demons that believe and tremble it's the demons that cried out inside you so are you here to destroy us why would we be intimidated by demons are so wimpy and I'm not saying they're extremely wimpy but they're certainly terrified of Jesus Christ and of Paul and of people like Paul who have Jesus and who have the Spirit of God and who are not afraid of them who's going out into their territory taking territory from the strong man because he is bound there's no reason for Christians to be afraid but I think that many times Christians this whole idea of demon possession if they've never encountered it just seems surreal I mean it's it's like reading about the parting of the Red Sea well I guess that happened because the Bible says so but I can't even imagine really happening I mean it did I guess but just seems surreal but actually of course in the meantime I have encountered demon possessed people a number of times and had to had to do something about it and now it does seem just very natural to me and maybe to some of you I know some of you encountered demon possession before but these people in the synagogue they had no you know when this demon possessed man began screaming out they just thought oh there's a demon possessed guy you know they knew what it was now the demon

possessed guy was behaving himself apparently for a while but it was through hearing Jesus teach that he got agitated and got up and started screaming I want to read the parallel to this Matthew doesn't have the parallel to this story but Mark does over in Mark chapter 1 and verses 21 through 28 Mark 1 21 through 28 says then they went into Capernaum and immediately on the Sabbath he entered a synagogue and taught and they were astonished at his teaching for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit and he cried out 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 but Jesus rebuked him saying be quiet and come out of him and when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice he came out of him then they were all amazed so that they questioned among themselves saying what is this what new doctrine is this for with authority he commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him and immediately his fame spread throughout the region now this is almost exactly the way that Luke tells it but the wording here is different in one place that I'd like to show you in verse 22 it says they were astonished at his teaching for he taught them as one having authority now this is before they saw what he could do they only heard what he could say now lots of people when you hear them speak they speak as if they have authority but authority doesn't always reside in those who speak in an authoritative tone lots of people speak as if they know something when they don't know anything they speak as if they have the right to boss people around but they don't have any right to boss people around they act like they're in charge but they're not in charge this is very common for people to speak as if they have authority many people preachers speak very authoritatively but doesn't mean they're right they're just speaking as if they have authority but do they that's that's got to be determined separately what they were amazed about Jesus that he spoke as if he had authority authority the scribes didn't have and the rabbis didn't have but did he have that authority or was just talking like he had it well then this event happened he cast the demons out and verse 27 says then they were all amazed they were astonished in verse 22 they were amazed in verse 27 so that they questioned among themselves and they said with authority he commands even the unclean spirits in the old man now he was speaking as if he had authority they weren't sure if he had it when this happened they said well he does have authority even the demons recognize his authority and so Jesus could demonstrate that he had authority by doing something Jesus often spoke as if he had authority that people questioned as when he said to the man the paralyzed man that four friends lowered down in front of him through the roof Jesus said son your sins are forgiven his critics said he actually has authority to forgive sins and what did Jesus say he says well what's more difficult to say your sins are forgiven you or rise up walk so you may know that the son of man has authority to do this I'm gonna do this other thing so the miracles that Jesus did often were to show that his words that he'd already spoken then he had the authority to do it he had the right to say that and so with this also the the authority he exhibited over demons showed that he had no pretension about authority but real authority so that when he spoke they should

