

## Luke: 4: 38-41

### From Catena Aurea:

#### 4:38–39

38. And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever: and they besought him for her.

39. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever: and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

**AMBROSE.** Luke having first introduced a man delivered from an evil spirit, goes on to relate the healing of a woman. For our Lord had come to heal each sex, and he ought first to be healed who was first created. Hence it is said, And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. 27. in Matt.) For He honoured His disciples by dwelling among them, and so making them the more zealous.

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.** Now see how Christ abides in the house of a poor man, suffering poverty of His own will for our sakes, that we might learn to visit the poor, and despise not the destitute and needy. It follows: And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever: and they besought him for her.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (ut sup.) Because Matthew is silent on the point of asking Him, he does not differ from Luke, or it matters not, for one Gospel had brevity in view, the other accurate research. It follows: And he stood over her, &c.

**ORIGEN.** Here Luke speaks figuratively, as of a command given to a sensible being, saying, that the fever was commanded, and neglected not the work of Him who commanded it. Hence it follows: And she arose, and ministered unto them.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (ut sup.) For since the disease was curable, He shewed His power by the manner of the cure, doing what art could never do. For after the allaying of the fever, the patient needs much time ere he be restored to his former health, but at this time all took place at once.

**AMBROSE.** But if we weigh these things with deeper thoughts, we shall consider the health of the mind as well as the body; that the mind which was assailed by the wiles of the devil may be released first. Eve was not a hungered before the serpent beguiled her, and therefore against the author of evil himself ought the medicine of salvation first to operate. Perhaps also in that woman as in a type our flesh languished under the various fevers of crimes, nor should I say that the fever of love was less than that of bodily heat.

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.** Let us therefore receive Jesus. For when He has visited us, we carry Him in our heart and mind; He will then extinguish the flames of our unlicensed pleasures, and will make us whole, so that we minister unto Him, that is, do things well-pleasing to Him.

#### **4:40–41**

40. Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

41. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.

**THEOPHYLACT.** We must observe the zeal of the multitude, who after the sun had set bring their sick unto Him, not deterred by the lateness of the day; as it is said, Now when the sun was setting, they brought their sick.

**ORIGEN.** It was ordered about sun-set, that is, when the day was gone, that they should bring them out, either because during the day they were employed about other things, or because they thought that it was not lawful to heal on the sabbath. But He healed them, as it follows, But he laid his hands upon every one of them.

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.** But although as God He was able to drive away diseases by His word, He nevertheless touches them, shewing that His flesh was powerful to apply remedies, since it was the flesh of God; for as fire, when applied to a brazen vessel, imprints on it the effect of its own heat, so the omnipotent Word of God, when He united to Himself in real assumption a living virgin temple, endued with understanding, implanted in it a participation of His own power. May He also touch us, nay rather

may we touch Him, that He may deliver us from the infirmities of our souls as well as the assaults of the evil spirit and pride! For it follows, And devils also came out.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** But in what follows, And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak, mark the humility of Christ, who would not let the unclean spirits make Him manifest. For it was not fit that they should usurp the glory of the Apostolical office, nor did it become the mysteries of Christ to be made public by impure tongues.

**THEOPHYLACT.** Because, “praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner.” Or, because He did not wish to inflame the envy of the Jews by being praised of all.

#### **4:42–44**

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.

43. And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.

44. And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** When he had bestowed sufficient favour upon the people by miracles, it was necessary for Him to depart. For miracles are always thought greater when the worker is gone, since they themselves are then the more heeded, and have in their turn a voice; as it is said, But when it was day, he departed, and went.

**GREEK EXPOSITOR.** (Victor Antiochenus.) He went also into the desert, as Mark says, and prayed; not that he needed prayer, but as an example to us of good works.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. 25. in Matt.) The Pharisees indeed, seeing how that the miracles themselves published His fame, were offended at His power. But the people hearing His words, assented and followed; as it is said, And the multitudes sought him, not indeed any of the chief priests, or scribes, but all those who had not been blackened with the dark stain of malice, and preserved their consciences unhurt.

