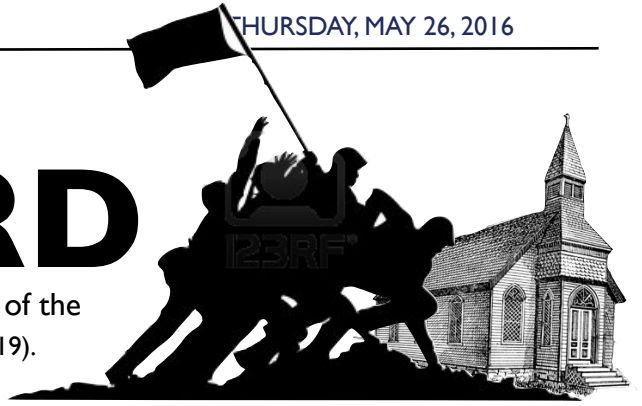


Lifting Up The STANDARD

“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:19).



Challenging And Encouraging God's Remnant To Remain Faithful

Lessons From Luke Chapter Three And Chapter Four

God Used Who He Wanted To Use

In the first verse of Luke Chapter three, God focuses on some political leaders by the names of Caesar, Pilate, Herod and Philip. In verse two, He refers to two religious leaders, namely, Annas and Caiaphas. Then, out in the wilderness, we have God's leader. We read in verse two that *“the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.”*

As we begin this chapter, we have the political leaders, and some religious leaders going thought the motions of what they thought was important. Actually, they were God's puppets in both areas who were going through the motions.

God Is Still Using Who He Wanted To Use

The Bible says that as we come to the end of the age, we are going to be entering into what is called The Tribulation period, and today we have political leaders and we have religious leaders that don't realize they're being used of God, as the Bible says they would be, to usher in this period of time and The Tribulation period that lies ahead.

To understand the Word of God, it is extremely important that we look to Second Timothy 2:15, which was a message actually to the pastor because he was the one who is to teach the people, and to the pastor it says, *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”* Now, there is an application there for every Christian in the world, obviously, but it's written to the pastor

If we look at John the Baptist and we look at God's purpose, John was being used 2,000 years ago for God's purpose concerning Israel.

It is God's will today and for the last 2,000 years for pastors to be used for the purposes concerning the local church age, and it is very important when studying any portion of Scripture to keep the Scripture in context.

For example, in Luke Chapter 3:3, it says, *“And he”*—John the Baptist—*“came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”* That is important. It's not saying anything here that John is talking about anybody getting saved. He's not preaching about salvation; he's preaching about Jewish baptism in the Old Testament age, and he's preaching about the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

If we drag John's baptism into our New Testament times or into our local church period that we are in now, baptism brings salvation, but that's not the case. We need to understand that John's baptism and John's message was strictly for the nation of Israel. For instance, in verse seven of this chapter, it says, *“Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him...”*

They came forth to be baptized. They didn't come forth to get saved. In Luke Chapter 3:16 we read, *“John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water...”* In verse twenty-one we read, *“Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also was baptized...”* Again, this baptism has nothing in common with local church baptism.

“Knowing Only The Baptism of John”

In Acts Chapter 18:4, we read, *“And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.”*

The context of this portion of Scripture has to do with the local church age.

What happened? Verse twenty-five says, *“This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord”*—We read he knew—*“only the baptism of John.”* Verse 26 says, *“And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.”*

Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos aside and explained to him the difference between local church baptism and the baptism of John. That phrase *“the baptism of John”* appears in the New Testament six times and then once it refers to *“John's baptism.”* Again, it had nothing to do with local church baptism.

“The Baptism of Repentance”

Again, Luke 3:3, says that John *“came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”* Again, this baptism had nothing to do with local church doctrine. Verse seven plainly says they came forth to be baptized of him. Nothing is mentioned of them being saved. This baptism had nothing in common with local church baptism.

“Israel’s Ceremonial Washings”

In the Old Testament, there were many ceremonial washings that were part of the Old Testament law:

- **Leviticus 14:9**, *“...he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean.”*
- **Leviticus 15:13**, *“...bathe his flesh in running water, and it shall be clean.”*
- **Leviticus 17:15**, *“...he shall...bathe himself in water.”*
- **Leviticus 16:24**, *“And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place...”*
- **Leviticus 16:28**, *“...bathe his flesh in water...”*
- **Numbers 19:19**, *“...he shall...bathe himself in water, and shall be clean...”*
- **Isaiah 1:16**, *“Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings...”*

All of this was under the nation of Israel's Old Testament ceremonial washings. **The Book of Hebrews is written to tell the Jews of that age that all of this had ended.** The way Old Testament things were done, and we read in Hebrews 9:6, and then also in verse ten, *“Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. Which stood only in meats and drinks, and*

divers (many) washings and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.” This word *“washings”* in Hebrews Chapter nine is the same Greek word that we find translated *“baptisms”* in Hebrews Chapter 6:2.

So, once again, it is extremely important as we study any portion of Scripture to be sure we understand the interpretation, then we can make some applications. These things are written for our admonition. The Bible is not just a history book.

As we get into Chapter four, we see a confrontation with the Devil.

We read in verse one, *“And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.”* This is an interesting little verse. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into this area, and the Bible says that everything that Jesus did He did under the power of the Holy Spirit. Now He was going to have a confrontation with the Devil, and it says in verses 2 through 13:

2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

11 And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 *And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*
 13 *And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.*

Why?

We could ask ourselves, Why did this even happen? Why was Jesus led of the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil? The answer is found in First Corinthians 10:11. It says, *“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”*

Jesus was out there in the wilderness, and First Corinthians 15:45 explains the first Adam and the second Adam. Verse forty-five says, *“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam”—referring to Christ—“was made a quickening spirit.”* We read in verse forty-seven, *“The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.”*

The difference between the first Adam and the second Adam or Christ is the subject of sin. Jesus said in John 8:46, *“Which of you convinceth me of sin?”* I can't say that, and nobody else can say that, but Jesus could say it. He never sinned.

Hebrews 4:15 says that Jesus *“was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”* The first Adam sinned, and we're in this mess we're in today as a result of that. We have hope today because of Christ, referred to here as the last Adam. Jesus said, *“Which of you convinceth me of sin?”* He *“was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”*

The purpose of this series is to learn some lessons from the Book of Luke, and we want to learn some lessons on how we can handle the temptations that Satan would throw our way, and we can learn a lot from this portion of Scripture.

If we go back into Genesis chapter three, we can see how the Devil worked there and how he worked exactly the same when he was tempting Jesus as he did when he was tempting the first Adam.

We read in Genesis Chapter 3:1, *“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”*

The first thing Satan did was put a question mark where God put a period. God said, *“Ye shall not eat.”* Satan is going to question the Word of God.

Verse 2-3, *“And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.”*

God did not say anything about touching it, and God did not say, *“lest ye die.”* In Chapter 2:17, God said, *“thou shalt surely die.”* We can quickly get into trouble by misquoting the Word of God.

Verse 4 says, *“And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die...”* Well, just look at Genesis Chapter 5—He died and he died and he died over and over again. *“Ye shall not surely die,”* the Devil said, *“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”*

Now, notice Genesis 3:6: *“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”*

She saw that it was good for food—that's the body—and that **it was pleasant to the eyes**—the emotional nature of the soul—and to be desired to **make one wise**—that takes us to the seat of worship. They that worship God must worship God in the spirit.

The Same Tactic”

So the Devil attacked Eve in the area of the body, the soul (which is the self-life—the mind, the will, and the emotions), and the spirit. When we look in Luke Chapter four, we see he used exactly the same program. It says in Luke Chapter 4:3-4, *“And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.”*

The first attack was concerning the body. Jesus was fasting for forty days; He was hungry, and the Devil said, *“Well, just make those stones into bread.”* How did Jesus handle that? Jesus said, *“It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.”* If we're going to handle Satan, the only way that we can handle him is by quoting the Word of God.

That is why it's so important to have Scriptures memorized in any given situation, so that when we're under attack, we know how to quote the Word of God—and not to misquote it as did Eve.

Secondly, the Devil said in Chapter 4:7, *“If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.”* And here we have an attack in the area of the spirit. *“They that worship me must worship me in spirit and in truth,”* What did Jesus do here? The same thing. Verse eight, *“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”* Once again, Jesus defeated the Devil by quoting Scripture.

