

Transcript

The Jesus Story - A Storm and a Demon Possessed Man

In the last session we began to take A Disciples Eye View of Jesus. We began at Luke chapter eight and the first 18 verses. We looked at the very important part that women played in the ministry of Jesus.

We then looked at The Parable of the Sower and the Seed. We found that it was how the seed was received that determined whether or not it would bear fruit. We learned from those first eighteen verses that the ministry that the women performed, though different, was just as important as that done by the men.

We found confirmation of this in Galatians 3:28; this is a wonderful statement:

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

That clearly tells us that there is no room for discrimination of any sort, in the work of God. That one verse covers it all.

Jew nor Greek: no national discrimination. Slave nor free: no social discrimination. Male nor female: no sexual discrimination. We all have a part to play in the work of God. It is our personal choice, and the responsibility is ours. We need to seek God, to find out as individuals just what it is that God wants us to do?

James chapter one and verse five tells us:

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

We finished at verse eighteen with words of Jesus:

18 "Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him."

So, we begin today at verse nineteen and what I would like us to do is to carry on trying to see things as the disciples would see them. Here we find Jesus talking about new relationships, and if we are not careful we can draw the wrong conclusions. Some people would look at the statement that Jesus makes here and take it to mean that Jesus was dismissing his family. But, nothing could be further from the truth.

What Jesus is really doing here, is extending his family. As Jesus was speaking, someone interrupted Him. We read in verse 19:

19 Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd.

20 And it was told Him by some, who said, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You."

21 But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.

From the three verses that we just read. We find Jesus bringing the Word of God to the crowd. And, this process could not be interrupted for anything. Jesus was doing just what his Father wanted him to do, which was to bring the word of God to the crowds.

The sole purpose of Jesus while here on earth was to fulfil the perfect will of His Father in Heaven. His earthly family had to wait until He was finished. Jesus gave a polite rebuke to his genuinely concerned mother, but he was definitely not severing ties with his earthly family. But, he cannot allow His submission to His Father in heaven to be “overruled” by the requests of His earthly mother.

We really need to understand just what the relationship was between Jesus and his mother. The first thing we need to understand is this; in no way would Jesus disobey any of the commandments and that would include the fifth commandment, Exodus 20:12:

12 “Honor your father and your mother”.

We need to look a little closer at this relationship between Jesus and Mary. When we read the first recorded words of Jesus, this was when they lost him in Jerusalem when he was 12. After they found him in the temple, talking to the teachers. This is what read in Luke 2v49:

49 And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”

50 But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

In the very next verse we have a very clear picture of their relationship.

51 Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.

By keeping all these things in her heart it is obvious that if anyone really knew Jesus, Mary his mother would be the one who knew him best. She knows better than anyone who Jesus really was. She knew of the miraculous events surrounding His birth. Jesus honoured His mother and lived in submission to her authority.

We find another good illustration of their relationship In John 2v3. The first miracle that Jesus performed. Mary had never seen Jesus perform a miracle, this was to be the first. This is what we read:

3 And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.”

4 Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.”

5 His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.”

Mary simply turns to the servants and tells them, “Whatever He tells you, do it.” Mary really knew the heart of Jesus. Then Jesus performed the miracle. And turned water into wine.

John chapter nineteen and verse twenty six we find the very last words of Jesus to his mother, as he spoke to her from the cross. Even during this terrible ordeal, His mother's welfare was uppermost in his mind:

26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!"

27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

There can be no doubt at all that Jesus loved his mother.

When Jesus said: "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it." He was revealing one of the most important doctrines we find in the New Testament - the doctrine of adoption, and if there is anything that should make us risk a Hallelujah it is this doctrine of adoption.

This doctrine means that through the grace of God, everyone who puts their faith in Jesus Christ is adopted into the family of God. Jesus calls us His brothers and His sisters, and we are then adopted by the heavenly Father. What Jesus is saying here is: His earthly mother and blood brothers are not His only relatives, but that whoever has heard the Word of God and does it, enters His kingdom. Those are His new family.

