

June 22, 2025

Second Sunday After Pentecost

“What Jesus Has Done For You”

Luke 8:26-39

When you receive really good service from someplace you tend to tell people about it, don't you? I have a roofer that has done extremely well by me. He's caring. He does quality work at a competitive price. He shows up when he says he will and gets the job done. I've recommended him to so many friends and neighbors that when I had some minor roof damage happen a few years ago he came over and fixed it for free. That's how much I like him and talk about him.

That just how it is. Great food and service at a restaurant? You pass it on. A great book or movie? You tell people. Lola's got like half a dozen ladies in this church reading some series by some author she really loves! This is just how it works.

And it's not like people have to drag the information out of us either. If a conversation veers anywhere near the book, movie, restaurant, contractor or whatever the thing we're so impressed with, we usually find a way to blurt out our piece. You naturally want to declare the truth of how good this whatever was to you.

And you may have guessed where I'm going with this. We are this way with just about any product or experience that impresses us with the notable exception of the One who has done us the greatest service for us—Jesus Christ our Lord. In my experience most Lutherans are as excited about doing evangelism as they are about getting a root canal.

Now I get it that all these other things I've talked about are trivial in comparison to Christ. Forgiveness of sins unto eternal salvation is the weightiest of all topics and no one is going to give you a whole lot of flack if you think one Thai restaurant is head and shoulders above the rest. You may get significant push back because of how the way of Christ clashes so much with the worldly culture around us. But you know how good this Gospel is! Why are we not eager to pass it on, like we are with so many lesser good things?

Probably the most frequent answer people give is, “I don't know enough about the Bible to be able to speak intelligently about Christ. I can't answer all the questions.” Bull. This is a complete cop out.

If you go to a great seafood restaurant, you don't leave saying, “Gee, I wish I could tell other people about it but I don't know the oil they use or the temperature at which they cook their oysters. I don't know the chef's name, how long they've been in business or their profit margin in the last fiscal year. How can I possibly tell anyone about them?” You know they make great oysters and serve them with a smile. That's enough.

Jesus tells this formerly demon-possessed guy in the Decapolis, “*Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.*” Pretty simple marching orders. So he goes home and speaks of what Jesus has done for Him. He doesn't know how Jesus did it. He's a gentile, so I'm pretty sure he doesn't know Jewish prophecy or the ins and outs of the coming of the Messiah. But he certainly knows what he knows and can tell folks what Jesus did for him.

There is absolutely no reason we shouldn't do the same. It's pretty obvious you know what Jesus did for you. You just said it in the creed a few minutes ago. You know your sins are forgiven. It's happening all the time by your Holy Baptism, by absolution and the Word of promise, by the body and blood in the Holy Supper. You know that even though you die, you shall live forever. Jesus has done this for you.

And I'm not saying you have to be exactly like this guy in the Decapolis. Let's face it. This guy is a special case. He was possessed by a multitude of demons. Jesus proves His divine authority by casting the demons into that herd of pigs that then charge to their death in the sea. This guy is then told by Christ to proclaim what happened to folks back home. This pig-slaughter is going to be big news and this guy at least for a while will be a celebrity, the guy at the center of the story. At Jesus' behest he uses this platform to publicly spread the news.

You aren't called to that vocation. But you do want to be sharing what God has done for you because it's all so good! And people need it! You weren't possessed by demons, but you were dead to God in your trespasses and God changed all that by His grace in Christ. Others need that same grace, so don't be silent. You'd be kind of a jerk if you discovered the best crawfish etouffee in south Louisiana and didn't tell those you love about it. How much more dastardly to keep life in Christ to yourself!

And I'm not saying you have to stand on a soapbox either. Just be intentionally public with your faith in your actions and your words. A lot of us have family and close friends who we're worried about because they don't practice the faith and are even opposed to it. Pray for them and let them know you are doing so. If you get in a conversation about how messed up this world is, casually drop in there that you're looking forward to the next life where all that strife will be gone. If they're concerned about your health problems as you age, acknowledge that death is inevitable but you're looking forward to living forevermore with Jesus. When someone bemoans that the New Orleans Saints have lost three games in a row, voice how thankful you are to be one of the saints always victorious in Christ!

I'd love it if we all became on fire for Jesus and the spread of his Gospel through us. But I also know Lutherans, the frozen chosen, and how evangelism terrifies us. I'm just suggesting a baby step here. Intentionally try to put the joy you have in what Christ has done for you out there among folks in general, but especially those you think need it. Don't preach. Don't persuade. Don't make it about your words convincing and saving another. Just be willing to happily signal what you know Jesus has done for you. Look for opportunities to do so.

You may be surprised by the reaction. St. Peter writes about *"always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you."* Your open faith may cause others to inquire why you have such hope. Don't panic. Simply tell them about you; what Jesus has done for you. Don't tell them they need to get religion, straighten up their life or go to church. Tell them the reason you have such peace and hope. Tell them what Jesus has done for you. Tell them what you know to be true by faith. If they want to talk more, fine. If things get weird and they want to drop the subject, fine. Your witness is out there. What you know, you've said. The Holy Spirit will work as He will.

That guy in the Decapolis did not have all the answers. I'm sure lots of people were asking questions that were beyond Him, but all he could say with authority was what Jesus had done for Him. That's enough. I'm sure a good number of people desired to know more about this Jesus guy. Later on, when someone else came along proclaiming this Jesus guy's death and resurrection, they were open to hearing the message. The Holy Spirit worked as he would and some received, believed and were saved.

Please think about this. In the long run you stand saved from the same fate as that guy in the Decapolis—cursed and separated from God's grace. Christ changed that for Him and for you. He is a really, really good Savior—to good not to be shared. Do the good and loving thing for those around you by your actions and words. Put it out there; how much Jesus has done for you.

Amen.