

FROM THE SERVANT GENERAL

DISOBEYING JESUS

January 28, 2009

We are disciples of Jesus, and we are supposed to live a life of obedience to him. Is it then ever permissible to disobey Jesus? We know that the answer is No. Never!

But there were people during the time of Jesus who did disobey him, and I would actually extol them. Before you cast aspersions on me, let me explain.

Who were these people who disobeyed Jesus? They were the ones he healed and whose lives he changed. There were the leper (Mk 1:40-42), the two blind men (Mt 9:27-30a), and the deaf and mute man (Mk 7:32-35). Jesus told all of them not to speak about their healing (Mk 1:43-44; Mt 9:30b; Mk 7:36a).

But they disobeyed Jesus.

The leper immediately “went away and began to publicize the whole matter. He spread the report abroad ...” (Mk 1:45).

The two no-longer blind men “went out and spread word of him through all that land.” (Mt 9:31).

The deaf-mute, and the people who witnessed the healing, were adamantly disobedient, such that “the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it.” (Mk 7:36b).

Why would those whom Jesus had done such a great thing for disobey him? Well, they disobeyed him precisely because he did such a great thing for them. They simply could not contain their joy. They could not hold back their amazement. They simply could not keep such miraculous works to themselves. They could not be selfish and keep silent about this miracle worker. They had to share him with others. They were extremely grateful. Jesus had radically transformed their lives.

What in effect had they become? They had become evangelizers. They proclaimed the good news of salvation and healing in Jesus.

Paul, that great apostle, himself said, “woe to me if I do not preach (the gospel)!” (1 Cor 9:16b). Just like those whom Jesus healed, Paul could not be restrained.

How about us? God has blessed us tremendously (though we often do not recognize the blessings). Do we thank Him? Do we proclaim His greatness? Are we enthusiastic about sharing our experience of Him with others? Or are we uncaring, complacent, disinterested, too preoccupied with other things? Or perhaps we do tell others about Jesus, but not passionately. We do not respond in the manner and to the extent that God has blessed us. Jesus gave his all, but we only give a small part of ourselves.

CFC-FFL is called to be evangelistic and missionary. This is the reason for our existence. We are to proclaim Christ. We should be as enthusiastic as the people Jesus healed. We should work such that “his fame (would) spread everywhere throughout the whole region” (Mk 1:28), that “people (would keep) coming to him from everywhere” (Mk 1:45c), that “the whole crowd (would rejoice) at all the splendid deeds done by him” (Lk 13:17b), and that “all (would be) astonished by the majesty of God” (Lk 9:43). We should work such that Jesus would be known and loved by all.

And in our situation, we do not face the dilemma of wanting to speak about Jesus but being told not to. Jesus does not tell us not to speak about him. On the contrary. Jesus commands us to “go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15).

Make sure you obey.