

Jesus and the Demons

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[0 : 00] For our Gospel reading, we continue with Luke, Chapter 8, page 1037, 1037 in the Church Bible, the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 8.

We begin at verse 26, the healing of the Gerasene demoniac. Human research works slowly. Jesus' healing is far more dramatic. They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee.

When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time, this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house.

But instead had lived in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?

[1 : 13] I beg you, don't torture me. For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him.

Though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and been driven by the demon into solitary places. Jesus asked him, what is your name?

Legion, he replied, because many demons had gone into him. And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the abyss.

Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs. And he gave them permission. And when the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs.

And the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside.

[2 : 20] And the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind.

And they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. And then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them because they were overcome with fear.

So he got into the boat and left. But the man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him. But Jesus sent him away saying, Return home and tell how much God has done for you. So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him. Thanks be to God. Good morning. Lovely to see you all this morning. My name is James. I'm the curator at St. Silas and that's been great.

[3 : 34] And someone's written on my lectern here, St. Silas Yolo. I'm not quite sure what to make of that, but there we have it. Father, let me pray for us as we begin to look at this passage.

Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for these moments to consider it and look at it.

Father, we pray that you'd speak to us now, Father. Please may what is helpful be remembered and what is unhelpful be forgotten.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, if you're new to St. Silas, a big welcome to you this morning. It's fantastic to see you. You're in the right place.

And let me add my welcome to those of Martin and to Malcolm who read for us and Michael who prayed and our welcome team earlier. It's good to see you this morning. And we're in the last in a little series entitled Jesus and His Salvation, looking at the gospel according to Luke, chapters 7 and 8.

And we've been considering the salvation that Jesus alone can offer us. And one of the things that we've seen about the salvation time and time again is that it has been given to the most unlikely and undeserving of people.

[4 : 52] And this morning is no exception to that rule. And this is shown in the very first verse in our reading that we read this morning. So if you turn down, keep your Bibles open.

We just read there. And they sailed to the region of the Gerasenes. Now, although there's a lot of debate over where the Gerasenes is, one thing is clear.

And that is, to quote Dorothy from The Wizard of Oz, we're no longer in Kansas. That is, we're not in Israel or in Jewish country, but we're in Gentile country.

We've moved away from where Jesus would have been accepted as a prophet into a region where he perhaps wouldn't have been accepted. And what Jesus is demonstrating here is that his salvation is not just for one nation, but it's for all the nations.

And it is here in the region of the Gerasenes that we meet the most unlikely of candidates. And we read there in verse 27, And what we learn about this man is that he is a man who is in need of salvation.

[6 : 13] That is, he is one whose situation is desperate and hopeless. And it really is an absolutely heart-rending story.

If we look down at the second half of verse 27, we read, For a long time the man had not worn clothes or lived in the house. That is, he's been like this for a long, long, long time.

It's hopeless, the situation. No resolution has come. He's been stuck like this. And the first thing we notice is his physical need.

He's naked. He has not worn clothes. He's homeless. That is, for some time he has not lived in the house. And then we look at the second half of verse 29, And we read, Many times it, that's the demon, had seized him.

And though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, He had broken his chains and been driven by the demon into solitary places. That is, he's beyond self-control.

[7 : 25] Many times the demon had seized him. And if you're parents here, you might know what that looks like When your kids and Tesco screaming and shouting on the floor there.

It's alright for kids, but not for adults. It's not what we expect from adults there. And he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, Very much like a dog or a prisoner.

Not how we'd want to be treated as humans. And that he'd been driven by the demon into solitary places.

Now it's great to go to the solitary places of Scotland, is it? To the highlands. But what's the great thing about them? Is coming back, finding a nice inn by a nice fire, And having a chat with your friends.

Well, this man, he goes to the solitary places, And he's got no one to chat with. He's absolutely dehumanized. He's robbed of his human dignity as a person.

