

“THROUGH THE BIBLE”

PASTOR SANDY ADAMS

LUKE 8:19-9:17

The South American country of Bolivia gained its independence from Spain in 1825. But since becoming a country, Bolivia has had over 190 different governments. That's an average of nearly one revolution a year. Who's on the throne in Bolivia? *Ask me tomorrow and we'll let you know. It changes daily!*

But that's not an issue in the Kingdom of God. In tonight's passage Jesus proves He is sovereign over nature, demons, disease, even death. Isaiah prophesied “the government will be upon His shoulders...” and “of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.” Jesus is the indisputable King over all God's creation!

Yet sadly, Jesus' own brothers refused to see His majesty until after His resurrection. We learn tonight the demons believed before His own family.

We pick it up, verse 19, “Then His mother and brothers came to Him...”

Notice, Luke doesn't mention Joseph. It's assumed that by now Joseph had died. According to Matthew 13:55 after the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph had at least four more sons, and two daughters. Here, Jesus' mom and brothers track Him down. *They're concerned. They need to talk...* But they “Could not approach Him because of the crowd. And it was told Him by some, who said, ‘Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You.’” His family was hoping for one-on-one time.

Luke doesn't actually tell us why Mary and the boys wanted to see Jesus, but perhaps they could see He was on a dangerous course. Jesus was agitating the religious hierarchy. An ugly collision was on the horizon.

According to John 7:5, at this point, Jesus' own brothers didn't believe in Him. He was *their brother, Mary's boy* – how could He be *God's Son*?

Perhaps Mary saw His identity a bit clearer. She had more information. Yet on Jesus' last visit home to Nazareth, He was almost thrown off a cliff.

His brothers questioned *His sanity*. Mary cared about *His safety*.

In verse 21 Jesus redefines His family. “He answered and said to them, *My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.*” *Did His words hurt Mom?* I'm sure. *Did they bother His brothers?* You bet. But you can't please God and not offend your unbelieving family.

Jesus' comment was true. There're ties that run deeper than physical family. Allegiance to God is stronger glue than the same last name. Earthly relationships last 60-70 years, but the family of God is eternal. It's been said, “*Blood is thicker than water, but Spirit is thicker than blood.*”

Jesus' real family is those who climb aboard the boat of faith!

Verse 22 “Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, “Let us cross over to the other side of the lake.” And they launched out.” Notice, His words, Jesus said, “*Let us cross over...*” You won’t go *under* when Jesus promises you’ll “*cross over.*”

“But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy.”

The Sea of Galilee is notorious for changing weather. One year we experienced this firsthand. We arrived on top of Mount Arbel under clouds and in a mist, but within minutes the clouds cleared and the sun broke out.

But this can happen in reverse – sudden storms arise. The lake sits 685' below sea level and it's surrounded by mountains 3000' high. The topography of the region is shaped like a funnel. Cold air pours in from the north, over the Golan Heights, and collides with the hot air on the lake. Storms pop up with no warning.

In 1992 ten foot tall waves crashed into downtown Tiberias causing extensive damage. In ten foot waves a small fishing boat doesn't stand a chance. Luke puts it, “*They were in jeopardy.*”

“And (the disciples) came to Him and awoke Him, saying, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” The boat is rocking and rolling - taking on water. It's about to capsize. The disciples are in a panic... *while Jesus slumbers.* You've heard the expression, “*He can sleep through a hurricane*” – well, it was literally true of Jesus. Obviously, He wasn't the least bit frightened.

“Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm...” Jesus did to storm what He did to the fever that racked the body of Peter's mother-in-law – He “*rebuked*” it.

Rebuke is how you put a demon in its place. Could it be this storm was Satan's attempt to drown Jesus - God's only means of our salvation?

But Jesus not only rebuked the storm outside the boat - He rebuked the lack of faith in the boat. “*But (Jesus) said to them, “Where is your faith?”*”

This is the point of a storm. *The stress in my life is a test of my faith.* If King Jesus is aboard your boat - the Lord who is sovereign over wind, waves, weather, and nature – then don't come unglued. Trust the Captain.

Realize that our lives are like the Sea of Galilee. Serious squalls can pop up in an instant. Panic and fear can fill our hearts. Yet we have nothing to fear when Jesus is in our boat. He can calm a storm with a single word. We need to learn to trust Him, even when He seems to be asleep.

“And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, “Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!”

In Luke 5 after Jesus told the paralytic to rise and take up his mat - and he did - the people responded, “*We have seen strange things today!*” They were enthralled in what Jesus had done. But now after he commands the storm, they ask, “*Who can this be?*” Notice their curiosity has graduated.

