

Luke 8:22-39 Jesus' Mission Trip



1. Luke 8 has 2 sections; (1) Parables and teachings (8:1-21); (2) Miracles (8:22-56). Just like the parables of Jesus, unless we study the miracles of Jesus carefully we can easily miss the main message in them.
2. 4 miracles of Jesus are recorded here: (1) nature miracle; (2) deliverance from demons; (3) healing and (4) raising the dead. These are also the 4 serious troubles we can face in life: (1) circumstantial danger; (2) demonic oppression; (3) long-standing sickness; and finally (4) death which has the last word on everyone's life. Jesus encounters them one by one almost accidentally. Each time we find Jesus has absolute authority over them all, and they give way to Jesus. When we meet these challenges in life, either we react in fear or we respond in faith.

A. Miracle #1 – Silencing the Storm (8:22-25)

1. Jesus often tried to get away from the crowd, not only to take rest, but also to spend time with His disciples and train them. After the teaching crowd with the parables and redefining who His "true family" is, Jesus was now in a small boat, crossing the sea of Galilee. And He was fast asleep at the back of the boat in the evening time (Mk 3:38). This tells us that (1) Jesus was truly human, and he got tired; (2) Jesus could sleep anywhere anytime. Remember, it is uncomfortable to sleep in a boat, and it was not yet night time.
2. Suddenly the quiet lake was in turmoil by a raging storm and water was pouring into the boat. Sea of Galilee is a beautiful lake, 13 miles long and 8 miles wide, 700 feet below sea level and surrounded by hill on every side. During the day the water can get heated up by the sun, and the rising hot air can suck in the cold air from the hill and whip up a violent storm in a short time. It took a lot to get the hardened fishermen to get scared, and they were terrified. And Jesus is still fast asleep!
3. Three Rebukes inside the Boat:
 - a. The disciples rebuked Jesus: "Master, Master, we are perishing!" (v.24). C.f. "Do you not care that we are perishing?" (Mk 4:38). The disciples must have resented Jesus being blissfully asleep. "How can you sleep in the middle of the storm?! Shouldn't you get up and pray or something?"
 - b. Jesus got up and rebuked the wind and raging water: "Peace, be still", or literally "Hush, be muzzled." (Mk 4:39) These were the same words He used to rebuke demons. Instantly the wind stopped and the waves died down. Suddenly the lake is completely calm. What an experience it must have been!
 - c. Jesus turned to His disciples and rebuked them, "Where is your faith? Don't you trust God? Don't you know that you are safe with me even in the midst of the storm? Jesus expected His disciples to have faith in Him in the midst of the storm. He called their state of panic and fear "lack of faith".
4. The disciples' response to Jesus was fear, "Who on earth is this man?" *We thought we knew Him, but we don't know this man who has complete control over even the nature.* They were scared of Jesus, the man they had followed for the past 2+ years! This man had unimaginable power and authority.

Do we know who Jesus is, the Son of God? When we meet sudden storms in life, do we rebuke Jesus? "*Why are you sleeping, Jesus? Don't you care that we are perishing?*" Could Jesus be rebuking us, "*Where is your faith? Don't you know that you are safe with me?*" Is Jesus in the boat of your life?

B. Miracle #2 – Delivering the Demonised Man (8:26-39)

1. They sailed to the country of Gadarenes opposite Galilee (v.26), i.e. modern day 'Kheresa' in Decapolis.
 - a. On the east side of the Sea of Galilee is a steep hill, 700-800 feet high, that belonged to the gentiles. On top of the hill is a flat plain, and on the plain were the 10 cities, 'Decapolis'. You can see these cities still to this day in Greek architecture. These cities were the conquest of Alexander the Great, and the gentiles in these cities followed the Greek custom, thus the pig farm. Jews would never raise pigs as they were unclean animals. Between these cities and the Sea of Galilee lay a limestone hillside with many caves used only to bury the dead. It was so much easier than digging a grave - just put the body in a cave and close it up.

