



It's Just God's Way

Everybody loves happy endings. Girl can't stand guy, guy climbs tall mountains and at the end of the movie girl loves guy and they walk into the sunset together. Happy ending. We love it.

Sometimes, however, it's a bit too much. Take the story in Mark 5, for instance. Eliezer (or whatever the demon-possessed man's name was) ranks lower than the low on any scale of wholeness: mental, social, emotional, spiritual. Possessed by demons—lots of them—he howls at the moon and turns iron chains into putty. He's not just crazy, he's dangerous.

But then Jesus walked by. Eliezer lunged toward him, mocking him and frightening everybody around for blocks. In his characteristic cool way, Jesus calmed the scene with two sentences, and within minutes—maybe seconds—Eliezer's torture was all over. The demons were gone, cast into the Sea, and by the time the dust settled Eliezer was "sitting there, dressed and in his right mind."

That's OK. Good story. Good ending. Happy for Eliezer.

But stay alert, the story isn't over. Just when we thought we were off to another miracle, the text isn't through:

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how much he has had mercy on you." So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed. (Mark 5:18-20)

Whoa! That's too much! From demon-possessed to preacher in one afternoon? No! He should stay with Jesus, get his divinity degree, launch some spiritual disciplines, start out as an intern and work his way up! Whatever could Jesus have been thinking?

Maybe he was anticipating David Bosch's words,

The church is not made up of spiritual giants; only broken men can lead others to the cross.

Don't try to understand. It's just God's way.

G. Crowe

Worried?

The student has homework, exams, projects; the parent has concerns about how to raise children and tuition money; minorities have racial or economic concerns that are, at the core, social concerns; athletes have time management concerns and scholarship requirements; widows battle uncertainty mixed with grief; single campus ministers have their concerns too. The world is overly complex and the items over which one might worry are increasing at an exponential rate. When will it end? The world calls for rest, a respite from its own daily entanglements.

Although the phrase, "do not worry" has become a cliché of sorts (remember the song *Don't Worry, Be Happy?*), the message embedded in the phrase is a hard one to hear. It is a counter-cultural message calling on us to rely on God and not our own abilities. Now that is hard. It is easy to accept this message until you are \$1,000 short of making bills, or until you have sent your child off to school for the first time. Then the message seems impossible to take seriously. But, in essence, that is our prime directive as Christians: *Do Not Worry!* Do not worry about material needs, future securities, or even the presence of the Evil One in our lives. God has dominion over all things. He will provide for our needs, he is present in our lives now and in the future, and he has already claimed victory over the Evil one. We may live in a forest of worry, but there is a path already set before us to lead us out.

~ Dan

Dr. Dobson vs. Sponge Bob?

I'll get to the title of this article in a minute, but for now I have a few questions for you. I know that none of you would be unaware of the name, Dr. James Dobson, or his ministry, Focus on the Family. Well, did you know he is among a group of people who are: "so-called Christians who can be best described as creepy, rigid, arrogant, cruel, know-it-all, pompous, obnoxious and treacherous (C.R.A.C.K.P.O.T.); sponge brains; menaces; should be "treated with the lack of respect they deserve"; intolerant. You didn't know that? Well it is mainly because it isn't true. These comments came from MSNBC.com, James Carville on CNN, The Los Angeles Times, and The New York Times. Of course these are "reputable" sources with no hidden agenda, right? Read on.

Sunday morning, one of the students asked me what was going on between Dr. Dobson and Sponge Bob. I had to plead ignorance. Today, I got the most recent mailing of Family News From Dr. James Dobson. This is a newsletter sent out by Focus on the Family. In the letter, Dr. Dobson explained what had happened. I'll do my best to keep it short. There is an organization called We Are Family Foundation that has produced a video called "We Are Family," using not only Sponge Bob, but Barney, the Muppets, Dora the Explorer, Bob the Builder, Winnie the Pooh, Clifford the Big Red Dog, Jimmy Neutron and Big Bird. Dr. Dobson did not "attack" Sponge Bob or any of the other characters. He also did not attack the video itself, saying, "The video itself is innocent enough and does not mention anything overtly sexual." What Dr. Dobson did point out is that (until he made the public comments) the foundation, focused on promoting tolerance and diversity, had many links to pro-homosexual materials on its Web site. In addition, the site listed (not now) organizational allies, including five of the largest pro-homosexual organizations in the country. Also there were links for teachers for a curriculum (released in California) for use in discussion with their students concerning "homophobia" and different "sexual orientations."

I find it very interesting that though we live in a world that refuses to recognize the sinfulness of homosexuality that the links and references to those sites, materials, and curricula are now either missing from the We Are Family Foundation or are just "dead links." If it isn't bad, why did they take them off? Oh, maybe they do really know the truth. If you would like to read more, we will have copies of Dr. Dobson's letter for you in the Farris Foyer. God, please help us all stand for what is right!

- Lee

Read: Leviticus 14–23; Mark 6:30–9:50; Psalms 40–44; Prov. 10:11–19

2005 Spiritual Adventure

Week 9: February 28–March 6

I, like others, groan whenever I think about reading Leviticus. I quickly turn to something lighter, more entertaining, when I read in the Old Testament. But, after being forced into it by a class, I thank God for this book.

The Book of Leviticus is a book of laws on holiness, cleanliness from sin, etc. There are many elaborate rituals for cleansing, and a whole day set aside once a year just for cleansing of sin, the Day of Atonement. Animals were sacrificed or took on the people’s sins (this is where scapegoat comes from), and their blood was sprinkled on altars or other animals were dipped into it. Extensive bathing takes place before most of these rituals, as well as differing procedures that governed the offering depending upon what it was for—sin, sickness, unclean discharge, etc. Each and every small sin had a protocol to be followed for absolution.

I thank God that, as Romans 8:3 says, He sent His son to be our sin offering, made once for all time. While bathing and washing garments is good, it is not necessary for forgiveness of sin. There is only one procedure necessary—repentance, confession, and prayer. We don’t need to slaughter a goat or a sheep, feed a priest or minister (although it may help!), or stay outside of our homes seven days.

So I no longer skip Leviticus. I thank God for being in Christ, and not under that law.

–Erica Hearn

 Weekly Schedule	 Elders	 World Missions
Sunday Worship 8:00 a.m. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Life Groups 6:00 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 p.m.	Bill Bell 463-1139 Joe Matthews 474-8369 Rick Swensen 463-6822 Don Vice 471-8653	Kevin Chambers World Christian Broadcasting Anchor Point, Alaska 99556 Loren and Penny Hollingsworth Phuket, Thailand 83000
	 Staff	
Elmwood Nursery School & Pre-K Preschool: Tues-Thurs 9-11:30 am Pre-K: Mon-Thurs 9-11:30 am Director, Susan McClain 447-2874	Ministers Gayle Crowe 447-6940 Lee Porter 463-6993 Dan Cooke 743-0954 Office Manager Sherry Marks 447-2874	City of Children Ensenada, Mexico Bren and Cheryl White P.O. Box 245 New Market, MD 21774

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