Through this incident, Jesus gave another lesson to his followers by explaining that spiritual relationships are as binding as physical ones. This would be the basis for the new community that Jesus was building - the Christian family.

The only people who can have a relationship with Jesus are those who do the Father's will. They listen, they learn, they believe, and they follow. Obedience is the key to being part of God's family.

Knowledge is not enough - the religious leaders had that, and still missed Jesus. Following is not enough - the crowd did that, but still didn't understand who Jesus was. Only those who really believe are brought into the family. "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."

If we claim to have a living relationship with Jesus Christ then the evidence that we do have that relationship will be found not in our just saying that we have it, but in our hearing, obeying and doing of the word of God.

If the hearing, and obeying are lacking, the existence of the relationship is brought seriously into question. The only people who can have a relationship with Jesus are those who do the Father's will. They listen, they learn, they believe, and they follow. Obedience is the key to being part of God's family.

And this is the inheritance of all those who have that real relationship with Jesus. They have been adopted into the family of God.

This is what we find in Ephesians 1:3:

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

Now just listen to this:

5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

Now we can move on with our text to Luke 8:22, and see just what lessons we can learn from a boat incident.

22 Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." And they launched out.

To all intents and purposes verse 22 sounds like a great day out. Jesus gets into a boat with His disciples and He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." I want you to hold on to just what Jesus said to the disciples. "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." But, in the next three verses we find that conditions changed dramatically:

23 But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy.

24 And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm.

25 But He said to them, "Where is your faith?" and they were afraid, and marvelled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!"

As they must have done many times before, Jesus and His disciples are crossing, the Sea of Galilee. When Jesus and His disciples started off in the boat, the lake would be calm and restful. So they set out, and as they sailed Jesus fell asleep. Ministering to the crowds and healing and teaching, Jesus certainly must have been exhausted. So as the boat set out, Jesus fell asleep.

While Jesus and His disciples were out on the water a violent storm began, the boat was filling with water, and the winds were howling, the waves became so high that the boat was in danger of capsizing. The Bible tells us that the disciples were afraid. They must have felt that this storm was about to destroy them. The Sea of Galilee is well known for its sudden, violent storms. The severity of this storm is evident by the fact that the disciples, many of whom were experienced fishermen on this very sea, were terrified.

The amazing thing about this was, that while this storm raged, Jesus was sound

asleep in the back of the boat. That Jesus could sleep during this storm indicates his complete exhaustion, the fact that the noise, the violent rocking of the boat, and the cold spray of the water did not awaken him gives us a glimpse of the physical fatigue that Jesus would experience throughout his earthly ministry.

The disciples, though their faith was not properly developed and their understanding still rather weak, they knew the only answer to their present situation was Jesus. They recognized he had the power to save them from their present situation, and so they went and woke him. Verse twenty four tells us:

24 And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"

Jesus, was roused out of his sleep not by the storm, but by the cries of the disciples. I wonder what they expected Jesus to do in this situation, they certainly did not expect Him to do what He did. Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water and they ceased, and there was a calm.

Mark gives us a little more detail in his account of this incident, Mark 4:39:

39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

Instantly, the wind ceased. There wasn't the slightest breeze in the air. Instantly, the sea became as smooth as glass. What was the disciples' reaction? What would you expect it to be? You would think they would rejoice and thank Jesus for saving them. That's the response that you would expect, but that's not the response the disciples had. Luke tells us that after the threat of the storm was removed by Jesus, instead of calming their fear, their fear was intensified, Luke 8:25:

25 But He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and marvelled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands Even the winds and water, and they obey Him!"

Jesus' words to the disciples, floating in their boat on the now-quiet sea, were simply, "Where is your faith?"

They ought not to have been afraid, they were with Jesus. If they had learned anything about him at all in their time with him, they should have understood that when Jesus made a promise he kept it. Let us cross over to the other side of the lake. He promised his disciples that they would cross over to the other side of the lake.

