



# Study 6

## Luke 8:26-56

### **Big Idea of the passage:**

Jesus' absolute authority over the forces of evil, sickness and even death. Once again certain people from all different walks of life "get it" while others do not.

### **Main application:**

Do we really believe that Jesus can be trusted with every aspect of our lives? Our view of Jesus, his power and authority will have a direct impact on the degree to which we trust him.

### **THE ACCOUNT OF JESUS HEALING THE DEMON POSSESSED MAN. (VERSES 26-39)**

#### **Background**

We do well to overcome our innate skepticism which comes from us never having experienced anything like this. Our tendency is probably to approach the account in a rather detached manner whereas Luke's account is "vivid" and "visceral".

Some of the small details in the text can be of help here as we try and imagine what it would have been like to be present at the time.

**Storyboard** - film-makers use storyboards to help them imagine the sequence of the scene.

Let's throw some ideas around to imagine what it would have been like for the following people:

#### **1. The disciples**

Jesus steps out of the boat and perhaps he is the first to do so. We don't know whether they had any idea before arriving in the region about who or what was awaiting them. (They were arriving in Gentile territory so they could be forgiven for not knowing the reputation of that place.)

- 1.1. What thoughts would have been going through the disciples' minds as they saw this initial encounter between the man and Jesus? (His nakedness must have been a giveaway along with his general physical condition).
- 1.2. If you were charged with writing a script for your storyboard containing some verbal exchanges between the disciples still in the boat, what do you think they would have been saying to one another?

#### **2. The townsfolk from nearby**

The man was from the town. He would have been known by them. Perhaps they had seen him grow up amongst them and had watched his awful slide into the hellish life that he had been living for a long time now. Was he a victim of his circumstances? Certainly at the time that Jesus met him he was. He was experiencing a living hell and was a tragic case. Had he done anything beforehand that led to his current enslavement? Perhaps. We're not told.

If the topic of the man came up in polite conversation between people living in the town, what do you think they would have been saying about him? Think again of some storyboard exchanges.

- 2.1. What might you have felt if you had been a bystander witnessing the scene described by verses 28-29a?
- 2.2. How do you explain the fact that Jesus had already ordered the evil spirit to leave the man and yet so far nothing had happened? Can you think of any other time in Jesus' whole public ministry in which Jesus' command was not immediately executed? Why the seeming delay here?

### 3. Guards

- 3.1. What might have you felt like to be a guard assigned with the duty of guarding this man?
- 3.2. Instead of living in the town he lived among in the tombs and was driven by the demon into solitary places. What must have this represented for him and for others from his circle. How would have any Jews learning about his plight feel about him?

Note : a Roman legion was made up of 6000 men.

### Visceral

- 3.3. Can you imagine the tone and the tension in the air described in verse 28-29?
- 3.4. Why the repeated begging on the part of the demons?

Luke is almost laconic in his description of Jesus delivering the man, "he gave them permission". (verse 32). As the description of a definitive meeting of two super-powers representing the forces of good and evil coming to a head, this seems to be a bit of a non event.

- 3.5. What is Luke trying to tell us here?  
 Luke would seem to be telling it as it happened rather than trying to up the stakes. If we were inventing something to try to convince the reader of Jesus' great power we would probably want to make this look more like a struggle between 2 matched foes.
- 3.6. Finding the man now sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind, seems to generate even more fear that what the people had experienced before. How can we explain this?
- 3.7. The people of the whole region ask Jesus to leave. What is the significance of this?
- 3.8. Jesus command to "return home" must have been sweet music to the man's ears. Why?
- 3.9. What can we make of the seemingly deliberate parallel of the language of the verse 39, "... tell/told home/all over the town, how much \_\_\_\_\_ has done for you/him." What is Luke seeking to tell us here?

### **THE SANDWICH - THE HEALING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER AND THE WOMAN WITH THE FLOW OF BLOOD. (VERSES 40-56)**

People's desperate need for what Jesus offers seem to cross even the greatest of social boundaries as demonstrated in this section.

1. There has already attention drawn to Jesus' feet in the previous section (see 8:28, 35). Where do we see this continuing here?

2. Twice Luke highlights the rapidity of the woman's healing as a result of touching Jesus' cloak and this contrasts with the long duration of her illness (vv.43, 44, 47)
3. What do you think might have been included in the woman's explanation as to why she had touched Jesus in verse 47? Does verse 48 shed any light on this?
4. Why the difference in Jesus' instructions to the demoniac compared with those given to the girl's parents? (vv 39, 56)

### **TAKE HOME MESSAGE**

Remember from chapter 1:4 that Luke is writing this work so as to give certainty to the reader about what they have been taught. What are you certain about as a result of reading Luke's account of the three events described in this section? How do you think that this certainty will affect you in the coming days? Can you think of ways that you will be changed by this certainty? If so, please share it with the group and pray together about each of your responses.