The third attack was on the soul—the mind, the will, and the emotions—and we read here in Luke Chapter 4:9, that Satan said, *“If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence,”* and then in verse ten, Satan quoted Scripture. The Devil is not against using his henchmen today to quote Scripture if they can get you off track.

In verse twelve we have Jesus' answer. He said, *“Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”* In every situation we find the Devil was defeated because the Lord quoted Scripture against him. Here we have a lesson for us here in the Book of Luke on how to defeat the Devil when he tries to tempt us.

Over One Year

Luke 4:14-15 says, *“And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.”* Jesus was in the area of Galilee, which Luke mentions just in this one verse, verse fourteen. He doesn't tell us, but verses fourteen and fifteen actually cover a period of over a year.

Then we read in verse sixteen that Jesus *“came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.”*

Jesus had been in the synagogues in Galilee, and there the fame of Him went throughout all the region and the

people glorified Him. Now He is back home, and He went to the synagogue where He had been brought up.

It was his custom to go there with Joseph and His mother when He was a little boy, when He was nine years old, when He was sixteen years old, and indeed when He was twenty-eight years old right up until He was about thirty years of age.

This Time Jesus Took Charge

Every Sabbath day Jesus would have gone to the synagogue, but this time He took charge. This time was different. Probably prior to this, they sat in the back. A lot of people were still whispering about whether Mary had had a baby out of wedlock, and some were probably wondering if Jesus should even be allowed in that synagogue. Well, Jesus comes back, and this time He *“stood up for to read.”*

Now He is involved in His purpose for being here. We read in verses 17-19, *“And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”*

In verses 20-22 we read, *“And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?”*

No, this is not *“Joseph's son.”* This is the Son of God. We read in verse sixteen that Jesus had gone into the synagogue every Sabbath for years and years. Isn't this the one who came with Joseph and Mary, and isn't this Joseph's son?

In verse nineteen Jesus finished quoting the Scripture, where it says, *“To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”* And then He closed the book, gave it back to the minister, and sat down. But He left something out.

He was quoting directly from Isaiah Chapter 61:, where it says, "*To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.*"

A Comma Representing Two-Thousand Years

When Jesus quoted it, He quoted only half of that line. He said, "*To preach* [proclaim] *the acceptable year of the Lord,*" and then He sat down. In Isaiah 61:2, where we read "*the acceptable year of the LORD,*" there is a comma, and that comma represents 2,000 years of local church history.

The Bible says in Second Thessalonians 1:8 that Christ will come back "*taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" He's coming back. Now, they wanted their Messiah to include this verse so that He would take vengeance against the Romans and those who were keeping them in bondage at that time. Jesus didn't quote that last part because that last part was not for them.

Then in Luke 4: 21, we read, "*And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*" We are given only the introduction to His message. We are not told everything that Jesus preached here, but this is the first line. He said, "*This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*" Verses 22 and 23 in Chapter 4 says, "*And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.*"

Again, as we mentioned earlier, Jesus had been in Galilee about a year, maybe as much as a year and a half. He did all kinds of miracles up there, and no doubt they had heard about it. So He says, I know what you're thinking. "*Physician heal thyself.*" That was a phrase that was used that really meant, "*Prove yourself.*" You know, if you want to buy some hair restorer, you don't buy it from bald men. If you want to go to a doctor, you don't go to one who's sick all the time. Prove yourself. This is what this is talking about, "*Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.*"

Verse 24, "*And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.*" They're saying, "*Is not this Joseph's son?*" Jesus said in verse 25,-26, "*But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias [Elijah], when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.*"

That woman was a Gentile, and she was a widow. The Jews didn't hold their women in the highest respect, especially widows and especially Gentiles. Then Jesus said you remember that Elijah didn't go to any of you Jewish people. He went only to that Gentile woman.

And then He said in verse 27, "*And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus [Elisha] the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.*" **Who is Naaman the Syrian? He was an enemy. He was a Gentile.** So Jesus is saying, "*If you look back into church history, fellows, you'll see that God didn't bother with you. He went to the Gentiles.*"

And then we read in verses 28 through 30, "*And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way.*"

We read in verse twenty-three that they're thinking, "*Whatsoever He did in Capernaum*"—all those miracles — "*do one here.*" Well, here's a miracle. All of a sudden they couldn't find Him. He just disappeared.

