

## **Becoming Part of Somebody Else's Story**

### **Luke 8:26-39**

#### **Introduction:**

1. People love to see before and after pictures. In an effort to get you to buy their product, weight loss programs use these all the time. And the same goes for workout programs, muscle-building programs, wrinkle-removing creams, etc.
2. This morning, let's look at a true story of a man that had quite a dramatic before and after picture. We examined this story last week, but we looked at Mark's account. This morning let's read Luke's account and let's see the before and after. Read verses 26-27 and 35.
3. Quite a before and after! What led to such an incredible change? Jesus Christ took a personal interest in this man. Verse 28 says, "*When he saw Jesus...*" This is when things began to change. This man had quite a story to tell and he told it! vs. 39
4. If you are saved today, you have a story. Somebody impacted you with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Somebody cared and reached out to you. Somebody made a difference in your life. Who was that somebody? Maybe it was several people. They are part of your story, your story of salvation and redemption.
5. If you were to tell me your conversion story (how you came to know Jesus), you would tell me about them and the impact they made on your life. What an honor for them to be part of **your** story!
6. But I have something to ask you, are you part of anybody else's story? In other words, has God used you to bring others to Jesus? Did you know that God will gladly use you to be a part of somebody else's story?
7. Your life can have a divine, eternal impact on others. How? Let's learn from the greatest evangelist that ever lived – Jesus!

#### **First, look for divine opportunities.**

1. Jesus arrives by boat in this area with His disciples (vs. 26). He gets out of the boat and notice what it says in verse 27, "*...there met him...a certain man.*"
2. This was a divine opportunity, but it didn't look like it on the surface. Let's read on (vs. 27-28). The disciples were probably like, "He's a

- crazy man. Let's get out of here." But Jesus saw this man and saw a divine opportunity.
3. It reminds me of a man that I met one time, whom I invited to church. He cussed me up one side and down the other. I ended up several weeks later leading that man to Jesus Christ, and he became involved in our church.
  4. I believe we have opportunities every day to make an impact for Christ, but many times, we simply are not aware and sensitive to those opportunities. We pass them up and allow the opportunity to minister Christ's love pass by.
  5. Jesus didn't do this. He stopped what He was doing and reached out to this man. In turn, this man told his story to everybody, telling them "*...how great things Jesus had done unto him.*"
  6. I have said this before and I will say it again, some of our greatest spiritual opportunities come disguised as interruptions.
  7. Society tried to put this guy away (vs. 29). When that didn't work, they simply hoped that he would disappear into the mountains or die in the cemetery by cutting himself.
  8. This guy had hit rock bottom, but Jesus was there and saw the opportunity to impact this man, seeing his life radically changed.
  9. Christ lives in you, and He can use you too, but you must look for divine opportunities.

### **Second, engage others in spiritual conversations.**

1. Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" (vs. 30) As Jesus engaged this guy in conversation it became apparent that he was in major demonic oppression and in bondage. vs. 30-33
2. Nothing ventured; nothing gained. One sure way to **never** be a part of somebody else's story is to never talk about Jesus to others. You have to open up a conversation, leading the conversation toward God and Jesus Christ.
3. This is how Jesus found out what was going on with this man, and we must do the same thing. When you do this, you put Jesus on their radar screen. For many people, He isn't. Oftentimes, they have given no thought to Jesus, God, heaven or hell. This man and the demons that controlled him never gave any thought to Jesus until he was confronted with Jesus.

4. So by talking to people, you at least put Jesus on their radar to where they are, in the very least, forced to think about Him and spiritual things. This is where it all begins.
  - **Illustration:** My testimony.

### **Third, know when to walk away.**

1. Did you know that we can't save anybody? Paul said, "I have planted; Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." You can't force a person to become a believer.
2. Some people need time. One conversation isn't going to do it. Some people are intimidated and fearful when you talk about spiritual things. This is normal. We are all intimidated by things that we know little or nothing about. This happened in our text (vs. 34-37). (In fact, they cared more about pigs than people.)
3. Not everybody Jesus met was converted. Jesus encountered some rejection. So, when that happened, what did Jesus do? It says in verse 37, "*...he went up into the ship, and returned back again.*" Jesus walked away. He didn't push it down their throat. They saw, they heard. The seed had been planted. Now it had to be watered and fertilized, which this man would do (vs. 39).
4. Jesus was now on their radar, whereas before, He wasn't. What they saw and heard could never be erased from their minds.
5. If you invite somebody to church or tell somebody about Christ, they may not be receptive, at first, but that's okay. Walk away, but walk away knowing that you did your part. You may get an opportunity to water that seed later, or another person might.

### **Fourth, keep telling your own story.**

1. In this town, Jesus was only able to lead this one man to salvation, but what a difference it made in his life. That man became an ambassador and just kept sharing his story.
2. There is no telling how many people, especially those who initially rejected Christ, ended up coming to Christ because of this man's testimony.
3. This man wanted to go with Christ when Christ left (vs. 38). But Jesus had something different for him to do. Jesus was like, "No, you stay here. You've got a mission field right here. There is a harvest for you right here. You stay here and keep telling your story."

4. If you are saved today, just like this man, you have a story. Keep sharing your story with others and before long, you'll become part of somebody else's story!