



WEEKLY STUDY

WEEK 3

This week Pastor Jacob taught on a short passage of scripture in which Luke focused on the authority of Jesus over evil. In Luke 4, we have seen Jesus walk through temptation by the devil and then announce himself to be the Messiah. He clearly had a target on his back and was watched closely by people and demons alike. As he began to heal people of their physical illness, some who were possessed by evil spirits came to him as well. Jesus demonstrated authority over both kinds of conditions. The topic of demons may seem foreign to you, but it was not foreign to Jesus. He has authority over conditions that we understand pretty well, and those that we know nothing about. May his power over the dark forces of evil become evident in your life this week as his word guides you into the light of life.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: LUKE 4.31-37 (ESV)

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.

- It is striking how quickly the unclean demon speaks to Jesus. The man with the spirit of an unclean demon was almost a secondary character. Jesus takes the demon head-on by demanding that he be silent and leave the man alone. We tend to talk about people who are experiencing the manifestation of evil in their lives, bodies, minds and relationships as being *possessed*. In this passage, that same word is used to express the authority of Jesus' word. His word possessed authority. His authority is a direct affront to the demons that grab hold of us. **Is there a force of darkness that seems to have authority over you or someone you love? Holding that situation in your heart, close your eyes and hear Jesus saying, "Be silent and leave this one alone!"**
- *Lord God, in the name of Jesus Christ, I speak against the forces of evil that are at work in this world. Send them away and restore us. Amen.*

TUESDAY: LUKE 4.38-41 (ESV)

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.

- Word of Jesus' authority over illness and demons spread quickly. When someone is able to meet you in your greatest need, your desperation will often carry you wherever you need to go. Notice that sickness and demons are not necessarily the same thing but they are treated side by side. How did Jesus know the difference? It seems that the demons announced themselves by crying out to Jesus and declaring that he was the Son of God. **Why would Jesus want them to keep that proclamation silent? Have you ever witnessed someone profess Jesus as the Son of God, but fail to let that knowledge change them?**
- *Jesus, I bring to you those who are sick. Bring your healing to those who are ill and deliverance from evil to those who are dealing with dark spirits. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: MATTHEW 8.28-29

When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. ²⁹ "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"

- Two men were causing a disruption around the tombs. Their violence was keeping anyone from coming near, and so the men were left to deal with their demons all alone. Surely that was a motivating factor when the men came out to greet Jesus. They were possessed by demons and therefore it could have been difficult to determine who was greeting Jesus. But Jesus heard them speak, and he seemed to know instantly what he was dealing with. **Did he see the men themselves or just the demons? Have you ever encountered a person or situation that seemed to be full of evil, like you were dealing with something much deeper than what appeared on the surface?**
- *God, guard me from evil spirits that surely lurk in the world around me. May your Spirit fill up any void that could create room for the powers of darkness. Amen.*

THURSDAY: MATTHEW 10.1

Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

- This was a major turning point in the lives of those who were following Jesus on this earth. The authority that was recognized by demons themselves was now given to Jesus' disciples. They had the power to heal and drive out impure spirits! **Have you ever been entrusted with a gift that seemed to be too much for you to handle? Why is it significant that Jesus gave this authority to his disciples? What does it mean for us today?**
- *God, I want to be a faithful disciple who reveals your ability to bring healing and freedom from evil. Use me as you will. Amen.*

FRIDAY: JAMES 2.14-19

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸ *But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."*

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

- James was airing out a common argument that he had heard in the early days of the church. The argument was that it is enough to simply be a good person or to simply hold a belief in God. He believed that the two must go hand in hand. One without the other leads to death. Faith and works are what distinguish followers of Jesus from the religious authorities of the day and from demons themselves. Later, in James 4.7 we read *Resist the devil and he will flee from you.* James is putting religious people and demons in the same category, but the good news is that the devil can be resisted in Jesus' name. **Are there situations that you or your loved ones are facing that are in need of the power and authority of Jesus' word?**
- *God, I call on the name of Jesus to cast out the evil in my life and world around me. Forgive me for attempting to fight it with my own power. I call on Jesus. Amen.*

SATURDAY: PSALM 124

*If the Lord had not been on our side—
let Israel say—*

² *if the Lord had not been on our side
when people attacked us,*

³ *they would have swallowed us alive
when their anger flared against us;*

⁴ *the flood would have engulfed us,
the torrent would have swept over us,*

⁵ *the raging waters
would have swept us away.*

⁶ *Praise be to the Lord,
who has not let us be torn by their teeth.*

⁷ *We have escaped like a bird*

*from the fowler's snare;
the snare has been broken,
and we have escaped.*

⁸ *Our help is in the name of the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.*

- The Psalms are filled with language about enemies that were coming up against the author. David often cited the people who were out to get him and asked God to help him escape. Clearly, these cries touch on the spiritual realm as well, they tend to go hand in hand. This Psalm is a Psalm of Ascent that was spoken aloud as the pilgrims were heading towards Jerusalem and the temple mount. As they ascended, they were crying out for supernatural help from God. **What words or songs connect with you when you feel under attack? How do you bring them before God?**
- *Almighty God, you are on my side even when I'm not paying attention. I'm paying attention now. Thank you for saving my life! Amen.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Grab your Bible and read Matthew 8.28-34 (NIV). We studied the first two verses in Wednesday's reading. The rest of the story involves a herd of pigs jumping to their death as the demons are called out of the men and into the animals. As you read, consider these questions:

- Where do you see Jesus' authority on display in this account?
- How did the demons respond to Jesus?
- What role did the pigs play in this story?
- How did the witnesses respond?
- Why do you think the whole town was eager to get rid of Jesus?
- What does this story say about our response to evil in the world today?

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³⁰ *Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding.³¹ The demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs."*

³² *He said to them, "Go!" So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water.³³ Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men.³⁴ Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region. MATTHEW 8.28-34 (NIV)*