Can you imagine them all looking around, "Where is He? Where is He?" I love reading the Bible, don't you? It simply says, "*But he passing through the midst of them went his way,*" and verse thirty-one says, "*And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.*"

We read in Luke 4, beginning in verse thirty, "*But he passing through the midst of them went his way, And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.*"

Why did He go to Capernaum? Very simple. Matthew 4:14-16 says, ***“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias [Isaiah] the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.”***

Everything that is happening is happening according to the Old Testament prophecies that were made hundreds of years before they happened. The prophecy is Isaiah 9:2 we read, ***“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.”*** Here we are fulfilling prophecy.

Jesus went to Capernaum because it was prophesied in the Old Testament that He would. Capernaum was a very interesting little town, actually just a little fishing village, and from this little village came Peter and James and Andrew and John and Matthew. They all lived there.

More miracles were performed in this little outlet, this little village than anywhere else when Jesus was here. In Luke 4:31, we have the story of the man who was demon possessed in the synagogue. Then in Luke 4:38, Peter's mother-in-law was healed, and in Luke 5:18 the man with the palsy was healed. Four men, you remember, let him down in front of Jesus through the roof on a bed. And then in Luke 6:6, we saw a man with a withered hand in the synagogue, and in Luke 7:1-10, the centurion's servant was healed. And then if we look in the other gospels, the nobleman's son was healed and Jesus walked on the water. This is the place where Peter found a fish that had a coin in its mouth so they could pay their taxes.

Jesus made his headquarters here after they tried to kill Him back in His home town.

In Luke Chapter 10:15, Jesus said, ***“And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.”*** That word "hell" has been translated "grave" in First Corinthians 15:55. It just means they're going to be destroyed, they're not going to be around anymore. It's interesting that over a period of years, Capernaum had three earthquakes, and it was absolutely, completely destroyed. There's nothing there now except a place that has been rebuilt to represent Peter's house, and they've built a big building over the top of that. And then they've kind of half built a synagogue, probably on the foundation of the

synagogue where Jesus was. But today there's nothing there. Whatever they could do to make some money with tourism they've rebuilt. But Jesus said, *You've had a lot of miracles here and you haven't paid attention.* There's a price tag on that. To whom much is given, much is required, and the same thing is true today.

It says in verses 32-34, ***“And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power. And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.”***

All of a sudden this man starts yelling out in the middle of the meeting. Isn't it interesting that the demons knew who Jesus was but the Pharisees didn't? In verses 35 and 36 it says, ***“And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.”***

Well, everybody went home from their little meeting that day and had a lot to talk about. It wasn't just an ordinary meeting. Why? Because Jesus showed up. We wouldn't be just having services as usual in our Baptist churches today if Jesus were to show up. We're just kind of going through the motions. We need to start getting serious about that problem.

In verses 37-38 it says, ***“And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about. And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house...”*** Now, we said Simon —that's Peter—lived there in that little town, and we read that ***“Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.”***

We see these healing lines today where somebody gets into their Mercedes Benz and drives to the airport and flies their jet off to go through some nonsense that they call healing and then get in their Mercedes and go back to the airport and fly home again with all the money in their pocket. That's not what was going on here—nothing like that at all. Today there are all kinds of charlatans coming in the name of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said in Matthew twenty-four that would happen.

In verses 40 and 41 it says, *“Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers [many] diseases brought them unto him [Jesus] and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God”*—once again, the devils knew who Jesus was—*“And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.”* Jesus said, *“I don't want any testimonies from these demons. Keep your mouth shut.”*

Verse 42, *“And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them. (That's not what happened in Nazareth). And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent. And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.”* There were hundreds of synagogues in these little villages in Galilee.

I really don't want to talk about it, but I need to talk about this subject of demons. What are they? Jude tells us that they are the angels which kept not their first estate, and Ephesians 6:11-13 says, *“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places [in the heavenlies]. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”*

We're living in an evil day. We're living in a day when there is a lot of demon possession and certainly a lot of demon influence, and if you're going to stand against it, you better get serious about Ephesians chapter six and put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in this evil day.

The Bible talks about demon possession. In our account in Luke Chapter 4:33-34, it says, *“And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.”*

Then when we get down a little further, we read in verse forty-one of Luke Chapter four that the devils or the demons came out of many, crying out and saying, *“Thou art Christ the Son of God,”* and Jesus rebuked them and told them not to speak.