[8 : 27] He is the shell of a man. The demon has robbed him of everything that it is to be human. The demon has alienated him from other people.

From the friendship and comfort of others. And that is what the demonic and the satanic does. It robs us of friendship. It isolates us from others.

And it breaks down our relationships. But it's not only that the demon in this passage has alienated him from men, But this demon has alienated the man from God.

And that's the second thing we notice from these opening verses. That is his spiritual plight. So look at the last verse, last words of verse 27.

And we read there, But he lived in the tombs. Well, to live in the tombs, he would have most certainly been in contact with dead bodies. That is, in Judaism, in Jewish religion, He would have been ceremonially unclean, coming into contact with dead bodies.

[9 : 37] But he's also living amongst the tombs. There's also a reference to the pagan cultic worships of that time. So he's worshipping the wrong God.

And then at the start of verse 29, we read, That Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. That is, the demon had robbed the man of the spiritual purity that is needed to be in God's presence.

So he's worshipping the wrong God, and he had the wrong spirit. And then finally, we notice that this man is living in a Gentile region.

And we read that at the start of verse 32, That there is a large herd of pigs was feeding there. And pigs being an unclean animal were taboo in Judaism.

That is, the man was living in the wrong place to be saved. So it really is an absolutely hopeless situation. This man is as far from God as any person could be.

[10:47] Physically, spiritually, both alienated from man and from God. He is the most unlikely of candidates to be saved.

But notice, friends, this is what sin does to us. It alienates us from men, and it alienates us from God.

It breaks down relationships and drives us to solitary places. And you and I both know this, don't we? We've experienced this firsthand. I don't have to illustrate this.

But more dangerously, sin hopelessly alienates us from God. And this is due to the deceptive and destructive nature of the demonic that we see in these verses.

So I wonder if you'll consider the last words in verse 28 that the demon says. The demon says, I beg you, don't torture me. And this is just to highlight the hypocritical nature of the demonic.

[11:55] The demons tortured the man for years and years and years. And yet the demon says, don't torture me. And then we notice the deceptive nature of the demonic.

And as we know, Satan is the father of lies. That's the only power that Satan has, is to lie to us. So in verse 29 we read, The man had broken his chains.

That is, the man seems very strong, very powerful with the demon's powers. Very impressive. I would simply like to be able to open jars.

Never mention break chains. Looks very impressive, doesn't it? But it's ultimately deceptive. And then we notice the ultimate goal of the demonic.

Now I wonder if you'll look down and look at the end of verse, at verse 33 where we read, When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

[12:57] Now often we might take exception at Jesus for this, for not saving the pigs. But this is the work of the demonic and the satanic.

The demonic and the satanic destroys life. Sin destroys life. That's its goal. It's to destroy.

So if we're tempted to sin, we should remember this. Sin and the satanic seem very attractive. They seem very impressive. If you follow me, says Satan, if you do this and this and this, then you'll have the good life.

Then your friends will like you. You'll get on in the world. You'll get a promotion at work. Things will go very well with you. But ultimately, it will only lead to hurt and misery and destruction.

Now I don't know how I should reference this, but remember the Banquo's lines in the Scottish play? Can I say the word? Don't know. Yeah, Macbeth. What does he say?

[14:00] He says, So in the demon-possessed man, we see the most unlikely of candidates.

We have a man who is utterly in need of salvation due to the deceptive and destructive nature of the demonic. But in Jesus, we see the man delivered by a good and powerful judge.

And that's our next point. And the first thing we notice here is that the demon recognizes and submits to the authority of Jesus.

So join with me and look at verse 28. And we read, You see, the demon recognizes Jesus' authority in posture.

He falls at Jesus' feet. He recognizes Jesus' authority in title. He says, Most High.

[15:21] God Most High. That is, God is not some local deity, but He's God of the whole universe, the whole world. That He is God of all people, of all creation, and everything beyond creation.

