

Luke 8:26-39



Theme Sentence

Jesus has unparalleled authority, but some will be 'offended' (7:23) at him.

Context

See **Saviour, Judge and King** p54-55 (*More about ... the Themes and Structure*).

8:26-39 is the second story in a sequence of four (in the section 8:22-56, where the third and fourth stories are interleaved). This story divides into two (roughly equal) halves: **miracle** and **reaction**.

26-33 **Jesus has unparalleled authority over enormous problems**

(... in all four miracles: a storm of 'great danger' [23-24], a man out of human control but under the control of a 'legion' of demons [set to destroy an entire herd of pigs], a woman beyond human healing [43] and death).

34-39 **Some people are 'offended'** (cf 7:23) **at him**

Luke shows that people react to this Jesus in line with 8:4-15, as he sows the word. 'Fear' (25, 37) at the naked power of God is not enough. It's 'faith' (25) that Jesus looks for (cf 48, 50); but instead he often encounters the ugly rejection that asks him 'to depart from them' (37).

Verse-by-verse

- 26 This is Gentile territory, where Jesus will leave a witness behind (39).
27,29 Luke piles up words to stress that this demon-possession is beyond help.
28 'Son of God' has not reappeared since 4:41: the demons recognise that the 'Son' has come to do battle with them, just as Satan did (4:3,9).
30 The size of a 'legion' varied (- roughly 6,000 troops): but size is not the issue when confronted with the might of the Son of Most High God.
30-33 See **Saviour, Judge and King** p51-52 (Supplementary note). The sea (and especially a rough sea of 22-25) is thought to be the home of all that opposes God, so appropriate for demons who ask for 'the abyss'.
35b A lovely three-some to describe the work of God in this individual's life: now seated (not roaming), with Jesus (not alone), clothed (not naked).
36 What they tell is how he was 'saved' (lit) ... namely, by the Saviour!
37 To now ask this Saviour of men to leave is a blatant rejection of all he is. Luke tells us twice why they ask this (35,37): it's fear (... of what?).
39 The man starts to preach (= the theologically-loaded word of 4:18-19, 44).

Application

- **who Jesus is.** Jesus shows the extent of his power ... he can even save the unsaveable! This means that even the hardest-hardened atheist is not beyond his reach. Do we believe this is true even of our loved ones?
- **how people react.** The Saviour who liberates the oppressed (cf 4:18-19) would, you'd think, be universally welcomed. How strange that people so violently hate the one who comes to do them such good!

Group Study Outline

Luke 8:26-39

Theme Sentence

Jesus has unparalleled authority, but some will be 'offended' (7:23) at him.

Launching Question

Think of someone close to you who is not a Christian: can you explain why not?

READ Luke 8:26-39

Questions

Compare 35 with what has gone before, and describe the change.

What did the man proclaim through the whole city? write his testimony for him!

How does Luke make clear that this demon-possession is 'worse' than 4:33-35?

How might the man be helped by watching what happened to the pigs?

Explain the reaction of 'all the people' (in 34-37).

Why do they respond in this way, and in what way is their response wrong?

Read 8:5-8, 11-15. How is this story an example of that parable?

Why does Jesus so meekly agree to their request?

How is the previously-possessed-man disobedient (!) in 39? with what results?

Thinking it through

How does this story help us understand who Jesus is?

How does this story help us understand the magnitude of what he came to do?

In what ways would this story challenge the more modest assessment by today's 'man on the street' of who Jesus is and what he came to do?

How does this story help us to understand people's reactions to Jesus?

Why do our friends and family ask Jesus to go away and leave them alone?

What did it mean for this man to sit at Jesus' feet? (! ... cf 38b-39a)

This man is to 'declare' when elsewhere Jesus orders silence (eg 4:41; 5:14): why?

So why does Jesus not go away when the demoniac asks (28), but does go away when the people ask (37)?

Application

If Jesus can do this, do we believe that his authority is genuinely over everything?

How does 8:5-8, 11-15 help us understand what is going on in this story?

If people so wholeheartedly rejected Jesus the Saviour then, why are we so surprised when we discover that they do the same today?!

How does this story help us with those we'd love to become Christians, but who seem so hardened in their rejection of it all? (is the Saviour unable to save?!)

A final thought:

Legion's salvation cost the life of a herd of pigs. Our salvation cost the precious life not just of animals, but of a man; and not just any man, but The Man.