To be demon possessed is to have demons entirely in control. There's also the case where we have demon influence, which is different from demon possession. Both the unsaved and the saved can be influenced by demons, but I do not believe it is possible for a Christian to be possessed by a demon. The Bible says that greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world (First John 4:4).

The Holy Spirit lives within Christians, and God is not going to allow the Holy Spirit and demons to be in us at the same time.

In Second Corinthians Chapter 11:3, Paul said, *“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”* The word *“beguiled”* has been translated *“deceived”* four times. The devil can deceive a Christian. The devil can influence a Christian, and he's influencing lots of them today.

We're trying to look at lessons from Luke that will help us today. We don't want to just look at a history story and what happened in Capernaum 2,000 years ago or what happened in Nazareth. How does this apply today? The Bible says these things happened unto them, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.

One thing we see in Luke Chapter 4 is priorities. In verse 42 it says, *“And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place...”* Jesus got alone with God. This was following a very, very busy Sabbath. His priority was not the crowds; His priority was His communion with His Father, and we see that over and over again in the three and a half years that Jesus was here in His ministry in this world. We also need to make communion with our Lord a priority. We need to get into the Word of God and pray. The Word of God is God speaking to us. Prayer is us speaking to God. Fellowship with the Father needs to be a priority in our lives. Jesus gave us that example. Luke 6:12 says, *“And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.”*

How are we spending our time? The typical life span of a 70-year-old person goes like this:

- We sleep 23 years;
- We work sixteen years;
- We watch TV eight years;

- We eat six years;
- We travel for six years;
- We have leisure for four and a half years;
- Some kind of illness affects us for four years of our life; And then we spend two years getting dressed.

Now, some of that can't be changed. We have to go to work. The boss says, "*This is how many hours you work if you're going work on this job.*" We can't change that, but the rest of it we can change, like how much time we sleep. Jesus prayed all night. He didn't sleep that night. Watching TV? Eight years of your life you're going to watch television? How in the world will we stand before God and tell Him we didn't have time to do the things He wanted us to do when we spent eight years of our life watching TV? We can change many of these things. The point is, what is our priority? Is our priority fellowship with the Lord? If it's not, we need to change our priorities.

Back in Luke Chapter 4 we have priorities, but we also see His preaching. Jesus said in verses 42 - 44, "*And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them. And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent. And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.*"

In Luke 2:49 He said, "*...I must be about my Father's business*"; in Luke 4:43, He said, "*I must preach...*"; in Luke 13, verse 33, He said, "*Nevertheless I must walk...*" In Luke 19:5, "*Zacchaeus,*" He said, "*I must abide at thy house.*" In John 9:4 He said, "*I must work the works of him that sent me...*"; and then in John Chapter 10:16, He said, "*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice...*"

So Jesus said in verse 43 of Luke Chapter 4, "*I must preach...*" and in verse 44 we read, "*And He preached...*" So we have His priorities, that is, His communion with God. We have His preaching. Jesus came into the world to preach—and you didn't have to go home and wonder what He said. We should have more of that kind of preaching today where you don't have to go home and guess what the preacher meant. You don't have to guess what John the Baptist meant. You don't have to guess what Paul the apostle meant. Read the book of First and Second Peter. You don't

need to guess what Peter is saying, and you don't need to guess what Jesus was saying.

Then we look at His purpose. The Lord knew what His purpose was in being here. The question is this: Do you know your God-given purpose?

Do you know why you're here? You're not here by accident. You're in this world for one reason, and that reason is that you should glorify God, and what we need to do is figure out how we can do that and where we can do that. You will not find real satisfaction in this world until you find what God's purpose for your life is and then get involved in doing it.

Fighting Discouragement In The Small Church



Years ago, I read that those who speak in public meetings should not speak about things they have not earned the right to talk about. If that is true, I can honestly say I have earned the right to speak about fighting discouragement in the small church.

I am presently pastoring a small church that is continually getting smaller, which can be very discouraging; however, no one can get me discouraged unless I allow it.

Discouragement is the devil's greatest tool. We read in Numbers 21:4, "*The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.*" The pastor and his people who do not fight discouragement will get discouraged "*because of the way.*"

For the first of a five part on line broadcast on fighting discouragement in the small church
([Click Here](#)).