They've gone from *what to Who* - but Jesus will take them one more step... In chapter 9 He'll discuss *where?* They know *what* He did - *Who* He is – and they'll need to know *where* He's going. He's headed to the cross.

Verse 26 “Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee.” *Gadara* or *Gergesa* was on the eastern bank of the lake.

“And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs.” The topography east of the lake is different from the western shore. The eastern bank ascends rapidly. It’s the beginning of the Golan Heights. The area is dotted with numerous caves. These caves or tombs were the demoniac’s home.

Here was a madman. A gang of demons had stolen his sanity. He walked among the caves naked, and ostracized, and lonely, and angry.

“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!” The demon spoke through this man. It’s ironic, after Jesus rebuked the sea, the disciples asked, “Who can this be?” But the demon already knew - Jesus was the Son of God.

Verse 29 tells us, “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; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness.”

Doctor Luke gives us a glimpse into this man's horrible existence. Demonic seizures would grip his entire body. Demon possession caused him to thrash around with supernatural strength. The guy went berserk. Not even shackles could restrain him.

“Jesus asked him, saying, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” because many demons had entered him.” A Roman legion was an army of 6000 troops. Obviously, multiple demons had taken up home inside him. I like how J Vernon McGee translates the demon's answer, “What is your name? And he said “mob.” A mob of demons possessed this man.

Verse 31 “And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.” Here’s a revealing insight into the nature of demons. Demons don’t like to be disembodied spirits. They seek a house, a habitation, a person’s body. The Holy Spirit inhabits a believer to *transform* Him into the image of Jesus. Evil spirits seek to inhabit an unbeliever to further *deform* the image of God in them. Demons specialize in vandalism.

In Matthew 12:43 Jesus said, “When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’” Demons desire a body.

“Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. And they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them.” Understand, a demon cannot inhabit a Christian! God’s Spirit lives in believers, thus the Holy Spirit won’t bunk with evil spirits. 2 Corinthians 6 makes this clear, “What fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with belial (or Satan)?” The Holy Spirit will never hang out with an evil spirit, so a Christian can never be demon possessed.

If you're a Christian, and a demon walks by he sees a “no vacancy” on your shingle. On the other hand, if you don't know Christ you're vulnerable.

Demons want a body, preferably a human body, but when there’s not one available, any body will do. Any body is better than no body.

Demons sing, "If you can't be with the one you love, honey, love the one you're with." This is why they asked to be sent into the swine. Apparently, a *gig* with a *pig* is better than no gig at all.

"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."

This story helps illustrate the depravity of the human spirit. Sadly, this man had tolerated the presence of demons for a long time. Yet the pigs couldn't handle them for a few minutes. As soon as they entered, the pigs went nuts. They ran "violently" down the slope. You could say "the swine flu." They rushed down the slope into the lake. They went *hog wild*. The pigs drowned. Apparently, they committed "*souey*side."

But don't feel too bad for the pigs I'm sure they went on to *hog heaven*.

"When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country." It became known as "*the case of the deviled ham*." The pig-feeders told the story to the townspeople of Gadara.

"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. And they were afraid. They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed."

Notice three signs of mental wholeness...

First, **the man was under authority**. He was sitting at Jesus' feet. He was no longer thrashing about wildly - he was sitting calmly. He had accepted responsibility for his actions, and surrendered his life to Jesus.

Second, **he returned to a moral center**. He was clothed. The demoniac's nakedness revealed a lack of shame. The demon robbed the man all since of morality, and decency, and self-respect. I see a close connection between demonism and nudity. Satanic influence will mute a man or woman's natural inhibitions. They'll throw off restraint. The fact the man was now clothed indicates he's returned to sanity and a sense of right and wrong.

Third, **he's in his right mind**. He's once more thinking clearly. He's has a new outlook. He no longer fears Jesus. Gone is the paranoia caused by sin. The man is now able to accept and receive the love of Jesus.

And this threefold picture of sanity is a great description of what Jesus wants to do in all men. Jesus brings us under His authority! We repent of our sin, and submit to His Lordship... He restores morality and integrity to our lives... Then He frees us from fear and helps us receive God's love...

Verse 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." One commentator describes their reaction as, "**too much change, too fast, and they were scared**."

Often folks get use to their bondage. They accept sin as the status quo. When Jesus works a miracle it upsets the apple cart and irritates people.

But I suspect there may've been more. They obviously were raising swine - and sausage and bacon were off-limits to the Jews. Perhaps they feared Jesus would damage their economy if He stayed and settled down.

The story isn't quite over, "Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, '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."

This is the common command Jesus gives to a new convert. Family and friends are those who can best appreciate the difference Jesus makes in a person's life. Before you charge the world to preach the Gospel, head home - and share the change Jesus made in your life with those who know you best.