listen as if he really is authoritative in what he says so the demon is cast out now the man with the demon my impression is that he was sitting in the synagogue for some little while before he acted up and the synagogue service did go on of course for some period of time until the Jesus got to speak and it seems like the man behaved normally until Jesus spoke and that would suggest if this is a correct impression that he was a demon possessed man who wasn't always acting crazy but certain things would set him off there are other demon possessed people in the Bible who are always crazy like the man who lived in the tombs he was a nut he lived like a crazy man and you know of course he had a legion of demons in him very severe case of demon possession but there are people in Jesus ministry that he encounters that are seemingly weak as a mildly demon possessed for people who they don't act up at all they're just they have a blind spirit or a dumb spirit and when the spirits cast out they can see or talk or they have some other limited incapacity that's caused by a demon so it seems like demon possession exists in degrees some people seem to have only have a physical malady and that's the only symptom other people seem to be totally out deranged living in the tombs but this is a case that sort of intermediate between there demon made this guy behave erratically and irrationally sometimes perhaps not all the time we don't know but it sounds like he was in the service there already and not acting strangely until this certain point in the service came now you might wonder how did Jesus just walk into a synagogue and start speaking after all he was a new a new person his public ministry had just begun I can't just walk into any church in town say I'm preaching today how could Jesus walk in the synagogue and be preaching that day well the synagogues most of them did not have resident rabbis if a rabbi would visit they'd certainly put him in the pulpit because they usually didn't have people in the synagogues most synagogues only had well they would have a synagogue if they had only ten adult male Jews in town that was the condition for having a synagogue if you have less than ten adult male Jews you don't have a synagogue if you have ten adult male Jews or more in the town you have a synagogue in Gentile cities sometimes they had less than that in some Jewish cities they would of course have more than ten but maybe a very small number and the number they had wouldn't include any rabbis among them so they'd have someone read the scriptures and I guess they'd have to just conjecture about its meaning but if a rabbi or authority came into town and visited the synagogue they'd certainly put him up so you teach us Jesus was a traveling sage rabbi whatever and so when he came to town he was not yet controversial enough for people to exclude him from the synagogue so they'd ask him to teach Paul the same way when Paul traveled in the Gentile world whenever he came to town he went first to the synagogue and they'd ask him to teach he's a rabbi they were glad to have a rabbi show up and so also Jesus was apparently recognized at this point in the Jewish community as a rabbi not a trained rabbi but one who was worth hearing who had something interesting to say and so when he'd go into a synagogue they'd let him stand in the pulpit and preach as we saw in the previous story when he's in Nazareth so also here in Capernaum when this demon possession manifested now this caused him to be reported famously throughout the region Luke 4



37 says and then we have at verse 38 now he arose from the synagogue and entered Simon's house now we've not even told who Simon is yet we're really going to be introduced to Simon in the next chapter which is kind of a strange arrangement because in chapter 5 we're going to read about Jesus along the Sea of Galilee encountering Peter that Simon and his brother Andrew and then James and John and calling them from their fishing but that's in chapter 5 here in chapter 4 he goes into Simon's house and with reference to this story Mark chapter 129 which is parallel this says Simon and Andrew's house so Simon and his brother Andrew lived together and so did apparently Peter's mother-in-law lived there as well but the interesting thing is this event in Simon and Andrew's house occurs before we relate or have related to us the call of Simon and Andrew from their fishing and now this is reversed in the other Gospels Matthew and Mark both introduced Simon and Andrew and James and John first with him calling them from their fishing then the synagogue and then the healing of Peter's mother-in-law now it seems like the other Gospels which agree in their chronology against Luke's chronology make more sense because Peter and Andrew seem to become followers of Jesus when he calls them from their nets and then it would be natural enough for Jesus to go stay in their house and encounter Peter's mother-in-law who's sick and therefore I don't know why Luke would give this counterintuitive rearrangement but we've seen he did something like that with the temptations of Jesus and we can see that Luke is not necessarily certainly not slavishly following the chronology that the other Gospels have followed now whether Luke is more accurate than the other two in the chronology or not we don't know it does seem counterintuitive that Jesus would be staying in Peter's house before he's even called Peter on the other hand it's not impossible that Luke is correct in his order because Jesus had met Peter and Andrew and John at least earlier this is recorded in the Gospel of John in chapter 1 these men these fishermen were previously disciples of John the Baptist and when John said there goes the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world these disciples changed their loyalty instead of following John they followed Jesus home now they didn't follow him permanently they just spent the day with him and got to know him then apparently they went back to Galilee and resumed their fishing trade and Jesus encountered him many months perhaps as much as a year later after