**GREEK EXPOSITOR.** (ut sup.) Now when Mark says that the Apostles came to him, saying, All seek thee, but Luke, that the people came, there is no difference between them, for the people came to Him following in the footsteps of the Apostles. But the Lord rejoiced in being held back, yet bid them let Him go, that others also might partake of His teaching, as the time of His presence would not last long; as it follows, And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, &c. Mark says, Unto this I came, shewing the loftiness of His divine nature, and His voluntary emptying Himself of it. But Luke says, Unto this am I sent, shewing His incarnation, and calling also the decree of the Father, a sending Him forth; and one simply says, To preach, the other added, the kingdom of God, which is Christ Himself.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. 48. in Matt.) Observe also, that He might, by abiding in the same place, have drawn all men over to Himself. He did not however do so, giving us an example to go about and seek those who are perishing, as the shepherd his lost sheep, and as the physician the sick. For by recovering one soul, we may be able to blot out a thousand sins. Hence also it follows, And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee. He frequently indeed went to the synagogues, to shew them that He was no deceiver. For if He were constantly to dwell in the desolate places, they would spread abroad that He was concealing Himself.

## **From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:**

### **4:31–41 Casting Out Demons and Healing Diseases**

#### **Miracles Testify that Jesus the Physician Heals Creation.**

Cyril of Alexandria: People who cannot be brought by argument to the sure knowledge of him who by nature and in truth is God and Lord may perhaps be won by miracles to a quiet obedience. Therefore helpfully, or rather necessarily, he often completes his lessons by going on to perform some mighty work. For the people of Judea were not ready to believe. They snubbed the words of those who called them to salvation. The people of Capernaum had this character especially. For this reason the Savior reproved them. He said, “And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, shall be brought down to hell.”<sup>1</sup> Although he knows them to be both disobedient and hard of heart, nevertheless he visits them as a most excellent physician would visit those who were suffering from a very dangerous disease and endeavors to rid them of their illness. He himself says, “Those who are healthy have no need of a physician, only those who are sick.”<sup>2</sup> He taught, therefore, in their synagogues with great freedom of speech. For he had

foretold this by the voice of Isaiah: "I have not spoken in secret, nor in a dark place of the earth." <sup>3</sup>  
Commentary on Luke, Homily 12.4

### **New Creation Begins on the Sabbath.**

Ambrose: He describes the works of divine healing begun on the sabbath day, to show from the outset that the new creation began where the old creation ceased. He showed us that the Son of God is not under the law but above the law, and that the law will not be destroyed but fulfilled. <sup>5</sup> For the world was not made through the law but by the Word, as we read: "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established." <sup>6</sup> Thus the law is not destroyed but fulfilled, so that the renewal of humankind, already in error, may occur. The apostle too says, "Stripping yourselves of the old man, put on the new, who was created according to Christ." <sup>7</sup> He fittingly began on the sabbath, that he may show himself as Creator. He completed the work that he had already begun by weaving together works with works. Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 4.58.<sup>8</sup>

### **Jesus Heals Men and Women.**

Ambrose: St. Luke did well to first set before us the man freed from a spirit of wickedness, then substituted the healing of a woman. The Lord had come to heal both sexes, and man must first be cured because he was created first. But woman, who had sinned by an uncertain mind rather than depravity, must not be overlooked. Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 4.57.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Power of Jesus' Word.**

Cyril of Alexandria: The bystanders, witnesses of such great deeds, were astonished at the power of his word. He performed his miracles, without offering up a prayer, asking no one else at all for the power to accomplish them. Since he is the living and active Word of God the Father, by whom all things exist, and in whom all things are, in his own person he crushed Satan and closed the profane mouth of impure demons. Commentary on Luke, Homily 12.<sup>10</sup>

