

Deviled Ham

Sunday Morning, May 31, 2015

Thesis:

No Matter What Condition or Situation Our Lives Are In, GOD CAN DELIVER US!

Introduction:

I want to tell you a fable.

Once there was a man who, while walking down a country lane, grew weary in his travel. Seeing that he was passing by an orchard of apple trees, he chose a particularly shady one in the middle of the orchard and lay down in the rich, green grass underneath to sleep.

After what seemed to him only a few minutes of dozing, he was rudely awakened when an apple fell from the tree, striking him on the head. As his mind cleared from slumber, he realized what had happened, and at the same moment noticed that he had grown hungry. Grateful for the ready food, he picked up the apple, leaned back against the tree and began to eat.

In the middle of his second bite of the crisp fruit, he noticed another man standing by the tree and looking up into its foliage. "Sir, what are you doing?" He asked.

Without taking his eyes off the branches above, the second man answered, "I am waiting for the tree to give me an apple."

The man on the ground took another bite of his meal while pondering the answer he had received. Swallowing, he shrugged and said, "Sir, the branches are not high, why not just reach up and pick one?"

After a brief pause, and again without looking away from the limbs above him, the man answered, "I know that if I remain vigilant and patient, the tree will give its fruit."

He did not appear anxious to talk further, so the first man went back to his apple and his own thoughts.

Presently, a third man came walking through the orchard with a steady and purposeful gait. The man on the ground watched him approach with interest, but the other man only continued looking up into the tree.

The third man strode directly to the same tree, uttered a polite grunt (the kind you might hear from someone not wishing to be rude, but also not willing to be distracted from his task), then he reached up to a low branch and picked an apple. He examined it, turning it in his hands for a moment, then with a nod of approval he picked a second apple, turned and began to walk away.

"Why the hurry sir?" asked the first fellow. "It's such a pleasant afternoon; wouldn't you like to sit in the shade with me while you eat your fruit?" Without turning or even shortening his stride, the third man called back over his shoulder, "One apple is not for me. It is for my child. He is weakened by illness and unable to come to the tree himself. But I have heard that this tree produces the finest apples in the orchard, and I know that if I bring him one it will give him nourishment and strength. I must be off to supply him. The second apple is for me to eat on the way. Good day to you sir."

Swallowing the final bite of his own apple, the man on the ground lifted a hand to wave and said, "Good day, Sir", but he doubted the retreating form was still close enough to hear. After a moment more he decided to get on with his journey. He stood to go, but before moving on and not wanting to be rude himself, he turned to the second man to bid him farewell. Before he could open his mouth to speak however, he saw the man reach up into the tree and pluck a red, lush apple from a branch.

"Why sir," he exclaimed, "I see you have chosen not to wait after all!"

Finally turning his gaze from the tree, the second man, polishing the apple on his garment, smiled and said, "I grew very hungry, and the more hungry I grew, the less willing I found myself to wait. Besides, I knew the tree wouldn't mind. After all," he continued after puffing a breath at his apple, "does not the tree bear fruit for the very purpose of feeding all who come to it?"

Thoughtful, the first man turned and headed back toward the road. As he left the tree line he looked back and saw the other man sitting contentedly in the shade of that wonderful tree partaking of its fruit; and even from that distance he thought he could see a wide smile of contentment on the stranger's face.

I. There's A Battle For Men's Souls

(Luke 8: 26 - 27a)

26 Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee.

27 And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time.

Powers of darkness fought against this man.

(Ephesians 6:12)

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Many people live among the dead.

(Ephesians 2: 1 – 2)

1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,

2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

II. Sin Robs Us Of Hope (Luke 8: 27b)

And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs.

Sin brought him to a place of no modesty or shame.

A sinful heart can be identified by lack of modesty.

III. Sin is Self-Destructive

The alcoholic, drug addict, low self esteem consumed, materially consumed, power/fame orientated and the sexually promiscuous are degrees of destroying self, and the life God has given.

Inward pain is sometimes relieved by self-afflicted outward pain.

IV. God's Power is Greater Than Any Sin

(Luke 8:28)

When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!"

Satan and Demons are no match for God!

Fell down before Him, but not for worship.

(Philippians 2: 10 – 11)

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Demons believe the truth of Hell and of Heaven, but many people do not.

V. There is Deliverance For the Desperate
(Luke 8: 29 – 33)

29 For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; & he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness.

30 Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him.

31 And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.

32 Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them.

33 Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.

- † Legion "Name", approx 6000
- † Demon's request honored? Why?
- † Evidence of how many: 2000 pigs
(Matt 8 and Mark 5)

We need to be aware of the reality of demons.

We need to be aware of the destructiveness the demons can cause in our lives.

VI. Accepting Jesus Always Results in Change
(Luke 8: 34 – 36)

34 When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country.

35 Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind & they were afraid.

36 They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed.

Demon possessed man changed

(II Corinthians 5:17)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

(Luke 8: 38 – 39)

38 Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying,

39 "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

As with the newly changed demon possessed man, we should want to go with Jesus.

VII. Following Jesus Always Involves Choices
(Luke 8: 37)

37 Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned.

- ✝ Jesus was asked to leave
- ✝ For fear that He would change and disrupt their lives.

Do you fear change or disruption to your life from following Jesus? _____
What do you fear? _____

God's changes are meant for the best for us and come from an all-knowing, all-loving, all-wise God.

Conclusion:

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