he'd met them in John chapter 1 he finds them fishing calls them to be disciples he didn't call them on the earlier occasion just met them but that would explain why if he came to Capernaum and Peter's house was there he already knew Peter and Andrew from this previous encounter and even if he had not yet called them from their nets he might be staying in their home they might be showing hospitality to him like Mary and Martha did and it might be that he was in their home before he called them to leave their business so Luke's order of events is not impossible it just seems a little stranger and it seems particularly strange that Matthew and Mark would put it in one order and Luke in the opposite order this leaves some things unanswered it just leaves puzzling things about chronology to be considered but I don't know that they can be resolved I've tended to think that Matthew and Mark are more correct in their chronology and that for some reason Luke has reversed it but we

really don't know for sure because Luke's chronology is not impossible either okay so he rose from the synagogue entered Simon's and Mark says and Andrew's house but Simon's wife's mother was sick wait the first Pope had a wife Peter's supposed to be the first Pope according to Roman Catholicism and not only Popes but even bishops can't even priests can't be married but the first Pope was married obviously he wasn't a Pope he was just a fisherman they had a wife and probably children too we don't read about them necessarily but if you have a mother-in-law you have a wife I know lots of people like to get a mother-in-law without needing to get a wife in the process but you have to have a wife in order to have a mother-in-law actually it's usually the other way a lot of people like to have a wife and not a mother-in-law but Peter got both as all people do when they marry a woman who has a living mother and that was the case Simon's wife had a living mother though nearly dead on this this particular occasion she had a high fever by the way this reference to a high fever it may not sound strange in our ears but in the Greek it's a specific medical diagnosis in the Greek medical literature there were different kinds of fevers and this particular term that Luke uses who is himself a physician of course is one of the categories of fever that are known from the Greek medical journals he specifies the other gospels just say she had a fever but he actually uses a specific medical designation for the category of her fever in the Greek here and they made requests of him concerning her so he stood over her and rebuked the fever and it left her and immediately she rose and served them hmm Jesus rebuked the demon in verse 35 he's also going to be rebuking demons in verse 41 we haven't gotten there yet but he rebukes demons there too but here he rebukes a fever verse 39 he rebukes a sickness the word rebuke in the Greek is epitomail and it means to reprove charge with fault chide censure or censure severely now Jesus rebuked demons he rebuked a fever and on one occasion he even rebuked wind and waves now on the occasion where he rebuked the wind and the waves we know that story of course but what you might not be remembering is that storm arose when Jesus was crossing the Sea of Galilee in order to encounter the man legion the man who had a legion of demons in him Jesus was crossing the lake and on the other side of the lake he was to encounter this man of the tombs who had a legion of demons in him and obviously would deliver that man now we have to say that any man who had a legion of demons and it must be one of Satan's prime trophies there's not many people that Satan gets that much power over and Satan certainly knew that when Jesus got to that side of the lake almost certainly Jesus was going to deliver that guy so it's very possible that the storm at sea that sought to sink the boat was sent by the devil in order to prevent Jesus from having this encounter on the other side of the lake with the man of the tombs less Satan should lose one of his chief victims and when Jesus rebuked the wind of the waves as if they had personalities as if you you don't censure the rain usually you don't censure the waves they can't hear you for the most part and they don't have any choice anyway why blame them they're just following natural laws presumably unless they're not unless they happen to be stirred up by the devil now does the devil have any power over natural forces I think so read the book of Job the wind that blew down Job's house and killed his kids or

apparently did so that was sent by the devil it would seem that if God allows it or does not prevent it the devil can stir up natural elements and it may well be that Jesus rebuked the wind of the waves simply because there was a demonic will behind that storm that he was really rebuking the demonic power behind it Jesus didn't rebuke very many things besides demons he did rebuke his disciples on one occasion but you usually rebuke something that has personality something that's doing the wrong thing and should have done something else wind and waves don't have any culpability so he may have been rebuking them in a sense as the you know the agency that Satan was using rebuking Satan and the demons there now if he's rebuking a fever here it may be a similar principle Jesus healed lots of different kinds of sicknesses but we don't read of him rebuking sicknesses