

# Matthew 9:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

## Analysis

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The healed men disobey Jesus' command: 'But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country' (οἱ δὲ εξελθοντες διεφημισαν αὐτον εν ολη τη γη εκεινη). Their disobedience seems well-intentioned—gratitude overflowing into testimony. However, obedience matters more than enthusiasm. Their public proclamation creates the very problems Jesus sought to avoid: crowds seeking miracles, intensified opposition, hindered teaching ministry. This illustrates common error: assuming good intentions justify disobedience. Faithful witness requires obedience to Christ's methods and timing, not just proclamation of His power. The passage warns that even testimony can become sin when it violates Christ's explicit commands. Zealous disobedience isn't faithfulness but pride.

## Historical Context

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Word-of-mouth communication in first-century Palestine spread news rapidly through family, trade, and social networks. Miracle reports traveled fast and grew in telling. The healed men's testimony, though disobedient, contributed to Jesus' growing fame and the opposition it generated. Mark's Gospel particularly emphasizes the 'messianic secret'—Jesus' commands for silence about His identity until the cross could properly interpret messiahship. Disobedient testimony complicated Jesus' mission by attracting crowds with wrong expectations.

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How can enthusiasm for Jesus lead to disobedience to His clear commands?
2. What is the difference between faithful witness and presumptuous proclamation?
3. When might testimony about Jesus actually hinder His purposes if not conducted according to His wisdom?

## Interlinear Text

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οἱ	δὲ	ἐξελθόντες	διεφήμισαν	αὐτὸν	ἐν	ὅλῃ
G3588	<b>But</b>	<b>they when they were departed</b>	fame	his	in	all
G1161		G1831	G1310	G846	G1722	G3650
τῆ	γῇ	ἐκείνῃ				
G3588	<b>country</b>	<b>that</b>				
	G1093	G1565				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Mark 7:36** (Parallel theme): And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it;

**Matthew 9:26** (Parallel theme): And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.