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Sharing the Gospel Well

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Sharing the Gospel Well

Abstract

"Return home, and tell how much God has done for you."

Posting about our Christian witness from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/sharing-the-gospel-well/>

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Disciplines

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service](#) at Dordt College.

Sharing the Gospel Well

 [all in allthings.org/sharing-the-gospel-well/](http://allthings.org/sharing-the-gospel-well/)

Nathan Tittle

“Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me”— for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” He said, “Legion”; for many demons had entered him. They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.”—Luke 8:26-39

I frequently wonder and think about how to share the gospel well. Aside from my most recent experiences teaching at Christian colleges, my entire life was spent attending and teaching at non-Christian schools and universities. In those multi-religious settings, I often felt unable to represent who I truly was for fear (real or imagined) of what others would think, say or do. My form of evangelism was probably best summed up by a student who, one time outside of a class I was teaching at a large state university, said to me “There is something different about you. Are you a Christian?” I remember feeling an immediate sense of pride – “Yes, I thought. I’ve done it. I’ve been able to, without saying a word about my faith and simply through my actions, demonstrate my faith!” Even before those me-centric, prideful thoughts finished traveling through my brain, the student challenged me to be more open about my faith, saying, “But, aside from me, who wasn’t even sure, how would anyone else in our class know?” And, therein, lies the paradox that I so often struggle with: In a broader world that is, always has been and always will be, hostile to Christianity, how can I best be a light when I am in situations and with people who are non-Christians?

- How can I show love by inviting people to church, but not making them think that church attendance is the litmus test of salvation?
- How can I show love by sharing the word of God with others, but not making them feel judged like a former non-Christian neighbor who shared the judgment he felt for mowing his lawn on Sunday when anonymous neighbors left a Bible on his doorstep?
- How can I be a light to non-Christians when I have workshops to lead, conferences to attend and professional talks to give on Sundays? Participate? Don’t?
- How should I participate in conferences or write in journals which have different opinions than mine on issues like abortion or the use of viable human embryos in genetics research?

When I read Jesus’ miracle about healing the demon-possessed man, I typically have tended to focus on the actions

and words of the demons and the pigs. But, I find what happens next in the story quite interesting. After Jesus is asked to leave, the man who had been demon-possessed begs to go with Jesus, but Jesus doesn't let him saying "Return home and tell how much God has done for you."

As I reflect on this story, and my own struggles with how best to share the gospel, I am challenged to think about how I can, perhaps, focus more on how I can share stories of miracles, grace and mercy that have happened to me personally, just as the demon-possessed man is challenged to share his own story. I believe that this will help me be able to worry less about the rules I follow (or don't follow – [1 Corinthians 9:19](#)), while not being ashamed of the gospel message I bear ([Romans 1:16](#)) and consistent with ultimately trusting in the Holy Spirit to do the hard work of changing hearts.