except for here and therefore this might have been a fever that was brought on by Satan and Jesus was rebuking the demonic source of the fever it can't be certain but it's a rare thing to read of Jesus rebuking something that isn't personal and it's in fact a rare thing for Jesus to rebuke anything other than a demon so on these few occasions where he rebukes the wind and the waves or the fever we may be justified in assuming there is something personal behind some demonic intention Peter after all was about to be called or had just been called to be disciple and to have a serious sickness occur in his home might well distract him from that might well impede his you know willingness to leave the home and do what he's supposed to do when he's got you know sick relatives and so forth it may be that in order to interfere with Peter's ministry the devil was specifically afflicting a member of his household I believe that has happened to me in the past I believe that members of my household have been attacked by demons in order to get to me I'm not sure why the attack wasn't directly on me which it could easily have been but it wasn't but I've had family members that have experienced strange and all seemingly demonic events happen if I've that were associated directly with them being in my family of something else I won't go into details now some other time perhaps but it may be because Peter was now destined to become a disciple of Jesus and an important one that the devil attacked his household and this spirit may have caused his mother-in-law to be sick I may be reading too much into it I don't mean to be dogmatic but I try to make some sense of the fact that Jesus rebuked the fever which is an uncommon way for him to deal with the sickness and it may be because there was in fact a demon behind it verse 40 now when the Sun was setting all those who had anyone sick with various diseases brought them to him and laid he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them now why was this when the Sun was setting because of the Sabbath this is the same day he'd come out of the synagogue where he'd rebuked the demon possessed delivered the demon possessed man rebuked the demon he had that same day gone into Peter's house and healed his mother-in-law and now is that night the Sabbath after the Sun set which is technically the end of the Sabbath people could carry their sick people could bear burdens and a medical man was allowed to heal if it wasn't the Sabbath so they wanted their people healed they were bringing them to Jesus at the end of the Sabbath and these people were sick with various diseases they brought them to him and he laid his hands on every one of them and

healed them now here's a case where Jesus healed every sick person that was brought to him we sometimes hear Christians say Jesus always healed every sick person that was brought to him that's not quite true it is true in some places sometimes every sick person that came to him was healed but it's wrong to suggest that there were no sick people left sick in the time of Jesus in places that he went we know of course that Lazarus sisters sought help from Jesus when Lazarus is sick and Jesus didn't come and heal him he let him die he did work a different kind of a miracle but the fact remains he let him die didn't heal him they were requesting him to come and heal him and he didn't we have to assume that the lame man that John and Peter healed in Acts chapter 3 who had laid for many decades at the gate that Eastern Gate of the temple that Jesus had walked by that man many times Jesus went in out of that gate frequently in his ministry and yet this man had been there for decades lame and Jesus didn't heal him but Peter and John did Jesus left that for someone else to do it seems clear that it isn't always God's will to heal every sick person immediately Paul himself desired to be healed of his thorn in his flesh and Jesus said no my grace is sufficient for you my my strength is made perfect in your weakness it's not always the case that people get healed by Jesus but in some cases especially at this time when Jesus was giving reason for people to believe he was the Messiah he would heal every person in town that was brought to him and it says in addition that verse 41 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 interesting he didn't let them speak because they knew and said that he was the Christ wasn't that the right thing to say why wouldn't he want them to say that what do you rebuke them for that well Jesus didn't need devils as his promotion team he didn't he didn't want them as his advertisers after all he would later be accused of being in league with them anyway the Pharisees would say he cast out demons by the power of Beelzebub if the demons are the ones identifying him as the Christ wouldn't that give the impression that he's a false Christ the one that the demons are trying to promote he didn't want the demons saying he's the Christ he wasn't even publicly saying he was the Christ much less wanting them to do so he would choose his own witnesses he'd choose his own advertising men he would choose his Apostles to go out and proclaim him but not the demons he wanted the demons just to shut up and go away and they had to when he told him to now notice that the demons were afraid of him as in the case we read first of all this man in the synagogue said what have you to do with us you're going to destroy us sometimes I say are you here to destroy us before the time as if the demons know very well that there is a time for them to be destroyed and they wonder if Jesus has moved that date forward I thought we had more time than this what are you doing here it's interesting that the demons didn't know he was about to arrive he kind of snuck up on him apparently and and when they saw him they were startled afraid thought whoa is it that late already is it time for you to destroy us seems like this is before the time and it was before time he didn't destroy them right then and there the the the Legion in the man of the tombs beg don't send us to the abyss send us into the swine he said okay go in the swine he could have sent them to the abyss it

