**Luke 4:31-44**

And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, **32** and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. **33** And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, **34** “Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are— the Holy One of God.” **35** But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. **36** And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!” **37** And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region. **38**  And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon’s house. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. **39** And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them. **40** Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who 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, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ. **42**  And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, **43** but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.” **44** And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

**“His Word Of Love With Authority”**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. If God creates with order in His creation, then we must also confess this order comes from God’s authority. He has even placed such authority in creation as an act and sign of His love. Of course, most today equate love and authority on opposite ends of the spectrum. Love is more an emotion, positive experience, or a personal preference, while authority is one of those unhappy things we have to deal with in life. The outcome of such a perspective has hurt our society, families, and churches greatly. Outright defiance and disrespect goes out to teachers, police officers, parents and anyone suspect with authority.

If loving people in positions of authority is hard, what about God who by His creating love has all authority over us? Our Lutheran Fathers understood this problem well stating, “The law always accuses us, it always shows that God is wrathful. We cannot love God until we have grasped his mercy by faith. Only then does he become an object that can be loved” (Tappert 125:129). Like a trickling river that suddenly swells from a flash flood, the love of God has overflown with mercy in Jesus Christ. His word possessed authority and it produced a flood of signs and miracles as we hear in our Gospel reading. Jesus brings love that has all authority and power to those who also must speak and act with love in their life.

This is love with an authority by Jesus to deliver from evil. The people back then were not much different from us. They had plenty of reservations about authority. Roman leaders could not be trusted and religious leaders gave their opinions. When Jesus came to Capernaum, He came by His own right as the Savior. They were shocked, “for his word possessed authority.” Unlike government dealing with things on the surface, Jesus could rebuke the darkest evils in life as with the demon-possessed man. He both silenced and cast out what harmed him. Exercising authority to Jesus was an exercise of love against the tyranny of Satan. His love delivered from the evils of life that threaten us.

With the breakdown of authority, we live in a time when truth is up for grabs. Most leave it up to personal choice, rather than an objective standard. The result is that few feel any need of deliverance, especially from anyone claiming authority. Most things are thus left open without any final answers for dangers against life. The question begging to be asked today is, “What is evil?” Just because the demons can put on a happy face or sin comes in a form of love, does not make it any less a prison. Authorities can be manipulated, shamed, abused, and God’s Word has felt the brunt of it. However, like that man at the synagogue, Jesus comes to silence sin and cast it out. His Word has authority to deliver us from evil so that forgiveness reigns and we are free in Him.

If Jesus is able to demolish evil, His love has power to restore what is good. This kind of good is what came upon Peter’s mother-in-law who was ill. The disciples were not afraid to appeal to Jesus for help. He stood over her and rebuked the illness with power to give life back to her. This life responded to His healing hand for, “immediately she rose and began to serve them.” By her own right, she was better off dead, but by every right of Christ, she was better off with Him. His authority was not to abuse power over her, but to put it to good use. To be under Jesus was for sinners to receive life in His Name. Life that by His cross He poured out later with all healing so none would be without Him.

God made authority to build up the good, but few celebrate that kind of life for today. The ideal is to reject authority as a hindrance to freedom and my way of life. Since we cannot come to define evil and demolish it, the same fate awaits us over what is good. Yet, Jesus has the power to restore life to sinners. Without Him they are helpless, self-destructive, broken, and cut off in every way. This healing hand of Jesus came upon us by the waters of baptism into His name. It is love powerful enough to touch every part of our life so nothing goes unnoticed. Whatever shame, this Savior makes you whole again to serve Him. Whatever guilt, a powerful Word keeps saying, “I forgive you all your sins.” Whatever suffering, Jesus promises you refuge in Him that stands over your life for all good.

Since Jesus’ love has all authority and power, His passion is to serve others. Plenty saw it as Capernaum with casting out demons and miraculous healings. Yet, He could not stop there just to please a few. Jesus said, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.” Unlike other authorities, Jesus has no boundaries. His power is without limit. He never runs on empty. It is for this purpose that he went to the cross. His suffering and death displayed the right kind of authority to be the Savior of a sinful world. His resurrection proved He is the Lord with all power over sin, death, and the Devil. The Good News is that Jesus has not given up His passion to serve even us.

Unlike so many who reject authority only to end up relying on self and nothing else. Jesus speaks with love by His Word and Sacrament to rely on Him. This authority has passion to save us from our sin by a Word saying not maybe or kind of but, “You are forgiven.” This power comes with Christ present to eat and drink of His kingdom. This love of Christ never ends and cannot fail. His way of the cross is an authority that lets us serve others. It is a passion to speak and act with love. This goes double for the least and weakest like the disabled, infirm, elderly, and unborn. God gave us authority to protect against evil and nurture what is good.

Many today reject both the authority of God and man. What remains is uncertainty, fear, and lack of stability. Yet, Christ continues by His love to call all to Him. The word of His cross is how He reigns over nations and kingdoms. He comes to cast out the darkness of evil. He has the power to restore what is good. We need not reject the authority of Jesus, since all comfort and certainty for life rests in Him. Before His death Jesus prayed for those under Him in His Church. He said to the Father, “They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world” (John 17:16-18). Jesus brings love that has all authority and power to those who also must speak and act with love in their life. Amen. The peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.