

# Don't force your religion on me!

by László Balogh

It happens every once in a while that when you try to tell someone about Jesus, you get the response: "don't force your religion on me! Stop proselytizing me!" I find it very sad that what Jesus has started turned into a religion and this is the kind of reaction some people give. In some ways I understand why, but let's imagine for a moment that we're back in Jesus' day.

Jesus healed a lot of people – in fact, multitudes – but just to recall one occasion, he healed a paralytic man who was brought to Him on a stretcher. After the man got up and walked, can you imagine him saying: "No! What did you do? *Stop forcing your religion on me!*" Now, how ridiculous that would have been? Of course, he didn't say that.

At a different time, Jesus stopped a funeral, and raised the deceased young man from the dead. Can you imagine his mother yelling "*don't force your religion on me?*" No way!

One day, Simon Peter faced a struggle in his business: he caught no fish, although he was out on the sea all night. When Jesus saw him, He told Peter to go back out again and cast down his nets one more time. Peter did just that, and came back with the biggest catch of his life. Do you think he scolded Jesus for "*forcing his religion on him?*" Not a chance!

Early on in His ministry Jesus attended a wedding. During the course of the evening, the host ran out of wine. Jesus' mother who was also present, promptly asked her son if He could do something about the situation. Jesus then turned a fairly large amount of water into wine – and a good one at that. What a crazy scenario it would have been if the celebrating crowd had rejected the wine, saying "*don't force your religion on us!*"

Jesus' disciples were caught one day in a storm while they were trying to get across the sea in a boat. Jesus calmed the raging wind and the water with a loud command, and their lives were saved. Do you think the disciples reacted to that with an offended "*don't force your religion me?*" Certainly not!

Jesus didn't come here to start a religion. He just went about doing good and fixed everything that wasn't right. His goal was to show people what a person filled with the Spirit of God can do. His sacrifice on the cross opened the possibility for everybody to become the type of person He was. Jesus even predicted that everyone who believes in Him would do the same things He did.

I wish I could find better ways and better words to express how Jesus was never about religion. He said the two most important things were to love God and love other people. *He encouraged us to believe that nothing is impossible* and if we just have a little faith, we can even speak to a mountain and it will move.

*Once humankind comes to understand that Jesus came to give us the ability to heal the sick, raise the dead, multiply food for the hungry, and stop natural disasters, no one will ever say "don't force your religion on me!"*

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