wasn't time yet for that but they knew that the day would come when he would destroy them and they weren't sure maybe this is the time they trembled around him he never seemed at all ruffled or intimidated or spooked by their weird behavior and a guy he just was he was composed he said you'd be quiet you come out and they had to do that they were the ones afraid and they are the ones afraid of us too except if they unless they can convince us that we're supposed to be afraid of them and I think that's one of the great deceptions of the devil is that Christians are made to feel like they should be afraid of the devil but the devil has some kind of great power over us and we need to really be careful not to stir up his anger but actually he's afraid of us and sure he does get angry he does pester us he does send problems our way but that's because he's afraid of us he's trying to neutralize us he's trying to intimidate us he's trying to keep us from acting within the privileges that we have as Christians to confront and overthrow the power of darkness in people's lives and in in in our society through the preaching of the gospel and so forth now verse 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 but he said to them I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities as well as well because for this purpose I've been sent and he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee that's a summary of what he did from that point on he preached in synagogues it throughout Galilee so this is his Galilean ministry he also at later times preached in Judea and in Korea but this is the region that he was focusing on at this time now it's interesting I there was an evangelist who came to a church in San Jose back in the 70s and he was gonna do a few nights meetings but something like a revival allegedly broke out a lot of people started coming and coming forward and so forth and so he prolonged his meetings in fact he prolonged it for months because this thing that was happening kept happening there was a lot of excitement about his ministry the church was growing people were coming forward at altar calls it was announced on the radio that was big revival going on which I guess it was I didn't go over and see it but I I'm not denying it I just can't affirm it all I know is he just kept he prolonged his engagement as long as there was success now Jesus wasn't motivated that way I'm not saying that a preacher shouldn't be but Jesus wasn't he had great success everyone in town was coming out to benefit from his ministry that night and in the morning they said we're ready for more and he said I'm going somewhere else I've got other venues to reach I've shown you what there is to show you I've given you what I have to give you I'm not gonna just hang around because I'm popular here just because I've got a phenomenal thing going on here I can milk this longer I've got other places to go I've got a job to do in very limited time to do it in now in chapter 5 verses 1 through 11 we have the story of Jesus calling the four fishermen and of course as I said this is in a different order Matthew and Mark both placed this pretty much at the beginning of the Galilean ministry and before the synagogue events that we that we've read about already in the previous chapter here and so Luke either has placed it out of chronological order or the other Gospels have in any case we have the story here and there's more detail in Luke of this story than we find in the others in some cases the detail doesn't agree exactly with what the others say

and for those who are looking for a very strict verbal plenary inspiration of the Gospels it's a bit of a problem because there are a few things recorded that happen slightly differently if you compare the different accounts however the differences are such as would not bother me if I'm just expecting to read three accounts that are true and essentially accurate though somebody's memory of one little detail might be different I've got no problem with that some people would have problems that because their view of the inspiration scripture is such that you know there can't be any thing out of place well there are a few things out of place but that only means that we might have to revise our understanding of what we call the inspiration of scripture I believe in the inspiration scripture but I might have to adjust my thinking to what the Bible actually demonstrates and the point is we have three accounts this really happened and for the most part the details I'm sure are pretty much the same in most of the accounts but some details are remembered apparently a little differently