Verse 40, "So it was, when Jesus returned (to the other side of the lake and Capernaum), that the multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him. And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue." When we go to Israel I always teach a Bible Study in Jairus' synagogue. It's one of the best preserved in all of Israel.

On this day the ruler of the synagogue, a dignified Jewish leader, "Fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying." It must've been quite a sight - a powerful, religious figure humbling himself - bowing in desperation - at the feet of the itinerate preacher from Nazareth.

Yet few experiences in life tackle a man's pride and bring him to his knees faster than a threat to one of his children, especially his little princess. This man was desperate! His daughter's life is on the line.

"But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years..." Notice the contrast. How old was Jairus' little girl? *She was 12!* She'd been born with a silver spoon in her mouth. For 12 years all she'd known was a *merry* life - whereas those same 12 years had been *misery* for this woman. They both were ending a dozen years - one would *pass from life to death* - the other *from death to life*.

And isn't this how life works - *you never know what's next*. Expect the unexpected! Circumstances can change radically without any warning.

Notice too, Luke tells us, this woman "had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any..." Today this woman would be a candidate for a hysterectomy. Isn't it interesting that we learn from Doctor Luke, not Matthew, that she wasted all her money on physicians?

Jewish doctors had some strange remedies for women with menstrual problems. The Talmud, a book of rabbinical commentary, proposed eleven cures for this malady, and all of them were outlandish. *For example...* If she carried a kernel of barley corn found in the *dung droppings* of a white female donkey she'd be healed... If she took three pints of Persian onions, boiled them in wine, and drank them she'd be healed... This woman wasted her savings on such cures, and was still bleeding to death.

And the worst dimension of her suffering wasn't physical, but spiritual and social. A woman with this malady would be unable to enter the Temple or synagogue. She was barred from public worship. The little lived in her daddy's synagogue. This woman was forbidden to enter its doors.

But she "came from behind and touched the border of (Jesus') garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped." In Jewish culture the border or hem of a person's garment spoke of their authority. This woman believed that Jesus was King over nature. He had authority over sickness and if she could just solicit His authority He'd deliver her from her dreaded illness.

Verse 45 “And Jesus said, “Who touched Me?” Recall, they were passing down a crowded street. It was like a mosh pit. Folks crowded in on all sides. “When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, “Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, “Who touched Me?””

But Jesus said, “Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me.” It’s been said, “God loves each one of us as if there were only one of us to love.”

Imagine, our Lord gets prayed to every minute of every day by millions of believers around the world. Heaven’s switchboard blinks like a Christmas tree. Yet Jesus always has time to take each call.

I believe He already knew who touched her, but He wanted to give the woman the opportunity to step out of the crowd and acknowledge her faith publically. This is why pastors sometimes give altar calls. Jesus knows us *privately and personally*, but He wants you to respond to Him *publically*.

“Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately.” I wonder why she was reluctant to step forward. Perhaps she felt she had encroached on Jesus. She didn’t understand His willingness to heal... Or maybe she thought he’d demand payment, and she didn’t have it – *recall her experiences with the Jewish doctors...*

I love what Jesus says to her. “Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.” Tonight, if you’re miserable, if you’ve wasted all your money searching in vain for silly cures, if you’ve looked in all the wrong places - *stop right now, reach out, and touch Jesus!* Believe in His power and authority – and let Him stop the bleeding in your life.

But what about Jairus’ daughter, verse 49, “While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house, saying to him, “Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher.” But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, “Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well.” Evidently, Jairus believed the Master’s confident words.

“When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl.”

Peter, James, and John were the inner circle of the inner circle. Three times Jesus singled them out – *here, when He was transfigured in all His glory on the mountaintop, and when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.*

“Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, “Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping.” Her death is not permanent, but temporary. This is a unusual diagnosis. Have you ever heard of a case of “temporary death?”

Apparently, the Jews hadn’t. “And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead.” In light of the diagnosis we probably would’ve done the same.

“But (Jesus) put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, “Little girl, arise.” Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately.” Jesus raised this little girl from the dead. It was a miracle! But notice, before Jesus works *the miracle* He drives out *the mockers*.

Sometimes the mockers are smart-eleck friends who question God’s power. Sometimes they come from within, and take the form of our own doubts and cynicism. But miracles

happen most often in an ambience of faith - an atmosphere of praise. If you're looking for a *miracle* - first get rid of the *mockers*. Put them outside, and fill your heart with faith and hope.

“And He commanded that she be given something to eat. And her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.” Once again, this command was primarily for crowd control. If word spread He'd raised the dead imagine the rubbernecks.

