



## Luke 4.<sup>40-44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>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. <sup>41</sup>And devils also came out of many...

<sup>42</sup>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. <sup>43</sup>And he said unto them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent."

<sup>44</sup>And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

After miraculously healing "every one of them" who were "sick with divers diseases," Jesus "departed and went into a desert place." Those who witnessed and benefited from Jesus' healing power did not know where this "desert place" was. But, still, they "sought him." They "looked for him." They "searched for him." The Greek word suggests that this hunt for Jesus' location was conducted in an ardent manner.

The desire to find Jesus was strong. The multitude was highly motivated. Whatever trouble it was to find out where Jesus was, it was not too much trouble. However far away Jesus was, it was not too far to go. However much wandering it required to find him, it was not too much wandering to be with him once more. Whatever the difficulty, they would find Jesus.

Having found Jesus, the multitude "stayed" him. The word used here is in an intensive form. It represents something more than simple "holding." It is "holding fast." It is a "grasping onto." When performed in relation to another, it can mean to "restrain." The crowd attempted, whether by physical or verbal means Luke does not say, to keep Jesus from leaving. Now that they were once more in his presence, they would do whatever they could to remain there for as long as possible. The thought of Jesus leaving, the thought of living without him was unsettling and unwelcome.

As much as all this tells us about the multitudes, I suggest, it tells us just as much about Jesus. He drew people to himself. People felt drawn to him. This Galilean response to Jesus reminds us of another multitude and its response to Jesus.

Jesus had spent many, many hours ministering to and teaching a large multitude that had gathered at Bountiful. Observing the multitude's fatigue, Jesus informs the people of his intention to leave and return after they had opportunity to rest. Then, the text informs us,

"When Jesus had thus spoken, he cast his eyes round about again on the multitude, and beheld they were in tears, and did look steadfastly upon him as if they would ask him to tarry a little longer with them."<sup>1</sup>

Just as the Galilean multitude would endure any amount of travel to find and be with Jesus, the Bountiful

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<sup>1</sup> 3 Nephi 17.<sup>5</sup>

multitude would endure any amount of fatigue to be and remain with Jesus. Jesus is just that attractive. There is simply no one like him. Isaiah felt this reality about him when he went by the name of Yahweh.

“I am God, and there is none else;  
I am God, and there is none like me.”<sup>2</sup>

So too, discovered the Psalmist.

“For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord?  
Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?”<sup>3</sup>

The multitudes of Galilee and Bountiful, as did Isaiah and the Psalmist just how attractive, just how incomparably desirable Jesus is? How about us? What about you? Have you made this, the greatest of all human discoveries?

What difficulties, then; what wanderings; what fatigue; what effort are we willing to endure to find Jesus and enter his presence? Are any too much to ask when the reward is so utterly complete? How cherished are the moments that we have with him? What are we willing to do to have him always with us; to have him “not depart” from us?

Yes, there is no wondering about the hymnist’s sincere plea. May we make it our own as we sing

“Be near me, Lord Jesus;  
I ask thee to stay  
Close by me forever,  
And love me, I pray.”<sup>4</sup>

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 46.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 89.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> “Away in a Manger”