### **Jesus Rebukes Fever Possessing Peter's Mother-in-Law.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus arrived at Simon's house and found Simon's mother-in-law sick of a fever. He stood and rebuked the fever, and it left her. Matthew and Mark say that the fever left her. <sup>11</sup> There is no hint of any living thing as the active cause of the fever. But Luke's phrase says that he stood over her, and

rebuked the fever, and it left her. I do not know whether we are not compelled to say that that which was rebuked was some living thing unable to sustain the influence of him who rebuked it. It is not reasonable to rebuke a thing without life, and unconscious of the rebuke. Commentary on Luke, Homily 12.12

### **Unclean Demons Know Jesus is the Christ.**

Cyril of Alexandria: He would not permit the unclean demons to confess him. It was not right for them to usurp the glory of the apostolic office or to talk of the mystery of Christ with polluted tongues. Yes, nothing they say is true. Let no one trust them. Light cannot be recognized with the help of darkness, as the disciple of Christ teaches us, where he says, “What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?”<sup>13</sup> Commentary on Luke, Homily 12.14

### **We are Never to Listen to Demons.**

Athanasius: Even when the demons spoke the truth, for they spoke the truth when they said, “Thou art the Son of God,” the Lord himself silenced them and forbade them to speak. He did this to keep them from sowing their own wickedness in the midst of the truth. He also wished us to get used to never listening to them even though they seem to speak the truth. Life of St. Anthony 26.15

### **Jesus the Chief Physician.**

Jerome: “Now Simon’s mother-in-law was kept in her bed sick with a fever.” May Christ come to our house and enter in and by his command cure the fever of our sins. Each one of us is sick with a fever. When-ever I give way to anger, I have a fever. There are as many fevers as there are faults and vices. Let us beg the apostles to intercede for us with Jesus, that he may come to us and touch our hand. If he does so, at once our fever is gone. He is an excellent physician and truly the chief Physician. Moses is a physician. Isaiah is a physician. All the saints are physicians, but he is the chief Physician. Homilies on the Gospel of Mark 75.16

### **Jesus Has Power Over Death.**

Athanasius: What irreverent men do not believe, the spirits see—that he is God. So they flee and fall down at his feet, saying just what they uttered when he was in the body. On the Incarnation 5.32.17

### **The Holy Flesh of Jesus Heals His Creation.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus laid his hands upon the sick one by one and freed them from their malady. He demonstrated that the holy flesh, which he had made his own and endowed with godlike power,

possessed the active presence of the might of the Word. He intended us to learn that, although the only-begotten Word of God became like us, yet he is nonetheless God. He wants us to know that he is easily able, even by his own flesh, to accomplish all things. His body was the instrument by which he performed miracles....

Jesus, then, entered Peter's house, where a woman was lying stretched upon a bed, exhausted with a violent fever. As God, he might have said, "Put away the disease, arise," but he adopted a different course of action. As a proof that his own flesh possessed the power of healing, because it is the flesh of God, he touched her hand. "Immediately," it says, "the fever left her." Let us therefore also receive Jesus. When he has entered into us and we have received him into mind and heart, then he will quench the fever of unbecoming pleasures. He will raise us up and make us strong, even in spiritual things, so that we might serve him by performing those things that please him. But observe again, I ask, how great is the usefulness of the touch of his holy flesh. For it both drives away diseases of various kinds, and a crowd of demons, and overthrows the power of the devil. It heals a very great multitude of people in one moment of time. Although he was able to perform these miracles by a word and the preference of his will, yet to teach us something useful for us, he also lays his hands upon the sick. For it was necessary, most necessary, for us to learn that the holy flesh which he had made his own was endowed with the activity of the power of the Word by his having implanted in it a godlike might. Let it then take hold of us, or rather let us take hold of it by the mystical "giving of thanks." May we do this so that it might free us also from the sicknesses of the soul, and from the assault and violence of demons. Commentary on Luke, Homily 12.18