between the different reporters but nothing significant says now so it was as the multitude pressed about him to hear the Word of God that he stood by the lake of Gennesaret and he saw two boats standing on the by the lake but the fishermen had gone out from them and were washing their nets then he got into one of the boats which was Simon's and asked him to put out a little from the land and he sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat now when he had stopped speaking he said to Simon launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch but Simon answered and said to him master we have toiled all night and caught nothing nevertheless at your word I will let down the net and when they had done this they caught a great number of fish and their net was breaking so they signaled to the partners in the other boat to come and help them and they came and filled both boats so that they began to sink when Simon saw it he fell down at Jesus knees saying depart from me for I'm a sinful man O Lord for he and all who are with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken and so also were James and John the sons of Zebedee who were partners with Simon and Jesus said to Simon do not be afraid from now on you will catch men so when they had brought their boats to land they forsook all and followed him that is the Peter James and John and Andrew left equipment right there and just followed Jesus now they owned it later on I mean after all they did take Jesus across the lake several times in the boat in his ministry and after Jesus rose from the dead Peter said I'm going fishing he got out his tackle and his boat again and seven of them went out fishing so they forsook it but they didn't liquidate it obviously they kept it available to Christ frankly as his transportation but they forsook it in the sense that they gave up their business they gave up their activities and changed direction to follow Jesus and whatever they own their boats and so forth became really at his disposal not just their own business and for themselves now we are told this story in much greater detail than we have in Matthew or in Mark because in Matthew and Mark we really just have Jesus walking along the lake and and calling them for example in Matthew chapter 8 I think it is chapter 4 Matthew 4 we begin at verse 18 he says now Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee saw two brothers Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea for their fishmen Luke doesn't mention that Jesus was teaching or that he

went out and sat in one of the two boats there's no mention of two boats and then he preached and that he called them after giving them a miraculous catch of fish it just abbreviates it here and he said to them follow me and I will make you fishers of men then they immediately left their nets and followed him and going on from there he saw two other brothers James the son of Zebedee and John his brother in the boat with Zebedee their father mending their nets and he called them and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him now and look it sounds like Peter James and John and Andrew all left their boats at the same time after all four of them had seen this miracle of the catching the fish this makes it sound like two of them were called then Jesus a little further down you know the seashore ran into the other two and called them that may be in fact what what happened and Luke may be compressing some of this although he gives more detail about some things it is possible for authors to compress the material it to some degree but in Mark chapter 1 verse 16 it says and as he walked by the Sea of Galilee he saw Simon Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea for their fishermen now notice both Matthew and Mark say they were in the boat casting their nets in Luke it says they had left their boats and were clement mending their nets on the shore however this doesn't necessarily contradict because Jesus may well have walked up and seen them while they were still at sea still fishing but after they had finished and come in he actually asked could I you use one of your boats so I mean it's possible for this all to be true it's just that we have to find a way to harmonize it because the difference of the details that are given says then Jesus said to them come after me and I'll make you fishers amen again no reference to this miraculous catch of fish or Peter saying Lord depart from me I'm a sinful man all that is Luke's detail but certainly this doesn't deny that that happened it just skips over it it says and immediately they left their nets and followed him and when he had gone a little farther from there he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother very much like Matthew says and called them separately immediately he called them they left Zebedee and the servants of the boat now Matthew and Mark very clearly say that Jesus was walking along the shore he saw them in their boats fishing he saw Peter and first he called them they followed him then he walked further down he saw James and John called him and followed him now look at how we have it in Luke it says as the multitude pressed about him to hear the Word of God he stood by the lake of Gennesaret interesting Luke is the only one who calls it a lake the Jews call it the Sea of Galilee or the Sea of Tiberias but to a Gentile it's just a little lake it's hits the lake of Gennesaret this is the same body of waters called the Sea of Galilee and the Sea of Tiberias elsewhere but the Jews called it a sea the Jews were not seafaring people they didn't go out on the Mediterranean much a lake was big enough sea for them they didn't they didn't like water very much they were afraid of the ocean but the Sea of Galilee they called a sea a Gentile who wasn't Palestinian living in another part of the world looking at it and that looks like a lake to me that's the lake of Gennesaret but it says there were two boats there and it says the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets now this is no doubt true he had seen them while they're out fishing and now they had come in and he'd been preaching there on

