

A Prescription for Evangelism

Lk. 8:26-39

Introduction:

1. It is a great and awesome task that the Lord has asked us to do to “Go and make disciples of all the nations.”
2. We are willing, even anxious to accomplish the task. We know the value of our own salvation and enjoy seeing others rejoice in freedom from their sins.
3. But how to persuade them? What do we need to do to accomplish this great task among those that we love?
4. I believe Lk. 8:39 is a prescription for evangelism. It is simple, direct, and straightforward. It is a task that we can perform. The qualifications are very personal, and maybe this is where we go wrong in our attempts to evangelize. We may try to do it without revealing what has happened to us personally. Yet, this may be our most powerful tool.
5. Let’s go back and look at what happened in this man’s life and how it was changed by his contact with Jesus.

Discussion:

- I. He was demon-possessed. Sick out of his mind. The demons had taken control of him (Lk. 8:26-31).
 - A. Demon-possession is a frightening subject.
 1. Different theories have been advanced to try to explain it. Some suggest that those described as “demon possessed” had various forms of mental illness.
 2. And while that is frightening enough, the Scriptures are even more frightening.
 - a. The N.T. writers see devils or demons as personal spiritual beings that are evil and have the ability to take control of individuals.
 - b. Jesus seems to affirm this idea here in this text.
 - B. In this case the demons had taken control of this man’s behavior.
 1. No clothes, living in the tombs.
 2. Taken control of his communication.
 3. Extraordinary strength.
 - C. When Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man, the demons recognized that Jesus was opposed to their work and immediately addressed this issue (v. 28).
 1. Note the personal nature of this occurrence.
 2. Adds to the frightening nature of the circumstance.
- II. Jesus cast the demons out.
 - A. These demons recognized that Jesus had power over them.
 1. They begged not to be cast into the abyss. I take this to be their final place of condemnation.

2. They recognized a time limitation on their activities (Matt. 8:29).
3. Asked to be cast into a herd of swine.
- B. When they left the man and went into the swine the whole herd rushed down a steep bank and into the sea, perishing in the waters.
- C. The man was completely transformed (34-36).
 1. He was sitting at the feet of Jesus, dressed and in his right mind.
 2. When the herdsmen reported the events in the city, the city people came out to see. They asked Jesus to leave their country.
- D. The man wanted to go with Jesus.

III. Here is the evangelistic prescription. Jesus told him to “return to his house and describe what great things God has done for you.”

- A. Truly God had done great things for this man, but he has done great things for you.
 1. While you were not demon possessed the devil had control over your thinking and your behavior (Titus 3:3;
 2. We are warned against falling under this control again (1 Pet. 1:14).
 3. It is a personal force (Eph. 6:10-12).
 4. In the case of Job Satan controlled (Job 1-2).
 - a. People.
 - b. The weather.
 - c. Job’s health.
 5. Paul refers to sin taking control of him (Rom. 7:14ff).
- B. But, like God released the demon-possessed man, God has released us.
 1. From the consequence of our sins through Jesus Christ.
 2. Through his revelation he renews our minds (Rom. 12:1-2).
- C. What was your life like before Christ?
 1. Enslaved to various lusts and pleasures (Titus 3:3).
 2. Characterized by all manner of unrighteousness (1 Cor. 6:9-11).
- D. Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you.
 1. You must recognize that what God has done for you is great.
 2. Do not brag about how bad you were.
 3. Tell how the Lord transformed you.

Conclusion:

1. What has your contact with Jesus meant to you?
2. Go tell others.
3. What was your life like before Jesus?
4. Go tell others.
5. What is your life now that Jesus has operated on you?
6. Go tell others.