This account shows the abiding care Jesus has for His people. There are a good many Christians today who seem to think the boat is going down! Let me make this clear. It is impossible for the boat to go down when Jesus is on board. And the disciples were afraid, and marvelled. The total calm of the sea should have filled them with peace, but instead, they were more afraid when He calmed the storm than when they were in the midst of the storm.

In the span of a few moments, the disciples saw both the complete humanity of Jesus - in His tired sleep, and the fullness of His deity - as the Son of God, who has

control over every aspect of creation. And they said among themselves: “What manner of man is this?”

In his Gospel account Mark uses two different Greek verbs to describe the disciples’ fear. When the storm came upon them, Mark says: they were “afraid.” But after Jesus stilled the wind and waves, they were “greatly afraid.” What manner of man was this? They found it very difficult to believe that Jesus had the power to change the elements.

They realized that they were in the presence of something more terrifying than the violent forces of nature. The disciples were in the presence of One who was in a league of his own, because He was different, He was higher, He was holy. And there is nothing more frightening than to be in the presence of Holiness.

This miracle clearly displayed Jesus’ divine identity. Yet despite all that they had seen and heard so far, and despite their love for Jesus, they still did not grasp that he was himself God, and so had power and authority over all of creation.

This does demonstrate that Jesus Christ is the Lord of the physical forces in the universe. That for him nothing happens by accident, and that no force in all creation can destroy his plan for our eternal salvation. Let me encourage you with this, if you are truly born again by the Spirit of God, this is what we read Romans 8:38:

38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Every day that the disciples walked with Jesus, they heard the things he said, they witnessed the compassion he showed to others, and they saw the miracles that he performed; and their faith grew.

Our faith can grow as we learn to walk like the disciples through the gospels, as we read and take on board the things that the disciples saw and heard. Paul was very clear about this when writing to the saints at Rome. This is what we read in Romans 10:17:

17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Now, our story continues in verse 26 of Luke 8:

26 Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee.

27 And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs.

We’re right in the middle of two spectacular miracles, back-to-back: the stilling of the storm and the driving out of the legion of demons. The stilling of the storm is the

most visually spectacular miracle Jesus ever did. How amazing is it then that immediately after that He does his most spectacular exorcism?

That's exactly what this account reveals. There is no other account of an exorcism that even comes close to this one. The driving out of demons from a human being, nothing else even comes close. Just for the magnitude of the power that it reveals the stunning transformation in one man, and the effect on the pigs - 2,000 of them perishing in one moment. There's no other power encounter with a demonized human being, that even comes close.

Let's just walk through the text with the disciples. Jesus and his disciples had left the huge crowds to get away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Little did they know what was awaiting them as they got into the boat, this raging hurricane in which they thought they were going to die. Then once that's done, as they land on the other side, they're confronted by a demon-possessed maniac of terrifying power.

Demons are angels, spirit beings that rebelled long ago with Satan and were evicted from heaven. We read this in Revelation 12:9:

9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The encounter begins with Jesus and his disciples getting out of the boat. The demon-possessed man sees them from a distance and comes from the tombs down to the shoreline. This man is an absolute monster. His human personality has been swallowed alive by the demons inside him. This man lived in the tombs and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, for he had often been chained hand in foot, but, he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet.

Mark 5:5 tells us a little bit more about this:

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

No one was strong enough to subdue him, night and day among the tombs and in the hills, he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

These words describe the most wretched human being on the surface of the earth in history. I can't imagine a more wretched condition to be in than this, this is the most detailed description of a demon-possessed man we have in the Bible. It is the classic profile of demonic possession, the man had been demon possessed for a long time. It says he lived in the tombs. No one in their right mind would live out there in the tombs of dead people.

These are often caves blocked up with boulders or big stones, and at best they would offer basic protection from the elements, they would be cold, they would be dark, not a very good place to live in at all. This man is absolutely severed from all human society. His condition has cut himself off from all connections with them. It says no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain.