the shore the whole time and now their boat was at shore and the fish nets were not in it and so forth so there was some room for him to sit in it and he asked Simon to put out a little from the land and he sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat this is an ingenious device and we read of Jesus doing it on other occasions too this is the first time he did it but it apparently worked out real well so he did it on other occasions when the crowd is pressing the people in back are trying to get closer they're bumping the people in front of them who bumped the people in front of them like dominoes the people in the front are getting closer and closer and Jesus is standing on the edge of the water and people are practically in his face if something hasn't done they'll push him off into the water so I know what I'll do I'll set out a little ways in a boat they can't get that close they can get right down to the shore but they can't touch me they can't push me in the water I'm safe I can sit here and there'd be a natural amphitheater effect because water is a good medium for sound to travel over we had our first school on a lake in Bandon Oregon and on the other side of the lake was some sand dunes stuff and there were often people you know out on the sand dunes and playing in the water and so forth quite a distance from our school but we were on the other bank of the lake and and we could hear those people as if they were right outside our window and there's there across the lake from us and you know the sound carries over water really well and when you got a multitude to talk to and you don't have amplification this this arrangement Jesus made actually provided for some almost amplification of his voice he could be heard much better and people couldn't crowd him if he's out there in the water so that was kind of an ingenious solution to a problem of being overcrowded so he sat down and taught from the boat now when he had stopped speaking apparently I don't know if this is after the crowds left because he stopped speaking they had nothing to stay around for or maybe they're still mulling around on the shore but Jesus turned his attention from the crowds to Peter and said okay I rented your boat I'll pay you for it now that's not really what he said but that's what it turned out to be I'm gonna I'm gonna give you a reward for letting me use your boat he says put your net down and you'll get a catch of fish now Simon was doubtful and this may mean that the miracles of the previous chapter had not happened yet remember the order is reversed here from Matthew Peter may not have ever seen Jesus work a miracle before so he just thought you know Jesus I think I'm the fisherman here I know I know about fishing I know they're not biting today this is not the day for fishing we've been fishing all night and and you know haven't caught anything and if you can't catch him at night you're not be able to catch him in the daytime I appreciate your well good intentions Jesus but I think you're probably wrong about this but if you insist at your word I'll go ahead and do it and so he did put the net in and of course they got a huge number of fish the number of fish is not given here but there is another time when Jesus gave them a miraculous catch of fish after the resurrection it's recorded in John chapter 21 and actually the actual number of fish is mentioned in that case here we're just told there's a huge amount of fish so that the nets were breaking the boats were sinking when they pulled them in and because of this Simon was embarrassed and saw himself as really a sinful man now he might have been



thinking of sins in his life that we don't know about or he might have been thinking well it was sinful of me to challenge you Jesus when you said to do it I talked like you didn't know what you're talking about boy I'm the one who didn't know I'm a sinful man shame on me he may have even been grumbling as he put the nets over you know I'm tired we've been fishing all night this guy says throw the nets over again well accommodate him but boy is this a bad use of our time you know we don't know what was going on that Peter was particularly convicted about but he said depart from me Lord I'm a sinful man it's interesting Jesus didn't depart from him Jesus didn't Peter didn't say Lord come into my heart he said depart from me go away from me and Jesus didn't he came and stayed and said listen I've got I've got work for you to do this sinful business you know that's not going to be a problem here we got sinners among us there's a lot of sinners around here I can still use you and Jesus said from now on he said don't be afraid