

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XXX

March 1, 2020

No. 09

Jesus' Don't Tell Policy

(Jerry Fite)

Jesus had just asked the question regarding His identity. After informing His disciples that He would build His church and offer access to the Kingdom, Jesus “charged the disciples that they should tell no man that He was the Christ” (Matthew 16:20, Mark 8:30, Luke 9:21). One moment He is asking, “Who do men say that I am?”, and then He charges His messengers to tell no man of the truth the He is the Messiah, the Son of God.

This is not the only time Jesus’ don’t tell policy was in place. Jesus came to the Sea of Galilee and put His fingers in the ear of a deaf man and then spat on His fingers to touch the tongue of the afflicted man who was also dumb. The man’s ears were miraculously opened, and his tongue was instantly loosed to speak before the multitude. Jesus “charged them that they should tell no man...” (Mark 7:36a). We know the more He charged them, “so much the more a great deal they published it” (Mark 7:38b). Did Jesus, knowing man as he did, charge them to not do something so it would be published the more? Was Jesus playing a psychological game?

On another occasion the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue died. Jesus took her by the hand and raised her up to life, and commanded that food be given her

to eat. While her parents were filled with amazement, Jesus “charged them to tell no man what had been done” (Luke 8:56).

When Jesus healed a man who was “a leper,” Jesus said, “See thou tell no man; but go, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift of Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them (Matthew 8:4, Luke 5:14).

Why were these miraculous events to be kept quiet? Why was Jesus’ identity as the Messiah not to be published when learning that He was to establish Heaven’s plans upon earth?

The answer, to these questions may lie in observing the times and places he wanted men to tell others of Him. When Peter, James and John observed the transfiguration of Jesus upon a high mountain, Jesus charged them that they “tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be risen from the dead” (Matthew 17:9, Mark 8:30, Luke 9:21). After the resurrection, Jesus’ earthly ministry would be completed. Till then, much attention could arouse the Jewish leaders to come after Him more vigorously, making it more difficult for him to spread the good news of the Kingdom.

While in the country of the Gerasenes, Jesus miraculously healed a man afflicted with many demons. Jesus charged this man to stay behind in Decapolis, a confederation of ten Gentile cities, and tell those close to him “how great things Jesus had done for thee and how He had mercy on thee” (Mark 5:19).

The fact a great herd of swine was feeding nearby indicates a large Jewish presence or influence was not as great in this area as there would have been where Jewish leaders and a synagogue existed. In such areas of heavy Jewish presence, Jesus put in place His don’t tell policy. But away from the Jewish leaders’ presence and hostile interference, spreading the news of Jesus’ miraculous power and mercy was expedient.

Telling the leper to go first to the priest, showing he was now cleansed, would establish Jesus’ miraculous power before the leaders of the priesthood, without public commotion.

Today, Jesus’ earthly ministry is completed. He has been raised from the dead and is currently ruling His everlasting kingdom from Heaven. We should be busy telling others about Jesus’ confirming power and His saving mercy.