

“Go tell” – Luke 8:39
THE POWER OF YOUR TESTIMONY

This sermon is about... and the reading for the month is Luke 8:39.
Let’s read the whole story Luke 8:26-39 & also Mark 5:18-20.

GOD’S WISDOM

Jesus saw it more important that the man stay. WHY?

The 2 words that Mark & Luke use mean, *pray, beg, implore, and plead* that the man might stay with Jesus.

The man had been an outcast, and had no friends. The verse even implies that the man was regularly imprisoned and broke free to the desert. (*The Amp. Luke 8:29; Mark 5:4*)

Q) *Wouldn’t you allow the guy to follow you around seeing that you are his only friend?*

Yet Jesus sends him back to those who turned from him. WHY?

Because Jesus knew the impact it would have.

Mark 5:20 says “and they were amazed, astonished, they marvelled”

Matthew Henry says in his commentary “*But Christ would not take him along with him, but sent him home, to publish among those that knew him the great things God had done for him, that so he might be a blessing to his country, as he had been a burden to it. We must sometimes deny ourselves the satisfaction even of spiritual benefits and comforts, to gain an opportunity of being serviceable to the souls of others. Perhaps Christ knew that, when the resentment of the loss of their swine was a little over, they would be better disposed to consider the miracle, and therefore left the man among them to be a **standing monument, and a monitor to them of it.***”

THE MAN’S TESTIMONY

He was once crazy, alone, dying, cutting himself, possessed demonically, naked, hurting
YET NOW...

He was sane, clothed, with his family, healed physically, free from the demons and alive!!
BUT Jesus had restored him **Physically, Mentally and Spiritually.**

Jesus said to tell of “*what the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you*”
God’s mercy and divine compassion drove Jesus to care enough to go across the lake to find the man. **He went only for him.** Mark 4:35; 5:21 – No reason to go except for the man.
WHY? Because God knew the man’s testimony would have a huge impact on the area.

Mark 5:20 – **The Decapolis – Ten Gentile Cities**

God’s heart is for evangelism!! **IMPORTANT**

WHY USE TESTIMONIES? – Because they are powerful

- **Oxford Dictionary** says a testimony is “*an affirmation, a statement; evidence*”.
- **The Bible** shows them to be
 1. a sign of salvation
 2. an act of obedience
 3. a sign of submission.

Testimonies are stories of experience.

They are powerful.

They allow us to share the gospel with someone without preaching at them.

TESTIMONIES

- Rabi Maharaj – “*The death of a guru*”

Rabi, before this, had grown up a son of a “god”. His father was a Hindu guru and he too was seen as deity. However, whilst having major doubts about his “deity” and faith, a few Christians invited him to a service:

“The preacher's sermon was based on Psalm 23, and the words, “The Lord is my shepherd,” made my heart leap. After expounding the Psalm, the preacher said: “Jesus wants to be your Shepherd. Have you heard His voice speaking to your heart? Why not open your heart to Him now? Don't wait until tomorrow -- that may be too late!” The preacher seemed to be speaking directly to me. I could delay no longer.

I quickly knelt in front of him. He smiled and asked if anyone else wanted to receive Jesus. No one stirred. Then he asked the Christians to come forward and pray with me. Several did, kneeling beside me. For years Hindus had bowed before me -- and now I was kneeling before a Christian.

Aloud I repeated after him a prayer inviting Jesus into my heart. When the preacher said, “Amen,” he suggested I pray in my own words. Quietly, choking with emotion, I began: “Lord Jesus, I've never studied the Bible, but I've heard that you died for my sins at Calvary so I could be forgiven and reconciled to God. Please forgive me all my sins. Come into my heart!”

Before I finished, I knew that Jesus wasn't just another one of several million gods. He was the God for whom I had hungered. He Himself was the Creator. Yet, He loved me enough to become a man and die for my sins. With that realization, tons of darkness seemed to lift and a brilliant light flooded my soul.

After arriving home, Krishna and I found the entire family waiting up for us, apparently having heard what had happened. “I asked Jesus into my life tonight!” I exclaimed happily, as I looked from one to another of those startled faces. “It's glorious. I can't tell you how much he means to me already.”

*Some in my family seemed wounded and bewildered; others seemed happy for me. But before it was all over with, **thirteen of us had ended up giving our hearts to Jesus! It was incredible.***

The following day I walked resolutely into the prayer room with Krishna. Together we carried everything out into the yard: idols, Hindu scriptures, and religious

paraphernalia. We wanted to rid ourselves of every tie with the past and with the powers of darkness that had blinded and enslaved us for so long. When everything had been piled on the rubbish heap, we set it on fire and watched the flames consume our past. The tiny figures we once feared as gods were turning to ashes. We hugged one another and offered thanks to the Son of God who had died to set us free."

Josh McDowell – a sceptic.

A typical, young & intellectual guy who wanted success and loved the comfortableness of life. Yet he began searching for more...

"After a couple of weeks, we were sitting around a table in the student union. I recall that six of the students were there and both of the faculty and one of their wives. The conversation started to get to God.

Let's face it: if you're an insecure student or professor or businessperson, or an insecure anything, and the conversation gets to God, you have to put on a big front. You know what I've found to be true? The bigger the front an individual puts on, the greater the emptiness inside. Well, I was putting on that kind of front.

Their talk irritated me. I wanted what they had, but I didn't want them to know it. I leaned back on my chair and tried to act nonchalant. I looked over at one young woman and said, "Why are you so different from the other students on campus?" She said two words I never thought I'd hear in the university as part of the "solution." She said, "Jesus Christ."

"Oh, come on," I fired back at her. "Don't give me that garbage about religion." She must have had a lot of courage and convictions.

"Look," she said, "I didn't tell you religion; I told you Jesus Christ." Well, I apologized to her because I'd been very rude - "Please forgive my attitude, but to tell you the truth, I'm sick and tired of that kind of thing. I just don't want anything to do with it."

Then you know what happened? These students and faculty challenged me to examine intellectually who Jesus Christ was. At first I thought it was a joke. How ridiculous! It was my opinion that most Christians had two brains. I thought one was lost, and the other was out looking for it! But these people kept challenging me over and over and over again, until finally I accepted their challenge.

I spent a lot of money to completely discredit Christianity, but it backfired. I concluded that Christ had to be who He claimed to be. "You came to that conclusion intellectually?" you say.

On December 19, 1959, at 8:30 p.m., during my second year at the university, I became a Christian.

That night I prayed. I prayed four things in order to establish a relationship with God, a personal relationship with His Son, the personal, resurrected, living Christ. Over a period of time that relationship has turned my life around.

Maybe five months after I made that decision for Christ, love for my (alcoholic) father, a love from God through Jesus Christ, inundated my life. It turned my hatred upside down. It enabled me to look my father squarely in the eyes and say, "Dad, I love you." After some of the things I'd done, that really shook him up.

When I transferred to a private university, I was in a serious car accident. With my neck in traction, I was taken home. I'll never forget my father coming into my room and asking, "Son, how can you love a father like me?". I said, "Dad, six months ago I despised you." Then I shared with him my conclusions about Jesus Christ. "Dad, I let Jesus come into my life. I can't explain it completely, but as a result of this relationship, I've found the capacity to love and accept not only you, but other people just the way they are."

Forty-five minutes later one of the greatest thrills of my life occurred. Somebody in my own family, someone who knew me so well I couldn't pull the wool over his eyes, my own father, said to me, "Son, if God can do in my life what I've seen Him do in yours, then I want to give Him the opportunity." Right there my father prayed with me and trusted Christ."

Both these men shared their simple testimony with their families and they became Christians. NO PREACHING, FANCY SEMINARS, JUDGEMENTALISM – Just what Jesus had done in their lives.

READ “THE ACORN” FOR TONY ANTHONY’S AMAZING TESTIMONY

HALF WAY – LOOK AT CLOCK!!!

Ben & My Testimony

When I came back from Italy I was a totally committed Christian. I was committed to Jesus Christ and to the power of the Gospel. I began to share my testimony with my friend Ben. He was stunned but not surprised as he knew I had always been different. At least now he knew I wasn't GAY!! Then I began to share with his mum, his dad, his girlfriend, our friends, one by one over 4 years. Me & Ben would be sitting there watching TV and a friend would ask about my faith. Ben's eyes would roll! “*Not again!*” he thought. Poor guy, he had to listen to my testimony over and over again.

But one time when explaining to Ben's dad about salvation, Ben, seeing his dad's confusion, exclaimed “*it's all about Jesus dad!! You have to believe in Jesus!*”

NEVER underestimate the power your words have on peoples lives.

I've shared my testimony to loads of people (work, football, family, friends, strangers) and it always has an impact on them, on 2 occasions directly leading them to Christ.

THE BIBLE & TESTIMONIES

- In Exodus 25:16 “*the Testimony*” is actually the Ten Commandments.
These are God's actions **against sin, within man** – OLD TESTAMENT
- In 1 John 5:11 we see that “*the Testimony*” of God has changed!
It's is **God's victory over sin in man!** – NEW TESTAMENT

The TESTIMONY is no longer God against Sin in Man but God's victory over sin & His life in Man!!

The Bible also says in:

- Rev 1:2 – John records Jesus' testimony because it is powerful.
- Acts 4:33 – The apostle's encouraged each other with their resurrection testimonies.
- Rev 11:7 – the 2 witnesses are killed because Satan knows the power of testimonies.
- **2 Tim 1:8 – Do not be ashamed of your testimony**
- **Rev 12:17 – the Saints overcame by the word of their testimony**

Our testimonies are so important. They maybe the key to the salvation of so many you meet!

CONCLUDE

What should ours include?

1. Where you were?
2. What changed?
3. What is the difference now?

e.g. – myself

1. I was scared of hell, had no security or purpose in life.
2. God showed me the pointlessness of a successful life without Him & revealed the gospel through an evangelism course. After I felt alive & forgiven.
3. God has helped me through very hard times, has changed my character for better, found me a wonderful wife & a house in London on my wage!!

The goal of our testimony is always Ephesians 2:8-9:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith. And this is not of yourselves; but it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast”

- **God has called us to share our testimony with those around us. Just like Jesus knew the impact the demoniacs' testimony would have, so He knows the effect your testimony will have on those around you.**
- *** Like Henry said, “we are a standing monument”, a constant reminder of God's power to change us. As you walk around work & see your family, if they know your testimony then they know you live & succeed because of God. BE SALT & LIGHT & A WITNESS TO WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR YOU.**

PLEASE COME FORWARD FOR PRAYER

Philemon 1:6 “I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ”

Ephesians 6:19 “Pray also...that whenever YOU open YOUR mouth, words may be given YOU so that YOU will fearlessly, make known the mystery of the gospel.