

October 30

Luke 8:26-39

Mark 4-6

Matthew 8-9

These are familiar stories we read today. Perhaps as we look at them again together, we will find a new excitement by what we learn of Jesus Christ - and of ourselves! Matthew, Mark, and Luke are in absolute agreement about the chronology of these events. They followed one another in quick succession.

Here are three applications from these events:

1. From the stilling of the tempest, we need to learn, with the disciples, that safety is wherever Jesus is -- even if that's right in the middle of a storm.
2. From the Gadarene Demoniac, we can learn that there is no such thing as a case that's too hard for Jesus.
3. From the story of Jairus' daughter and the woman with the issue of blood, it is phenomenal to see how Jesus, in the midst of a certifiable crisis, stops to deal with an anonymous woman whose physical need had already disappeared when she touched Him. But Jesus, as busy as He was, stops to be sure that she understands not only what has happened physically, but also the spiritual implications of her new situation. If He wasn't too busy then for her, He won't be too busy now for you!

These are simple to understand story by story, but lets look at the stories as a whole also...

In all three of Jesus' adversaries (nature, demons, and sickness and death), it is possible to discern the power and presence of Jesus over Satan.

It would be possible to miss that connection, at least in the first event, the stilling of the storm, because violent storms are a regular occurrence on the Sea of Galilee. However, in ancient times, the sea was connected with the idea of chaos, the abyss and evil. Seas are not tame or predictable. Things that get lost at sea die and/or never return. To defeat the sea is to symbolically defeat evil.

With a word He rebukes the storm, and instantly the sea and the wind are calm, and the disciples are left in fear and amazement. Well, nature is no match for Jesus. He exercises complete and total dominance. Even the wind and the waves obey him.

Shift to the story of the demoniac. Once again -- it is no contest. There is not just one demon in this guy, but a legion - a roman military term for 1000. Jesus breaks the demonic hold with just a word. The battle is over almost before it begins.

Jesus apparently believed in demons and encountered very, very many of them. A This make us ask the question today, are we just missing them? Well, when God begins to do special things in the history of redemption - when the progress of revelation is making a great leap forward – as, for example, during the time of Moses, or the Old Testament prophets, or most of all, during the time of Christ, we see bigger levels of miracles AND bigger levels of demonic activity. That is why the Gospels are full of demonic activity while in other times and other places it seems more placid and quiet on the spiritual warfare front. Demonic effort was strategically focused around the nation of Israel during Jesus' life. But they are still active today. And we need to be carefully discerning to note the difference between simple mental illness and demonic oppression.

I also think that demons manifest themselves in different ways in different cultures. In animistic and tribal cultures, they may express themselves in ways that are obvious, scary and drive people toward fear. In more developed countries, they are more clandestine - masquerading as greed, materialism, success and busyness. They whisper subtle lies about our identity, the church, parents, or Jesus. Remember, their goal is not for us to believe in them, but to cause us to not believe in or follow God... If they can keep you from God, they are happy. They are alive today, but look different in different places.

In our third example, Jesus demonstrates power over sickness and death. Without even trying, power leaves him to heal the bleeding woman. Then he raised Jairus' daughter from the dead.

So, put it all together and you have all the things Jesus has power over - Nature, Demons, Sickness and Death. Matthew, Mark and Luke are all setting up and argument for the power of Jesus over everything.

It does not matter what your standard of comparison might be. Jesus is more powerful than that. He is more powerful than the biggest army, than the smartest academic, than the most powerful storm, than a legion of demons, than sickness or even death. This humble carpenters son is the most powerful being in the universe. That's because he is God. He proved it and is worth trusting.