- b. It was now dark, and they just landed on the shores of this graveyard. It must felt like a haunted place! Then suddenly a man leaps out from among the tombs, screaming and running towards them. He is naked and bleeding with cuts and scars everywhere, and gashes around his wrists and ankles where he'd been chained and he's torn free of them. He has crazy hair, long nails, mad eyes. What would you do? *'Retreat! Back to the boat!' ???*

2. Deliverance of the Demonised Man

- a. When the man saw Jesus, he cried out with a loud voice and began to beg Jesus not to *torment him*. One major characteristic of demonic oppression is 'torment'. Demons were screaming, 'why is the Jewish Messiah coming into our territory?'
- b. Difference between 'mental illness' and 'demonisation' where a part of human personality is under demon's oppression or even control, is (1) 'crying with a loud voice' – there is often an involuntary outcry in the presence of God; (2) 'supernatural strength' – the man broke chains and shackles with his bare hands; (3) 'supernatural knowledge' - the disciples were wondering concerning Jesus, 'who could this man be?' (v.25) The demonised man just met Jesus and cried out, *'Jesus, the Son of the Most High God.'*
- c. Jesus asked the demon, "What is your name?" Sometimes we need to identify the demon by name to expel it. The demon replied, "Legion" or 'Battalion'. A Roman legion had 6000 soldiers! Some traumatic experience in the war may have been the origin of this man's demonization. The demons begged Jesus not to send them into the abyss, i.e. 'bottomless pit' which is reserved for Satan and his fallen angels (Rev 20:1ff). They asked instead to be sent to the herd of swine. Demons want to inhabit human body. If they cannot, they prefer the animals to the abyss. Jesus gave them permission, and immediately 2000 pigs feeding nearby rushed down the steep hill and perished. (In recent history when a demonised son of a pig farmer was delivered in Switzerland, the demons went into the pigs. The pigs went into a frenzy and started killing each other. So the farmer had to get a shot gun and put down those pigs.)

3. Reaction of the People

- a. The demonised man was now clothed and in his right mind sitting at Jesus' feet. But the multitude of the people of Gadarenes begged Jesus to leave. And Jesus just left. How sad! Jesus caused too much economic damage. They were ceased with great fear. (v.37) Healthy fear brings us to close to God to get right with Him. Unhealthy fear runs away from God and separates us from Him.
- b. The man asked to follow Jesus to go with Him to the Jewish side. Jesus told him to go back home and tell his own people *what great things God has done for him*. This was a difficult command. It was much easier for this man to go with Jesus than to go back to his own people. He was the notorious demoniac who'd lived among the tombs! But he obeyed and returned home and proclaimed throughout the whole city *what great things Jesus had done for him*. What Jesus has done is what God has done.

4. Lesson

- a. This was Jesus' first overseas mission trip into the gentile territory. Was it worth all the trouble? (1) The whole team almost perished on the way; (2) They landed in the haunted place, and they managed to convert only one demonised man; (3) They caused a significant damage to the local economy - 2000 pigs were decimated! (4) The people of the city asked them to leave!

When the team came back to Capernaum a huge crowd of Jews welcomed them back! Why did they even bother to go? All that trouble for just one demonised man? To God one man's soul is worth more than 2000 pigs.

- b. 'And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.' (v.39), i.e. the region of Decapolis. Next time Jesus is in Decapolis, 4000 men came to hear Jesus (Mk 7:31ff). Remember the parable of the sower? Who would have thought that this demonised man was the good soil which received the word and yielded 100-fold return?
- c. Note Jesus often asked the Jews on the Jewish side of the land NOT to talk about Him, but He didn't mind being talked about on the gentile side. Why? This is the 'Messianic Secrecy.'

C. Discussion

1. Have you ever felt overwhelmed by circumstances like the disciples were in the sinking boat? What emotion(s) best describe your inner thoughts? If you are in such a situation now, what do you think Jesus is saying to you?
2. Have you been confronted by a demonic oppression? How did you deal with it? Compare it to how Jesus dealt with the demonised man in Gadarenes. What did you learn from it? Pray for deliverance in the name of Jesus from any demonic oppression in your life.
3. Consider how much time and trouble it cost Jesus to minister to one demonised man in Gadarenes. Was the mission trip worth all the trouble? What can we learn from the value God puts on one soul?