

**LUKE 4:31-40**  
**A TOUCH OF FRESH AIR !**

*Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and 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. 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 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. Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region.*

*Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon's house. But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them.*

*When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them.*

When I was a child, it seemed like everybody smoked. At a birthday party or anniversary, sometimes it felt good just to go outside and get a breath of fresh air. There are many circumstances where a breath of fresh air is a treat. Switching thoughts, there are circumstances where a "touch" of lemon, or tabasco sauce, or some other spice, puts a tasty zing into an item in a chef's kitchen. Both of these thoughts help describe our text for today.

As in last week's text from Matthew, Luke relates events taking place early in Jesus' ministry. Jesus entered Capernaum, the village of "comfort" located in Galilee, the northern part of the Jewish land. As was His custom, He went into the synagogue to teach on the Sabbath.

What do you remember about "The Sabbath"? In the Third Commandment, the Lord told His people, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." The Sabbath day was a day set apart by God. Does the word "Sabbath" mean "seventh"? Seems like it. At creation, God rested on the *seventh* day, right? The word "sabbath," however, means "rest." God "rested" on the seventh day. God ceased from creating. The thought is much like that of an attorney who says, "I rest my case." "I'm finished." The Sabbath was the "Rest" Day.

That Day was a gift from God to His Old Testament people. The Sabbath was not a liability--as in "Oh, no! tomorrow is the Sabbath Day. We won't get any more of our work done, work which should be done now." The Sabbath was a gift from God. "My child, you rest. I'll take care of the things you're frantic about. You'll be fine. Trust Me." Nor was it just physical rest which was God's concern. It was also spiritual rest--for souls, hearts, and minds. The Sabbath Day immersed the people in the mercy, peace, love, and forgiveness of God. He showered upon them the Promise of the Savior to come. In that fashion, Jesus went to the synagogue on the Sabbath to proclaim rest, rest from God, for sin-burdened souls. For He, Jesus, would give up His life to pay the price for all.

The people were accustomed to gathering at the synagogue on the Sabbath. However, what they were hearing there was typically the gnawing demands of the Pharisees and scribes, Bible scholars of the day. "Do this, do this, do this, and do this just like I do. Keep all the little specks of God's law, and you will be good with God like I am." It was a burden that was crushing conscientious, honest souls. It did not bring rest, only shades of pride in self, or levels of despair against self. Enter Jesus, extending the mercy, love, and forgiveness of God for, even for the lowlives. A breath of fresh air! The people *were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority*. Jesus did not mince words, He did not hem and haw with uncertainty regarding matters of right and wrong, sin and disobedience. He did not preach difficult loopholes by which one could do wrong and still be right at the same time. He spoke with authority. He called sin sin. But He preached grace upon grace, God's love and pardon. The people were astonished, amazed, struck, to hear such wonderful words.

You may not be a "lowlife," but you do have plenty of "lowlights" in life, don't you? Cows get out, cows missing, pickup won't start, kids are sick again, having less but making more money than ever, a conscience eating you raw for words you spoke to your spouse or to your neighbor, etc. Then Jesus comes with forgiveness and life. A breath of fresh air!

The people gathered at the “synagogue” The word “synagogue” means “a gathering place.” We gather together at God’s house to worship on our day of Rest too, to be showered by His gracious forgiveness and love. We gather together for mutual encouragement and strengthening. Even if you come and do not discuss any of the “ditches” through which you’re “driving” right now, yet to be with others who cling to Jesus for help and forgiveness each day, is encouraging. How would you feel if you came to church on a Sunday and you were the only person here? Compare that to sitting with fifty other sinners seeking the same comfort that you seek. *Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching* (Hebrews 10:24-25). Jesus says, *Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light* (Matthew 11:28-30). A breath of fresh air is at God’s house for you!

It was not just the words of Jesus that uplifted the hearts of people—not just a motivational speech or a pep talk. It was also His words-put-into-action, His words of power helping people and providing new life and strength. Consider, at creation the Father said, “Let there be” and it was so. So it was here! A demon possessed man, filled with an unclean spirit, was in the synagogue. The demon speaking through the man, spoke gruffly with Jesus, perhaps trying to intimidate Him, perhaps filled with fear himself, perhaps trying to mock Jesus by announcing to everyone that this ordinary looking fellow was supposed to be the one God sent! At any rate, Jesus calmly and forthrightly told the demon, “Muzzle it! Come out of the man.” The demon, in desperation, got in a last shove and threw the man down, but the demon was out. The man was unharmed! Demon affliction was common in Jesus’ day. It was part of the devil’s assault upon the Kingdom of God in Christ. The people were helpless against such possession. But what a breath of fresh air. “Jesus of Nazareth drives out demons with authority and with power! He has both the ‘right’ and the ‘might’ to step in and to give Satan a quick exit.” The people were amazed; the report spread quickly. Hardly what Satan wanted.

What demons do you have? What ropes of Satan keep you strapped in life? There are burdens and there are sins you can’t beat, aren’t there? But Jesus has come to free you. For the times you have meekly or enthusiastically followed Satan and been helplessly caught like a fish chasing a lure, guilty of biting off what you shouldn’t, there is forgiveness and rescue in Jesus. His love for you washes you clean from your guilt, gives you a new heart and new motive to fight temptation. Indeed, you will not be perfect or good enough, to win God’s favor on your own, but with Jesus, you are forgiven and not the devil’s slave. He is your Savior!

Is it sickness or physical ailments with which you struggle---Jesus *arose from the synagogue and entered Simon’s house. But Simon’s wife’s mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them.* --- By the way, this is the proof that Peter was married—the only one of the Twelve for whom we have such proof. --- *When the sun was setting* [marking the end of the Sabbath “rest”] *all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them.* All these people beleaguered by illness came to Him. Their sickness was cured! What a breath of fresh air! In His love for souls He eased their “dis”ease and healed their woes. Why is there sickness? It’s because of sin. Sickness travels along with the wagon-train of sin, death and misery. The wagon master is Satan. Jesus, however, has power over them all. He has power over sickness and death. He was punished for your sins and gave Himself into the grip of death in ultimate punishment for sin. Yet Jesus was not “down for the count.” He rose from the grave in full, power, glory, and majesty on Easter Sunday. “Because I live, you will live also” (John 14:19). In Jesus you are saved. Do you wish Jesus would heal you instantly, like He healed these people? He can. If it is best for you, He will. And He does give very miraculous healing through the body itself. Beyond that, through the gift of modern medicine, He gives miraculous healing. You do realize, don’t you, that all the modern medicine in the world would go nowhere, if the Lord in His wisdom and love didn’t grant it the go-ahead. What gifts! It feels good to walk again, to eat again, to talk again, to breath again, to think again, to work again. All gifts from the Savior of soul and body.

*He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them.* He physically touched them to communicate His concern and His strength. Isn’t it true that the physical touch of someone you love and trust is uplifting—a mother comforting her baby, a father picking up a fallen child, a doctor examining your beat up arm, a friend putting his hand on your shoulder to encourage you. Jesus lays His invisible hands on you each day, to help you and to heal your sins and woes. His touch, like a “touch” of lemon in a certain sauce or dressing, gives us sparkle and confidence, hope and security, forgiveness and life!

Jesus does not just bring a breath of fresh air, but a comforting “touch” of fresh air—sorely needed by all!

So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach---