

May 21st, 2023 – (full notes)
“**Demoniac Turned Missionary**”
Luke 8:26-39

Read Luke 8:26-39... We left off last week with Jesus calming a storm; then rebuking the disciples for their lack of faith. After this occurred, Jesus and His disciples continued across the lake to an area known as Gerasenes, named for the small town of Gerasa nearby, just off the shore to the east of the Sea of Galilee.

As soon as Jesus steps out of the boat (**Luke 8:27**) a man possessed by demons, who has come from the tombs, is there to meet Him. In **Luke 8:29** we are told that this man has an “unclean spirit”. Note: Unclean refers to a demonic spirit that can attack a person spiritually, mentally, and physically, even indwelling an unbeliever; it can also promote false religions, false worship, and false doctrines, resulting in immorality, insanity, masochism, and all kinds of godlessness.

This demon-possessed man was frightful: living out in the tombs, the place of the dead, these tombs were cut out of the hillsides and cliffs just outside the city. This man is insane, naked, possessed by demons. No one was able to keep him bound, no matter what was used to restrain him, for he continually broke the ropes and chains used to bind his feet and hands.

This man was in constant torment (**Mark 5:5**), “Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones” [he cut himself with sharp jagged rocks, probably made of flint].

Running up to Jesus (**Luke 8:28**) he bowed down, shouting with a loud voice, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg [implore] You, do not torment [torture] me.”

The demons know who Jesus is, in fact, Mark records an earlier encounter that Jesus had with demons (**Mark. 1:16-24**), “As [Jesus] was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him. They went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach. They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, ‘What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!’”

Note: The Holy One of God, the “Most High God” is an ancient title used to identify the One, True, and Living God of Israel – distinguishing Him from all false gods.

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The demons recognized Jesus' authority to do with them as He pleases, for they are fallen angels who joined Satan's rebellion long ago.

At one time, Satan was a highly ranked angel in God's throne room, but he rebelled against God, wanting the glory that God was receiving to be given to him also. He was cast out of heaven (**Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Luke 10:18**) and 1/3 of the heavenly hosts [angels] rebelled and were cast out with him (**Revelation 12:4**). These angels are called demons.

The demons in **Luke 8** ask Jesus not to torture them, in **Matthew 8:29** they ask Jesus, “Have You come here to torment us before the time?” They know there is an appointed time at which God will judge and send them to their eternal place of punishment in the Lake of Fire (**Matthew 25:41**), “the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Jesus asks the man (**Luke 8:30**), “What is your name?” The demon responds out of the man's mouth saying, “Legion, for we are many.” [A Legion is a Roman military unit consisting of 6000 men.]

The demons beg Jesus (**Luke 8:31**) not to send them into the abyss [bottomless pit, **Revelation 9:1-2**; Satan is locked up there for 1000 years, **Revelation 20:1-3**]. The demons implore Jesus to let them go into the large herd of pigs feeding on the mountain [**Mark 5:13** tells us there were about 2,000 swine]. Note: To an orthodox Jew, pigs are the most unclean of animals, unacceptable to be used as food. The owners of this herd of swine were either Gentiles or unorthodox Jews who didn't follow the law.

Luke tells us (**Luke 8:32-33**) that Jesus gave the demons permission to enter the pigs and the herd ran down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

In **Matthew 8:31-32**, we read, “The demons *began* to entreat [Jesus], saying, ‘If You *are going to* cast us out, send us into the herd of swine. And He said to them, Go! [Begone!] And they came out of the man and went into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea,” and drowned.

The men who were tending the herd (**Luke 8:34**), watched the pigs drown in the lake, then they ran into town and told the people all that had happened. The people came out to see Jesus, and they found the demoniac (**Luke 8:35**) sitting at the feet of Jesus, totally calm, fully dressed, and in his right mind.

What a contrast to the way this man had been behaving, i.e., screaming out from the tombs, gashing himself with sharp rocks and running around naked. Luke records that the people, when they saw the demoniac clothed, calmed and in his right mind, they became afraid!

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At this point (**Luke 8:36**) the eyewitnesses [Jesus' disciples and herdsman], tell the people about how the demons had gone out from the man and entered the pigs on Jesus' command, then the large herd ran into the lake and drowned.

The people (**Luke 8:37**) in the region of Gerasenes, urge Jesus to leave, to go away from them! Those people were in the presence of God's Son, Savior and Lord, but they don't ask Him to save them, instead they plead with Him to leave.

Read Luke 5:1-11... Notice, Simon Peter falls down at Jesus' feet saying, “Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!” Peter realizes that this miraculous catch of fish was not a coincidence; only God could do such a thing, which meant that he was in the very presence of God, Immanuel [God with us].

This was overwhelming to Peter, and no doubt to James and John as well; for this is the largest catch of fish anyone had ever seen, and it takes place in broad daylight, when the common practice on the Sea of Galilee was to fish at night.

Simon in the presence of God in Jesus, is very aware of his own sinfulness. God in Christ is holy and righteous, to be in His presence is to be made aware of one's sinfulness, to either seek forgiveness or to reject God's offer of salvation.

Romans 3:10-12, “There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one.” **Romans 3:23-24**, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”

God loves us so much, even though we deserve death (**Romans 6:23a**), “For the wages of sin is death.” God grants us forgiveness and eternal life (**Romans 6:23b**), “For the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Only Jesus can set us free from sin's penalty, because He alone was able to take upon Himself our punishment for sin (**Romans 5:8**), “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

No wonder in **John 14:6** Jesus says, “I am the [only] way [to God], the [only] truth [of God], and the [only] life [from God]; [and therefore] no one comes to the Father [no one is made acceptable to God, no one goes to heaven] but through Me”

Jesus offered Himself as full payment for all sins, for all people, for all time (**Hebrews 10:12, 14, 16-18**), “He [Jesus], having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,” “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: ‘I will put My laws upon their heart, and on their mind I will write them,’ He then says, ‘And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’ Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin.”

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Romans 8:1-2, “Therefore there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”

Back to Luke 8:38-39... The people in the country of the Gerasenes were witnesses of Christ's supernatural power that commanded the demons out of the man and into the pigs, also saving the demoniac's soul and restoring his mind; but, instead of praising Jesus, the people implore Him to go away! Luke says, “they were gripped with great fear,” and they begged Him to leave.

Jesus is rejected by them, He gets into the boat and goes back to Capernaum, and as far as we know from the biblical record, He never returned to the region of the Gerasenes. But notice that the man who was healed implores Jesus to let him come along in the boat, he wants to be with Jesus.

The demoniac had been healed and delivered from his sin, and he wants to go with the Savior. This man, previously possessed by a legion of demons, may be the only saved person in the whole region; Jesus tells the man to go home and to tell his family [to show them] all that God has done for him. The man obeys and goes home, proclaiming the good news of God's love, mercy, and power (**Luke 8:39**), “throughout the whole city” telling them all that “Jesus had done for him.”

The man who had been released from a Legion of demons has gone back to his people to testify to God's mercy and grace. God is forever extending His love to anyone who will believe in Him.

This story teaches us about the sovereign power of God, but also about the gracious, relentless, and unconditional love of God. Even though the majority of the people in the country of the Gerasenes rejected God, God came to save one man, the demoniac, to release him from the penalty and curse of sin.

God went to great lengths to show His mercy to one lost tormented man living out in the tombs, in the region of the Gerasenes. It is this same God, the One and Only True God, who desires that everyone come to a knowledge of the truth, confessing Jesus Christ as Lord, believing in and receiving Him as Savior.

God wants to save people, not condemn them.

1Timothy 2:3-4, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

2Peter 3:9, “The Lord is... ..patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

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Romans 10:9-10, “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”

Romans 10:13, “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Romans 10:17, “So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

The healed demoniac was told to go back to his family as a witness of the salvation he had received from God. He wasn’t disciplined, neither did he sign-up for an evangelism course; instead, Jesus told him to go and tell others what God had done for him through Jesus Christ..

Near the end of Jesus’ time on earth, before ascending back into heaven, most likely on a mountain in Galilee, the resurrected Christ told a very large crowd of followers (**Matthew 28:18-20**), “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Do you understand what Jesus is saying? Our purpose is simply to tell others about God’s Son, Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior. Why do we do that? So that they might know the truth and be set free from sin’s penalty, forever, as a child of God.

The demoniac was healed spiritually, eternally; he was then commissioned to go tell others what God had done for him. Guess what, every genuine believer and follower of Christ, every Christian, is commissioned to do the very same thing.

2Corinthians 5:20-21,

“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He [God the Father] made Him [God the Son] who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him [being indwelled by God the holy Spirit.

Pastor Mike

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