

Luke 8:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying,

Analysis

Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, The healed demoniac's response contrasts sharply with the crowd's rejection. "Now the man out of whom the devils were departed" (edēito de autou ho anēr aph' hou exelēlythei ta daimonia, ἐδεῖτο δὲ αὐτοῦ ὁ ἀνὴρ ἀφ' οὗ ἐξεληλύθει τὰ δαιμόνια) identifies him by his deliverance—his defining characteristic is now freedom from demons, not possession by them. "Besought him that he might be with him" (edēito autou einai syn autō, ἐδεῖτο αὐτοῦ εἶναι σὺν αὐτῷ) expresses intense desire for discipleship, to remain in Jesus' company permanently.

His request seems reasonable—why shouldn't the most dramatically delivered person become Jesus' follower? Yet "Jesus sent him away" (apelysen auton, ἀπέλυσεν αὐτὸν) redirects his calling. The verb apelysen (sent away, dismissed, released) indicates authoritative commission to different service. Not every delivered person is called to follow Jesus geographically; some are commissioned to testify where they are. The man wanted to be with Jesus; Jesus wanted him to be His witness in the Decapolis.

This passage teaches that deliverance creates obligation to testify. The man's dramatic transformation—from naked, violent, demon-possessed tomb-dweller to clothed, peaceful, sound-minded disciple—gave him unique credibility as a witness. His testimony among people who knew his previous condition would be more

powerful than an unknown itinerant preacher's words. Jesus strategically deploys witnesses where they'll have maximum impact. Sometimes discipleship means staying home and testifying, not leaving everything to follow geographically.

Historical Context

The Decapolis was predominantly Gentile territory where Jesus had limited ministry during His earthly life. His primary focus was "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24), though He occasionally ministered to Gentiles (Centurion's servant, Syrophenician woman, Gadarene demoniac). By commissioning the healed man to testify in Decapolis, Jesus planted gospel seeds in Gentile soil that would bear fruit in Acts as the church expanded beyond Jewish boundaries.

Mark 5:20 records the man's obedience: "he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel." The verb "publish" (κηρύσσω) means to proclaim as a herald—formal, public announcement. His testimony prepared the region for later ministry. When Jesus returned to Decapolis (Mark 7:31-37), crowds brought the deaf and mute for healing, suggesting the healed demoniac's witness had created receptivity.

Early church missionary strategy often followed this pattern: convert individuals, commission them to witness in their communities, return later to build on established awareness. Paul's missionary journeys demonstrate this methodology—initial evangelism, commission local believers to testify, return to strengthen churches. The healed demoniac becomes the first Gentile missionary, commissioned to evangelize his own people using the powerful testimony of personal transformation.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does Jesus' refusal of the man's request to follow Him teach about different callings and forms of discipleship?
2. How does personal testimony about transformation often carry more weight than external preaching in reaching skeptical communities?
3. In what ways does Jesus strategically deploy witnesses where they'll have maximum impact rather than keeping all delivered people near Him?

Interlinear Text

ἐδέετο δὲ αὐτὸν ὁ ἀνὴρ ἀφ' οὗ ἐξεληλύθει τὰ
besought **Now** **him** G3588 **the man** **out of** **whom** **were departed** G3588
G1189 G1161 G846 G435 G575 G3739 G1831

δαιμόνια εἶναι σὺν αὐτὸν ἀπέλυσεν δὲ αὐτὸν
the devils **him that he might be** **with** **him** **away** **Now** **him**
G1140 G1511 G4862 G846 G630 G1161 G846

ὁ Ἰησοῦς, λέγων
G3588 **Jesus** **saying**
G2424 G3004

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