Yet do you think these parents obeyed? I doubt it. How could they! Their little girl was dead, and now alive. How could they not praise God!

Chapter 9, “Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.” People were flocking to Jesus, whereas it was Jesus' desires to take the ministry to the people. He wanted to strike while the iron was hot. It was time to launch out.

Here He commissions and empowers His 12 disciples for their first foray into ministry. “And He said to them, “Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece.”

In other words, *travel light!* I like Peterson's paraphrase. “Don't load yourselves up with equipment. Keep it simple; you *are* the equipment.”

Jesus says, “Whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart.” Don't bounce around looking for better accommodations. It's not *where you stay* - it's *what you've been sent to do* that matters.

“And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them.” And here's another verse that still applies. Don't linger too long where you're not wanted. There're plenty of folks who'll welcome the good news of Jesus. Why waste years knocking on a dead heart where nobody's home, when other people are waiting to hear the news? “So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.”

Verse 7 “Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again. And Herod said, “John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?” So he sought to see Him.”

Herod Antipas tried to get *ahead* in life by beheading John the Baptist.

John called him and his wife, Herodias, on the carpet for their evil lifestyle. She schemed to have John silenced. But now another voice from God is sounding. Jesus is on the scene and He's making Herod nervous.

It's a good sign when God's servants make the evil men a little antsy. It's been said, “Jesus disturbs the comfortable and comforts the disturbed.”

Verse 10 “And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done.” Remember, this is their first venture into ministry. Imagine their excitement that God had used them. The excitement was contagious. They couldn't wait to get to the clubhouse and celebrate with the team.

“Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida” – which means “*house of fishing.*”

Bethsaida was a fishing village located on the northern shore of the lake, where the headwaters of the Jordan feed into the Sea of Galilee. Here the water is warmest. It’s the site of the lake’s best fishing.

“But when the multitudes knew it, they followed Him; and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing.” It seems Jesus planned a debriefing for His disciples. After their own time of ministry they were primed for instruction. But the crowds interrupted His plans. He ends up loving and healing the masses.

And evidently, it went on all day. Verse 12, “When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, “Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here.” The disciples were concerned. Verse 14 says there were 5000 men – that means 15,000 women and children. There could’ve been 20,000 mouths to feed! And this was a rural area. There wasn’t a single Waffle House in sight!

“But (Jesus) said to (His disciples), “You give them something to eat.” And they said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people. For there were about 5000 men.”

Apparently, the disciples had canvassed the crowd, and all they could come up with was one little boy’s sack lunch - *5 tortillas and 2 sardines.*

“And He said to His disciples, “Make them sit down in groups of fifty. And they did so, and made them all sit down.” Note Jesus was organized. 1 Corinthians 14:40 tells us, “Let all things be done decently and in order.” Jesus practices what He preaches. He gets ready for distribution.

Here’s a great lesson for us. If we really believe God works miracles we will organize for it beforehand. I’m already planning a new wave of *Through the Bible Groups*. The optimum size for a TBG is 10-12 people, and as we grow we’ll need more groups. The time to *organize* and *mobilize* is now.

It’s been said, “*Don’t agonize organize.*” We learn that from Jesus.

“Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude.”

Notice the four things Jesus does with the bread... He takes, blesses, breaks, then gives... This is what He does with us!

He takes us from the world, blesses us in Christ, and He wants to use us – but we’re not yet digestible. We have to be humbled and broken – of pride and self-sufficiency. If not, we’ll cause indigestion. People will choke on us. It’s only after we’re broken that we can be given to feed others.

Of course, the process of our brokenness is never pleasant. God uses people and situations to humble us. It’s often painful, humiliating, costly – *that’s why it’s called brokenness!* It’s no fun when God squeezes us. But it’s absolutely necessary. *Brokenness always follows blessedness.*

When brokenness comes we tend to ask, “*What happened to God’s blessings?*” We assume God has abandoned us. Not so! God’s blessings will flow again, but for right now God is getting you ready to be used.

Verse 17 “*So they all ate and were filled...*” It was a molecular miracle. The Master tinkered with the atomic structure and multiplied a lunch-able.

“*And twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them.*”

Notice, there're always leftovers when the Lord does lunch. He takes our *meagerness* and turns it to *much* – even leftovers! It’s ironic that there were 12 baskets – *one for each of the 12 disciples*. It was as if Jesus made a personal point to each man that he could trust the Lord with *his* needs.

When we give our all to Jesus - no matter how *small* that *all* happens to be – Jesus will take it and multiple it. He enlarges its *impact and influence*.

Though Jesus started out that day with a single order of fish and chips, we're told “*They all ate and were filled.*” It was a miracle of multiplication!