

JESUS, ONE ON ONE

RESPONDING TO THE POWER OF JESUS 2/19/2023

LUKE 8:26-39

MAIN POINT

Today's message will be on Jesus' personal interaction with people (From the gospel of Luke).

One person at a time, One conversation at a time, One act of kindness at a time. Jesus taught us the importance of focusing on the person in front of us. Throughout the gospel of Luke, we see a record of Jesus personal interactions with a variety of people. He demonstrated that impacting others begins by focusing on the person in front of you. Following His example, we learn to focus on one person at a time, engaging in one conversation at a time, demonstrating one act of kindness at a time.

The lesson will focus on: When we follow Jesus, we'll experience His power in our lives and testify to others what He has done.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Who was your favorite superhero growing up? Why? What was their weakness?

What would you say is your greatest strength? What about your greatest weakness? In what ways do your weaknesses motivate you to rely on Jesus? Give examples.

Power naturally elicits response. In Luke 8, Jesus encountered an army of evil spirits. These spirits had power over the man they possessed, but their power was no match for the inherent power of the Son of God. Through this encounter, we see people respond to Jesus in different ways. Their responses challenge us to recognize Jesus' power, welcome His power to remove evil in our lives, and tell people what His power has done.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 8:26-33.

Immediately after Jesus stepped out of the boat and sailed across the Sea of Galilee, a man possessed with demons confronted Him. The man was taken over by many demons who had completely invaded his body. His existence was an extreme distortion of humanity. He wore no clothes, lived among the dead, and even chains couldn't shackle

him. What's worse, the man was isolated from his community, driven to madness and hopelessness.

What name did the demon-possessed man use in addressing Jesus? What is significant about the fact that the man referred to Jesus in this way when he encountered Him?

Why do you think the demon-possessed man engaged in conversation with Jesus instead of running away from Him?

What do you learn about Jesus from this miraculous event?

Jesus' casting out the demons was not just a display of His miraculous abilities, but also of His power against darkness. The possessed man called himself "Legion", a name that did not simply denote a large number (5,600 soldiers would constitute a legion), but the term referred to a large, organized collection of soldiers who were connected to a greater army. In other words, these demons were a collection of evil spirits at war against this man, and ultimately against God. Yet at the sight of Jesus, they cowered and began to make the terms of their surrender.

The demons that controlled this man immediately recognized Jesus. They intrinsically knew that His power far exceeded theirs. Jesus is the "Son of the Most High God", and the demons knew that their fate rested solely in Jesus' word. In every display of glory, Jesus' power pointed back to His Father.

The demons begged that Jesus not send them to the place of eternal destruction (abyss), but instead into a herd of pigs. Their interaction with Jesus showed that they were fully aware of their final destiny. Their understanding of who Jesus was and their certain end was ironic in that Jesus' own disciples did not yet have this full understanding. Jesus' disciples had yet to realize the depth of who this "Son of the Most High God" was.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 8:34-39.

What were the Gerasene herdsmen talking about? The people of the surrounding country? The previously demon-possessed man? Who do you relate to the most? Why?

When the healed man begged to stay with Jesus, what kind of life do you think he was hoping to experience? How did Jesus change his understanding of what it meant to follow Him?

What does this story reveal about the different ways we can respond to Jesus?

This crowd reacted differently than other crowds. People who witnessed a healing or exorcism usually crowded Jesus with others to heal and help. Not the Gerasenes. They demanded that Jesus leave their region immediately. The cares of the world and the world's riches were too much for them. Their livelihood took precedence over human need. They expelled the most powerful and caring person in history without seeking His help for any of their friends and neighbors.

However, the healed man wanted to answer Jesus' call to follow. Jesus' response may have surprised him. For this man, following meant going back home and telling fearful friends and neighbors what Jesus had done for him. The man obeyed instantly. He took the good news to a town that had expelled Jesus, telling everyone exactly what Jesus had done for him. The call to faith is a call to commitment to the mission Jesus defines for us, not a call to the things we want to do.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What's preventing you from declaring Jesus' miraculous work in your heart and life?

How should knowing Jesus has authority over demons (and all things) impact those obstacles that keep you from declaring to others His power in your life?

What seemingly unconquerable forces in your life do you need to hand over to Jesus to heal? How might this way of living point others to the truth about Jesus?

PRAYER

Praise Jesus the Son of the Most High God, whose power and authority changes lives. Thank Him for the work He has done in your life, and invite Him to give you opportunities to share that with other people this week.

COMMENTARY

LUKE 8:26-39

8:26. The region of the Gerasenes was probably around the town of Gergesa (or Khersa), on the eastern coast of the Sea of Galilee. The name for this predominantly Gentile region came from the city of Gerasa, located about 35 miles to the southeast.

8:27. In the parallel account in Matt. 8:28, two demon-possessed men are mentioned. Apparently, Luke chose to focus on the one who did the talking. The phrase did not stay in a house but in the tombs may refer to an outdoor burial ground, but since the man was naked, it is more likely this refers to a cave, several of which have been found in that area.

8:28-31. The demon who spoke identified Jesus, just as the demons had in 4:34 and Acts 16:17. Son of the Most High was the wording used by the angel in speaking to Mary. Don't torment me probably refers to sending the demon to the abyss, a place where some of the demons are currently confined (Rev. 9:1-2,11). Demons enabled people whom they possessed to perform feats of great strength (he would snap the restraints). It is not clear whether Jesus was asking the name of the man or the demon, but the

demon answered. A legion of Roman soldiers was a force of 6,000. Thus, many demons possessed this man.

8:32-33. The presence of a large herd of pigs indicates that the region of the Gerasenes was heavily Gentile because Jews considered pigs to be unclean animals (Lv 11:7-8) and would never herd them. The cruel destructiveness of demons is seen in that, as soon as Jesus permitted them to enter the pigs, they caused them to drown in the lake (the Sea of Galilee).

8:34-37. Sitting at Jesus' feet is the position of a disciple (i.e., the pupil; see 10:38-42). The people were afraid when the demon-possessed man returned to normal, for Jesus had exercised a power that revealed His supernatural identity.

8:38-39. Because He had been asked to leave, Jesus told the healed man to stay in that region and testify to what God had done for him. The man obeyed by proclaiming all that Jesus had done for him.