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LESSONS FROM A MAN POSSESSED

“And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbath; and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority. In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are – the Holy One of God!’ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be quiet and come out of him!’ And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of the people, he came out of him without doing him any harm. And amazement came upon them all, and they began talking with one another saying, ‘What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits

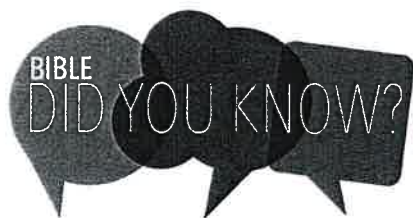
and they come out.’ And the report about Him was spreading into every locality in the surrounding district,” Luke 4:31-37. What business does a sinner have coming into the presence of Jesus? This is what the unclean demon wanted everyone in the synagogue to think when Jesus approached the man. Most likely, this is what the unclean spirits who have overpowered those today in the lusts of their sins have convinced the souls they inhabit to think. As we saw in the demoniac named “Legion” last week, we see initial resistance from the demons when confronted by the power of Jesus. Let us examine the statements made from the perspective of the unclean demon, so that we might be able to understand the responses of sinners who have been invited to come and hear about Jesus.

1) "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth?" You keep inviting them to come to services, to the VBS, the gospel meeting, the Friday night Bible study, but they still won't come. From their perspective, the resistance makes sense, as most likely, the demonic influences of sin in their life are convincing them they have no business coming anywhere near the presence of someone like Jesus. This won't be easy. 2). "Have You come to destroy us?" As much as our kind demeanor and patient spirit hopes to convince the one in sin that our church is "different", and not like others with a poor reputation of not receiving sinners well, there is still a haunting fear in the back of their mind that the only reason they are being "lured" into church by your sweet disposition is so the preacher can "destroy" their sinful lifestyle by raking them over the coals of hell-fire and brimstone in an attempt to guilt them into turning from sin. It is a steep hill to climb in convincing them to let go of their suspicious fears to accept the invitation. 3). "I know who You are – the Holy One of God!" As much as you try to let them know there's nothing "special" about you and you are really just a "forgiven sinner", they know who you are.

Your speech betrays you. You are a holy one of God, and they are not, and the very idea of being completely surrounded by 30 more "holy ones of God" is, frankly, just too much to put up with. So what is to be done? Bring them to Jesus. Just Him. I realize that this is the game plan with inviting someone to come to church; you are going to be bringing them to a message of Jesus. But consider the demon possessed man of Luke 4. The man was an audience member in the synagogue. Here is someone who "came to church" but was still overrun by demons. We can't simplify the problems demonic lusts and influences have in people's lives by simply telling them they just need to come to church. This man was coming to the "Jewish church" and wasn't helped until Jesus overpowered Him! Can we still have success in inviting people to church? Sure, if the Spirit of Jesus is actually there. Will it help bringing a sinner to church if all they see and hear is a judgmental attitude about the lifestyle choices of sinners? Jesus said don't judge lest you be judged. "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and it will be given to you. They will

pour into your lap a good measure – pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.” Luke 6:37-38. Will it help bringing a sinner to church if all they see and hear are the bitter complaints of everyone who was wronged or upset by someone that week? Jesus said love your enemies. “But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you,” Luke 6:27-28. Why should we be surprised when bringing someone to church or telling a fallen Christian all they need to do is get back to church doesn’t seem to work? It is kind of bizarre to use the “please come to church” as the quick-fix band-aid for serious spiritual sickness that requires intensive surgery if the Great Physicians ways aren’t even anywhere to be found in the building. It would be a lot like telling a man with a bleeding head wound to rush into the abandoned building down the block because it looks like a hospital, when no trained surgeons are anywhere to be found. The wounds created by the demonic influences felt in sin are deep, and will take someone more powerful than us and our bleeding band of

wounded disciples on the mend to heal them. They need Jesus. If it was with great resistance that even the demons left under the stern command of Jesus “Be quiet and come out of him”, do we really think a group of imperfect, healing reformed sinners at church can do much better? So yes, let’s invite them to meet Jesus by asking them to come to church. But if Jesus is nowhere to be found, don’t be surprised if they remain unchanged, or ever come back at all. – Daniel Ruegg



Jesus spent all night in prayer before choosing the Apostles. “It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles: Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew; and Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.”

Luke 6:12-16

People, Places, and Things of the **BIBLE**



SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Ron Wyatt discovered the ruined cities of Sodom and Gomorrah alongside the Dead Sea in Israel. Researchers and archaeologists have since uncovered the ruins of man-made limestone buildings which had been showered with sulphuric balls. The Bible says that God rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah fire and brimstone from the heavens. The definition of "Brimstone" means "stone made out of sulphur." The remains of the ancient city walls of Sodom and Gomorrah have 90 degree angles, cylindrical towers, square windows and arched symmetrical doorways. Researchers were astonished to find that there is no evidence of volcanic activity in the area. Sulphur is always mined around Geothermal sites. Where did this pure sulphur come from? The Bible has the answer in Genesis 19:24: "Then Yahweh rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from Yahweh out of the heavens." The Bible clearly informs us that the source of this brimstone had supernaturally come from Yahweh God out of the heavens. Archaeologists have easily pulled out sulphuric balls out of the ruins of limestone buildings of the city of Gomorrah. Amazingly, there are no other ancient ruined cities anywhere else on planet earth covered with pure sulphuric balls with its ruins turned into ash. Sodom and Gomorrah are unlike any other ancient cities of antiquity that have been destroyed by fire or volcanoes. Modern excavations of the Roman city of Pompeii found a layer of volcanic ash on top of the limestone structures but the original stone buildings were not also turned into ash. In

contradistinction, archaeologists have found that the entire limestone cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had been turned into ash through millions of highly concentrated sulphuric balls. The evidence proves that the actual city structures of Sodom and Gomorrah were turned into ash just like the Bible says. When limestone

rock turns into ash there must be very intense heat. The limestone buildings of Sodom and Gomorrah could not have turned to ash without very extreme heat from sulphur. The swirling designs on the sides of the structures provide evidence that these buildings were turned into ash by a process called thermal ionization. This occurs when limestone rock is burnt by incredible heat source.