The account gives a sense of history with this man. Many times been bound with chains and even shackles but this man had broken every chain ever put on him and

shattered every shackle: “for he had often been chained hand and foot,” But, he tore the chains apart, he broke the irons on his feet.

In verse 30:

30 Jesus asked him, saying, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” because many demons had entered him.

31 And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.

32 Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them.

In verse 33 we read:

33 The Demons went out of the Man. The demons asked that if they must be expelled from the man, they might be permitted to enter the swine; Then the swine ran into the lake and were drowned.

Jesus had surely anticipated what would happen, and had deliberately allowed it. The destruction of the pigs would vividly demonstrate what must have been the greater eventual destruction of the man had the demons been left in control.

The infinite greatness of Jesus is what we're seeing here. The effortless power that Jesus has. Power that only almighty God could have, the effortless stilling of a hurricane and the violent sea and then effortless power over demons, saying a single word, "Go," and they're gone. No effort at all, they instantly obey.

Some of the local townspeople had at times tried to bind him with chains and to restrain his self-destructive and anti-social behaviour.

Yet when Jesus not only restrained the man, but expelled the demons and saved him completely, they did not like it. They who had helped the man before, now asked his deliverer to depart. Why? They were afraid, says Luke. It is really strange that Luke does not say that they were afraid of the man when he roamed the cemetery naked. But whether they were or not, it was very strange that they were afraid now that they saw the man sitting clothed and in his right mind?

What had they to be afraid of? We can only assume that they were afraid of Jesus, afraid of his supernatural, and to them mysterious power to cast out demons. They could not understand the change that had come over the man. To them the power that had brought it about was frightening. But that's who Jesus is. Why do they want him to leave?

37 Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned.

They're afraid, and they ask Jesus to leave. They don't want him, they're just afraid because they don't understand his goodness. But when the townspeople asked Jesus to depart, he granted their request at once and left them, and He got into the boat and

returned. Their request was the expression of their own free choice made with their eyes open and in full view of all the evidence, and Jesus respected their choice.

Jesus will never remove a man's free will. Not even in order to save him.

We learn something else from this incident. We see just how meek and mild Jesus is. He just complies with their wishes. "Okay, I'll leave." He walks away and gets back in the boat, we need to understand the infinite power of Jesus, but also the incredible gentleness.

Along with that, side-by-side with their decision, we get the decision of the previously possessed man. This man has the exact opposite response, he doesn't ever want to leave Jesus again, he wants to be by Jesus' side forever. This formerly demon-possessed man's a different story altogether. The text says that:

38 Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away.

Isn't that marvellous. He's dressed, in his right mind, he sees Jesus properly, he loves him. All he wants is to know him and be with him. He pleads with Jesus to stay with him. This was Jesus' reply:

39 "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

So the man went away and began to tell everyone how much Jesus had done for him, and all the people were amazed.

The writer of Hebrews 12 tells us in verse 2:

2 Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Here we have the wonderful overview of the mission of Jesus, the Author of our faith. Revelation 13:8 tells of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

In Philippians 2 and verse 8 we read how this came about:

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

During his time here on earth Jesus ministered to the multitudes. He then fed 5,000

men, women and children. He ministered to the crowds that followed him. He took the group of his disciples to one side and ministered to them. He ministered to single individuals like Nicodemus and the woman at the well.

But there is something special that we learn about Jesus from this passage. The calming of the storm and the driving out of the Legion demons. The way it's written here, it's really astonishing because you could see Jesus standing on one side of the Sea of Galilee.

This is an amazing story. Jesus is looking ahead to what's about to happen. Jesus has to go through a hurricane and drives out an army of demons to save one man. He saves that one man and comes back. He goes over the sea of Galilee and back for one man. Jesus cares about the multitudes, the crowds, the small groups; and Jesus also cares about individuals.

This should make you want risk a Hallelujah. Jesus cares just as much about you and me this morning as he does about those we have looked at.