

Attitude #10 . . . Loving Servant

Matthew 5:13-16 Jesus said: "You are the salt of the earth; . . . You are the light of the world . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

As a new creation in Christ, I share with others the Good
News of a risen Savior who makes His people whole.

A Christian is described as a disciple and a disciple is a "follower of a teacher". If I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, I have been given certain expectations about the Christian life. One of the most important expectations for the believer is to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

2 Peter 3:18 - But grow (increase, grow up) in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.

Notice the meaning of the word grow in this verse; it means to "increase, grow up". There is no way that we will ever live like a Christian until we learn how. To pretend that we do know when we have never learned will lead to our frustration and/or failure. To assume that we know something when we do not and live in a pretentious way as if we do would be hypocritical.

The activity of the life of a disciple of Christ will be a direct result of their learning. It will never happen any other way. What Jesus taught; He modeled. As he modeled what He taught, He taught His followers to do the same. The result was a contagious response to the teaching of Jesus Christ. Every person that was saved by the grace of God was to accept their God given responsibility to be a servant. We cannot say that we are truly followers of Christ if we are not servants of Christ; these two things go hand in hand.

John 12:26 - If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.

The following story is an example of a man whose life was in a bad way. Everyone had given up on him. His life had no purpose for himself or anyone else; in fact, he was a danger to himself and perhaps others. How can he have any kind of purpose and where could he possibly serve considering who he was and how he was? We will see!

Mark 5:1-20

1. **Verses 2,4 & 5 - What the man was like. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 Who**

had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: **4** Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. **5** And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

We would be hard pressed to find someone as bad off as this man was. Just by his description we would agree that he was a case that many had given up on. He made his dwelling in a graveyard. The people tried to constrain him there by placing chains and fetters on him, but to no avail. He is described as having no relief for himself wherein verse five says, "**And always.**" His torment manifested itself in him crying out and self mutilation. If there ever was a worst-case scenario, we have one here, the worst for the people, the worst for the man but not the worst for Jesus!

Jeremiah 32:27 - Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?

No doubt the details may have been different for all of us, but the fact remains, as bad as it was, we are never out of the reach of God in order for things to begin and continue to get better.

2. Verses 3 & 4 - What people tried..... and no man could bind him, no, not with chains....neither could any man tame him.

After all the other methods for a cure had failed, their last resort was containment and confinement. To the people's credit, we can be certain that their motives may have been pure and good but sadly their methods fell short of success. This man's battle was spiritual. Jesus Christ is the answer for every spiritual battle, many are not won overnight. A relationship with Jesus Christ is the answer. When we enter that relationship by receiving Christ as our Savior and we begin to learn and grow in His word as our focus. Following this decision, we can begin and continue to win the battles of life.

Proverbs 21:2 - Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.

3. Verse 15 - What the man received. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

After his encounter with Jesus Christ, we have no further description of the man than what we have just read. It would be an understatement to say that this description after his encounter with Christ is quite the opposite of his description prior to meeting Christ. Notice that Mark speaks of his prior description with regard to the past....**"And see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion"**. Then we see his description after his encounter with Christ....**"Sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind"**.

Anyone would agree that this was a new man. Prior to knowing Jesus, he was out of control and now he is found sitting. He is **"in his right mind"** while previously there may have been no hope for that.

Sin disturbs the mind. It corrupts our thinking, and it destroys the purity of our thoughts. This man had now been miraculously renewed in his mind by the power of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul instructs us to renew our mind (**Romans 12:2**) so the sin that once controlled us will no longer do so. We now have the Holy Spirit to control our flesh, and our flesh no longer must control our Spirit.

Galatians 5:16 - This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust (desire) of the flesh.

Romans 8:8 - So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

4. **Verse 18 - What the man desired. And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.**

Who could blame the man for making the request that he made to Jesus? After reading about his condition and knowing the miraculous change that had taken place in his life, anyone would want to go with Jesus wherever He was going, or would they?

There are many testimonies like the one that we read in this story. We know of testimonies of people who had little hope or no hope at all, being hurt, hurting themselves and/or hurting others. Their cases were much like this man's case; other people tried everything they could to help but to no avail. Then through a series of circumstances that only God Himself could orchestrate, they meet Jesus, have their sins forgiven and the promise of heaven and rapid change begins to take place. Unlike the man that we read about in this story, some people believe or assume that their journey with Christ can be stopped and started anytime that they feel the need to do so. In other words, they might follow Jesus out of convenience rather than follow Him out of necessity.

Perhaps he was fearful of reaping what he had sown in his anger and his rage by the town's people whom he caused so much trouble. What I do know by personal experience and the witness of many others is that when Jesus has delivered you, we will begin to have a desire to be near Him.

The Application:

One very costly mistake that a Christian can make is to walk away from God when the work in their lives that He began is still unfinished. You and I are robbing ourselves and grieving the heart of God when we only allow Him to put things back together enough to where we believe that we can "take it from there" and become foolish enough to walk away from Him.

5. Verse 19,20 - What the man was told. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, *Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.* 20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

- Where He told him to go - *Go home to thy friends*

The first thing that Jesus told the man to do after he had an encounter with Him was to go home. Go home to the people that knew you best before you met Me. Go home to your "area of influence," where people know who you are and know how you were.

We might think that those who knew him before might have been glad that he was gone. However, despite his past, anyone who loved him would be blessed by his deliverance.

Always consider: Until you gain the knowledge to be able to express the change that you know is taking place in your life, you should already be able to express that change by the way you are living. When you do so, you will find that the people that know you best will be the ones initially that will see the greatest change. But be prepared for times when those that do know you best are still skeptical of the change that is taking place in your life. Understand that several months of doing well does not necessarily make up for years of rebellion! Keep in mind that it is not their fault when they are having difficulty trusting you, you may have given them good reason.

- What He told him to say - *tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee*

Notice that Jesus did not give him anything to do that he was not capable of doing. He simply told him to go home and tell the people the **"great things the Lord had done for him."** He did not mention that he would understand how it all happened or why it all happened. Just go home and tell them what you know, that God has done great things for you!!!

Do not fall into the trap of assuming that everyone or anyone owes you anything simply because you are acquiring some clean time. One sure way that I have seen that a person is growing in the Lord is when they begin to see other people that have the same need they have, and they reach out and invite them to get help.

He told him to serve Him by his experience. No sooner had he been set free; he was now sent out. So then, we see that this man did not wait for days, weeks, months, or years before he was able to be used in the service of the Lord. Verse 20 tells the whole story, **"And he departed and began to publish in Decapolis, how great things Jesus had done for him, and all men did marvel"**.