from now on you'll catch men now Matthew and Mark both use the phrase fishers of men follow me and I'll make you fishers of men or fishermen of men who catch men I think this is interesting that Jesus used this expression with them it shows how Jesus speaks in terms they can relate to because he never he never called anyone else to be fishers of men except people who are fishers of fish they were fishers and so he said yeah you know how to fish if he'd said I'm gonna make you a great preacher and church leader they're gonna be great ecclesiastical official in order of the events of a great religious movement Peter was that way I just told you I'm a sinful man I think you're at the right now I don't know a thing about leading movements I don't know a thing about this kind of stuff what do you mean calling me to be a missionary I'm a fisherman instead of saying follow me I'll make you a missionary an apostle a church leader he said I'll make you a fisherman of men you know about fishing that's not intimidating right well you're just gonna be catching men instead of fish so basically you know the ropes and I'm gonna tell you how to transfer what you know about fishing to catch men instead he could have been much more it would have been much more intimidating I think to Peter if Jesus said I'm gonna make you an apostle or a preacher or a church leader which is what Jesus really had in mind but he used the expression Fishermen you know a lot of times when God calls people into certain kinds of ministries he calls them out of backgrounds that are some kind of secular field like David was a shepherd Moses was a shepherd and yet they were called to shepherd the people of Israel they were called to be leaders of a flock God's flock but he called them from shepherding sheep and made them shepherd people he took people who caught fish and made them catch men that is he he gave them some kind of description of job of their ministry that it resembles what their job description is that they were familiar with I I've mentioned before but maybe not here that there were a couple of other men and myself in Santa Cruz in the 70s who were all in ministry separately and we knew each other we thought about joining our three ministries combining them into a single ministry it didn't happen because of some conflict but the but the interesting thing is we were praying about that together for a while should we join our ministries and have sort of a ministry team here and it was interesting when I noticed that one of them was a concrete mason and he was an

evangelist and one of them was an auto mechanic and he was a teacher and I myself was a window washer that's what I did for a living and I was a teacher also I thought well it's kind of interesting because Danny the the concrete mason he lays foundations for a living and he's also his mysteries entirely evangelistic he doesn't build on foundations he lays foundations like Paul said he did when he came to Corinth I laid the foundation someone else builds on it he would evangelize somebody and that's laying the foundation but then Dale the other teacher he was a mechanic he liked to make things works he was kind of a troubleshooting kind of guy his teaching ministry was trying to you know correct things that were wrong and make them work right and in the church and in people's lives his ministry of teaching was kind of focused on that kind of a fix-it kind of a mentality and I was a window washer and my teaching at that time was not as much practical as it was trying to give people insight into you know biblical concepts and biblical theology and so forth I'm much more interested in practical teaching now than I was then this is back in the 70s and I was more fascinated with theological questions that were I was sorting through and I but to clean windows is to enhance people's vision and and that's really what my ministry was like I thought I noticed this when we're praying together I thought well the three of us we do different things for a living but we all have ministries but our ministries kind of resemble the things we do for a living Danny lays foundations and he's evangelist Dale's a auto mechanic and he's kind of a practical teacher who tries to teach people how to how to make their life work how to make the church work and I was more interested in conceptual you know clearing up conceptual biblical things and like I and I was Washington I just thought was really coincidental or interesting that each of us have been separately called to some different kind of ministry really but it kind of resembled in some way what we were doing secularly and likewise David Moses they were shepherds of sheep and God called them to be shepherds of Israel Peter was a fisherman a fish and God called him to be a fisher of men and makes me wonder sometimes when God calls people if he has first prepared them earlier than he called them by putting them in some kind of profession they may not have known it was him doing it but they've taken a they've been involved in some kind of profession in the world which has prepared them or prefigured what God is going to do use them for in ministry that certainly was the case with Peter and the fishermen and I like to say there are some other cases I know of where that is true I don't know how universal that would be but we're out of time now so we'll close here and we'll pick up the rest of chapter 5 next time