

Can I Get a Witness?

March 10, 2019

Luke 8:38-39

38 The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

Introduction

In Luke chapter 8 Jesus is traveling through cities bringing the good news of the kingdom of God to the people. During this time he gives many lessons and parables. There is also the miracle story of calming the storm. Jesus and his group of followers arrive in a place called Gerasene. They are outside of Galilee and into another country. It is there that Jesus cures a man that is possessed.

Today's Scripture is interesting. The man begged Jesus to join his group. Last week we learned in Luke Chapter 9 that Jesus taught the disciples that to be a follower you have to deny yourself, pick up your cross daily, and follow him. Jesus teaches it is difficult to be a follower. It is hard to do because to deny yourself goes against human nature. Very few people have what it takes to be a disciple. In fact, of the multitude of thousands there were only 12. So, why does Jesus send this man away when it is hard to be disciple? You would think that Jesus wants disciples. The man in today's Scripture has a valuable asset that is good for the ministry of Jesus. This man can testify and Jesus needs people to testify. We need people to testify. Jesus still needs people today to testify. The man boldly gave his testimony. The Scripture tells us that the man proclaimed throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him. He told the whole community what Jesus did. This man is ideal; he is thankful, he is giving his testimony, and he is praising the Lord.

How many of us, up until now, have noticed what Jesus did? Jesus sent him away. How many of us have noticed that Jesus sent away a man that wanted to be a disciple? Jesus told the man that wanted to follow him, the man who had sincere appreciation, "do not follow me, instead go home and testify." Why did Jesus do this? Do not be afraid to ask why when you read and study the Bible. There are hypothetical reasons why. One is a matter of discipleship. The Jesus team had sufficient discipleship, there were already 12 disciples, he did not need any more. Another hypothetical reason is in the realm of testimony. Jesus needs people to testify in your own community. I take the liberty to emphasize in your own community. People often think that the mission field is some third world country. Well, it is, but the mission field is also right here. There are people in our community that have not heard the word. There are people that are homeless in this community. Jesus needs people then and now to provide their testimony to their own people. In today's Scripture Jesus put a priority on testifying. The contemporary lesson is that Jesus puts priority on you giving your testimony. Another hypothetical reason why Jesus sent the man away is due to geography. When Jesus healed in Israel he told the people he healed not to tell anyone. Now, outside of the country Jesus is telling a man to go and tell. It could be because the conspiracy against Jesus is in his own country. His popularity and the huge crowds that are following Jesus are a threat to the religious establishment. Jesus needed to delay his execution until the right moment. Finally another hypothetical reason is that the man Jesus turned away from discipleship was not a Jew.

Luke chapter 8 shows Jesus is master over the forces of nature. In verse 25 Jesus calms the storm and the disciples ask "who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?" Then the text shows Jesus is master over demonic spirits. But then

the unclean spirit knows Jesus identity and calls out "Jesus, Son of the Most High God." The text shows the disciples question who Jesus is while the demon knows. Then the text shows Jesus has a mission that extends out into the Gentile world. It appears that the soil is more fertile in the Gentile world.

The question is why does Jesus call disciples but send this man home? The text shows the beginning of the mission to the Gentiles. Jesus sends this man away to testify. It is here in Luke 8:39 where Jesus starts the mission to the Gentiles. Meanwhile, he stays focused on his divine destiny and purpose. The title of the sermon is *Can I Get a Witness?* In the outlining areas, outside of Palestine, Jesus needed a witness to testify about Jesus. Outside of Israel today Jesus needs a witness. Today, more than ever, right here in America Jesus needs a witness to testify to, as the Scripture says "how much God has done for you."

Every Christian should give their testimony. Every testimony is unique. It is the testimony, the proclamation of the changed life and the good news of what Christ has done for you, that brings people to Christ. You have heard my testimony in the past, you are invited to give your own during worship, during a sermon, in church, and outside of the church. Anywhere and everywhere, everyone is called to give their own testimony. In their own community and anywhere else. Think of it this way it is Jesus who is asking "Can I get a witness? Can I get a witness?"