



Conducted by
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“ When Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus to life (Luke 8:56) why did He charge the parents to tell no man, yet at other times (such as in Luke 8:39) tell the recipient of His miraculous powers to go and show how great things God hath done. Why the apparent inconsistency? ”

It is true that Jesus on several occasions gave strict instructions to those who had received the benefits of His healing powers to remain discreetly quiet about it. Jesus, of course, knew also that it was difficult to conceal the evidence of his marvellous, miraculous cures and healings, and that those who had been sick and had been cured could not long, if at all, be relied upon to stay mute on the subject. Why then did Jesus give instructions that “no man” should be told that He had been the means of healing the sick?

Perhaps Matt. 12:14-21 will go some way in helping us to understand the matter: “But when Jesus knew it he withdrew himself from thence; and great multitudes followed him and he healed them all. And he charged them that they

should not make him known; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying: 'Behold my servant whom I have chosen; my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgement to the gentiles. He shall not strive nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgement unto victory. And in his name shall the gentiles trust.'"

The Jews expected their Messiah to be an aggressive type, perhaps even a militant conqueror; but instead of a warrior he was, as Isaiah had predicted, a peaceful and retiring man, who shunned publicity and did not so much as lift up his voice in the streets—even to preach. Whereas one rough touch will break a bruised reed and quench the flickering smoking flax, His was the gentle touch which, with matchless tenderness and love, sought to heal the sick, comfort the mourning and say to the fearful, "Be strong, fear not."

Jesus personally avoided publicity (v. 16 "and charged them that they should not make him known"). Why? "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet." This then is one reason why Jesus charged some that they should tell no man or make Him known.

Again in the case of the cleansing of the leper in Matt. 8:4 we are introduced to another reason, or perhaps two other reasons. "... And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, see thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them." The first possible reason for the prescribed silence was that first of all the leper was required (in accordance with Leviticus 14) to go to the priest that the priest, after close examination, should confirm he had actually been cured of his leprosy before allowing him to enter society once again. He had to be officially declared free of leprosy before he could mix with people, and so Jesus rightly instructs him to do all this first before he mentions his cure to anyone. The parallel passage in Mark 1:45, however, shows us how difficult it was for the ex-leper to contain his joy and gratitude and also suggests to us another very good reason why the leper should have held his peace: "But he (the leper) went out and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter." We are not told precisely why Jesus could not enter the city, but it could have been either that his enemies lay in wait for him or that he was being crushed and crowded by the huge multitudes who were constantly searching Him out. The latter must have been a very real problem to Jesus and as we read on into Chapter 2 we see that as soon as He had slipped quietly into Capernaum (v.1) "it was noised abroad that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them." This indeed was probably the main reason for our Lord imposing a degree of silence upon those who had received a miraculous cure at His hands.

What has been said above will also be applicable in the case of the restoration of Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:56) and the healing of the man possessed of devils and the curing of the blind men (Matt. 9:30). Additionally Jesus would want to forestall the wrath and envy of the scribes and Pharisees and delay their violence until the time appointed. Mark 1:34 tells us that Jesus commanded even the devils which he had cast out to be silent, "because they knew him."

Where conditions were such that Jesus could allow the favoured recipient of His blessings to extol the praises of God, He did so, as in the instance mentioned by our questioner (Luke 8:39). The desire of this man, out of whom devils had been cast, was to accompany Jesus—perhaps not surprisingly. He was full of joy and gratitude and perhaps also a little afraid that when Jesus had gone the devils would return and overpower him again. Jesus, in the circumstances desists, and showing a tender regard for the man's own family and friends "sent him away, saying "return to thine own house and show how great things God hath done unto thee." And he went his way and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him." This was no doubt a fulfilling of the Psalmist's words in Ps. 126:2: "Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongues with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord has done great things for us: whereof we are glad."

The Lord still does great things for the heathen and has done great things for us all. We have not been strictly charged to "tell no man" of these things—isn't it a pity that so very often we are slow to blaze abroad the wonderful works and blessings of God?

(Thanks for the further questions brethren—keep them coming—to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.)