

Something Worth Sharing

Jesus continued to spread the good news. Women followed and supported His ministry. He identified His true family, and He taught in parables. The challenge is to seek and truly hear Jesus.

Note: I've enjoyed and recommend Mark E. Moore's "The Chronological Life of Christ." Some of my comments can be found in his material by coincidence (he's not the only one making such observations articulated in his material), and other times, I've leaned on his accurate and helpful observations. He's done an excellent job making 1st-century culture and practices available.

No events occurred between last week's lesson and today:

Calming Storms (Luke 8:22-25)

- *Harmonizing and/or explaining the text:*
 - Let's recap what happened on this particular day: Jesus was accused of being demon-possessed and taught in parables in a boat at the lake. Then He finished His parables in a house. It's a very long day. Now, He'll leave the house and cross the lake.
 - They attempt to leave, but others follow them in boats.
 - Three events occur: *Jesus falls asleep*. (This is the only time we read about Jesus sleeping). *A storm hits the sea*. (The Greek word can be translated as "whirlwind, hurricane."). The Sea of Galilee is 685 feet below sea level. 2000 ft hills are the east and west sides of the lake. Winds are known to make their way over the hills and through the valley. This can occur quickly, and the storms can be powerful. I remember reading about a few men who pitched a tent by the sea and were swimming. Winds suddenly hit the lake. One of the men struggled to return to shore even though he wasn't far out. They all had to put their full weight on the tent pegs to keep it from flying away. *He rebukes it*. "Peace! Be still!" This is the first time we see Jesus command wind and water (although He did change water to wine).
 - Disciples question: Do You not care that we are perishing? (Mark's account).
 - Jesus' two questions are asked by Jesus: Why are you so afraid? Why do you still have little faith?
- *What grabs my attention:*
 - I must admit: Jesus' response seems unreasonable to me at first read. Imagine being in real danger. To be clear: this is an emergency. Luke plainly records, "they were filling with water and were in danger." Yet, Jesus is sleeping.
- *What I took home:*
 - Jesus isn't wrong, so I need to rethink this account. Jesus expected them to know He could save them based on previous miracles. I don't believe He was disappointed that they asked for help. As far as I can tell, the boats would have sunk if Jesus hadn't rebuked the winds. It's how they came to Him. They didn't see a savior in a boat. They didn't know He cared.

- Jesus' words, the Word of God, still calm the storms of life. The only way to have peace and for our souls to be silent is to return to His word with belief in who He is and that He cares. However, this is challenging because He doesn't always calm storms in our lives so quickly. Sometimes, we want the winds to stop, but Jesus gives us an anchor.
- *What I want to share:*
 - Jesus hasn't kept me from many storms but got me through them all. I've learned that what used to seem like title waves were actually small. There have been title waves, but they've made me trust Him more. Facing fears makes you appreciate His power when you make it through. It makes our faith stronger in Him. It's given me courage. If the disciples in the boat were to ask me, "Who then is this?" I'd have an answer for them. I've got an answer for those around me, brethren.

Casting Out Demons (26-39)

- *Harmonizing and/or explaining the text:*
 - We're in Gentile territory (pig herders - not likely Jewish, seeing as how pigs were unclean animals).
 - Matthew speaks of two demon-possessed men. Mark and Luke focus on one of the two for whatever reason. They were so fierce that no one could pass that way. Mark says he lived among the tombs, and no one could bind him, not even with chains. He states he would break the chains and shackles in pieces. No one could subdue him. He would spend night and day among the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.
 - Legion - could be around 5,000-6,000 at that time. 2,000 pigs are possessed and run into the sea. There's no need to think there were five to six thousand, but if so (as Moore states), that would be 3 demons to every pig. He then writes, "No wonder they committed suicide." C'mon, that's funny. They know who Jesus is and even fall before Him, yet they have no business with each other. They beg to be sent into the pigs. They are aware the future includes being sent to the abyss.
 - **Abyss:** "By the end of the first century ad—when much of the nt probably reached its final form—the abyss became known as the place where God confines demons (see Rev 9:1–2; 2 Pet 2:4 and note; Jude 6 and note; compare Rev 11:7; 17:8; 20:1)." *John D. Barry et al., Faithlife Study Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Lk 8:31.*
 - The village, upon hearing what happened and seeing the demon-possessed man back in his normal state, was filled with fear and asked Jesus to leave.
- *What grabs my attention:*
 - Jesus tells the man to share what God had done. The man shares what Jesus did for him.
 - Share what you do know. Don't forget - it's the good news. What has God done in your life? It doesn't always have to be pointed at what another person is doing wrong.
 - These people ask Jesus to leave, but later, they will welcome Him. Jesus will feed the 4,000 there. Perhaps this is partly due to the man's testimony? Give people time.
- *What I want to share:*

- There have been mental battles I've had to face in life. That's the closest thing I can come to when discussing demon possession. We pray to Jesus and ask for relief or the strength to endure.
- There are times when I've been blessed with relief, and other times I haven't. The goal for me is not to follow or share good news about Jesus *once I have relief* but to do so whether or not my mental state is top-notch. And through it all - we can have peace and pain simultaneously.
- Jesus was in Gentile territory. I've seen "Gentiles" or "outsiders" spread the good news with more passion than I've seen in "insiders" at times. Let's be grateful!

Disease & Death (40-56)

- *Harmonizing and/or explaining the text:*
 - Jesus returns to the other side of the sea. The crowd welcomes Him. We're introduced to Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue. He has a 12-year-old daughter who is dying. He believes Jesus can touch and heal her. Meanwhile, as Jesus follows, a woman who had suffered from a discharge of blood for 12 years. She suffered much from doctors and spent all her money. Nothing helped. It only got worse! A woman with such a discharge would be unclean, and everything she touched and everyone who touched her would be unclean as well (Lev. 15:25-27). She'd heard about Jesus and knew she would be healed if she touched His garment.
 - Jairus is told that his girl is dead, but Jesus encourages him to have faith over fear. Jesus takes Peter, James, and John inside the house. Those weeping and mourning begin to laugh when Jesus states she isn't dead.
 - Jesus raises her from the dead. She immediately gets up and walks. Jesus instructs them to give her food and to keep quiet about what happened. However, that doesn't happen. They tell everyone, and His fame spreads through the district.
- *What grabs my attention:*
 - The demon-possessed man, a woman with the discharge of blood, and Jairus all kneel before Jesus. Jesus' authority over nature, demons, disease, and death is on full display.
 - Jesus is not made unclean by these three, either. When holiness enters into our realm, He makes us clean. We've seen this before.
 - Jesus helps everyone: Gentiles, poor women, and powerful men. Like the women who followed and supported Jesus - He is accessible to all. He doesn't do what's easy. Jesus had a long day and found no rest this one. Serving is not about doing what's convenient. Sacrifice should be felt, brethren.
- *What I want to share:*
 - Belief in Jesus and His word is what He's asking for. Do not fear. Believe.
 - Go and tell everyone what He's done for you. He's not asking you to be quiet.
 - I realized for the first time that if I understood Jesus' coming correctly, I'd never see any of this. By the time I pass away, sin, disease, and death will be gone. The need for healing will be no more. For sure, I would have loved to have witnessed these. Yet, I have a feeling I'll file no complaint when I'm home with God. His loving kindness will be experienced without end.