That He is uniquely and extraordinarily God. That He is God alone. And then we see that the demon recognizes Jesus' authority in access.

That is, He is the Son of God. Now, when a servant goes to his boss, I might go to Martin. I might ask him for Martin. Martin might look away.

But if Bethany or Rachel or Hannah went to Martin, well, they've got immediate access. They can go to Martin in a way that I can't because they are children of Martin.

So Jesus has access to God the Father by being a son. And next we notice that the demon obeys and recognizes the authority of Jesus' words.

[16:22] So we see in verse 29, we read that Jesus commanded the impure spirits. And again, verse 31, it begs Jesus not to order them.

So in exercising the demon, Jesus doesn't go through any special rituals or use of special talismans or any kind of song and dance. Jesus simply speaks as God.

And the reason for this is that the demon recognizes that Jesus is a powerful judge. Now we think again of the demon's request there.

Don't torture me. What is the demon asking in saying that? What are they asking when they say, don't torture me? And then we think about the demon begs Jesus repeatedly not to let it go, order it to go into the abyss, where we understand that the abyss is probably the place of final judgment for Satan and his demons.

What is the demon saying in asking that of Jesus? Well, can I suggest to you that the demon recognizes Jesus' power to judge it and to execute a final sentence?

[17 : 52] Perhaps not in the long term, that's maybe unclear from this passage, but certainly in the short term. And that the horror of this place of judgment is shown by the demon's request that Jesus doesn't torture it.

You see, the demon might be deceptive and manipulative in this passage, but it is absolutely clear on two points if we are to believe the demon's testimony about Jesus.

And that is, firstly, it recognizes Jesus' authority as son of the most high God. And secondly, it recognizes Jesus' power as a judge.

So, two main applications for us to think through. Now, in many ways, we might be ambivalent towards God. Our friends might be ambivalent towards God in future judgment.

So we think about this time tomorrow, we might go to work. A lot of our friends might not be convinced about the authority of Jesus or about the realities of judgment. They might be ambivalent towards death, and we remember that poem.

[19 : 04] I've just slipped away into the next room. And that's it. But that is because we don't know what is beyond the veil. We don't know what lies on the other side.

But this demon does. And it tells us. And if we did know, as this demon does, then we would join with it in begging Jesus for mercy.

And the second thing we notice is the hard-heartedness of the demon. See, the demon recognizes clearly who Jesus is, that he has authority as the Son of God, that he comes in judgment, but it still doesn't ask.

It still doesn't repent. It still rejects Jesus' rule. So many times we think, well, if I knew more about Jesus and about God, then I would become a Christian.

If I had more of the answers, if I read more of the Bible, then I'd become a Christian and I'd fall and honor Jesus. But the Bible is clear.

[20 : 15] The more knowledge won't make you a Christian, it will only make you better informed for judgment and only make God's good and wise judgments for rejecting Jesus as God's Son more wise and more just.

And it's because of Jesus' power and authority as Son of God Most High and as God's just judge over the supernatural realm and the demonic and the satanic that Jesus is able to save the man. Which we see as Jesus commands the impure spirit to come out of the man and the demon obeys him and the demon comes out of the man. And so we read at the end of verse 36 that the demon-possessed man had been cured and that's perhaps better translated that he had been saved.

So in summary, the demon recognizes the authority of Jesus as a good and powerful judge, as Son of God Most High, which allows Jesus to save the man.

The man is saved not simply from his physical plight, from his alienation from men, but Jesus saves the man from his alienation from God.

[21 : 39] And that is, he's probably the most unlikely person in the Bible to be saved, but he is saved. And what we see in the final verses of this account is a man who, having been saved, models what discipleship looks like in verses 34 to 49.

And what we see here, really, is a picture of this man becoming more human than he has ever been before in his life as a creature who is in communion with his Creator.

And we have this powerful, really beautiful picture in these final verses in verse 35 when we read, When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed, and in his right mind.

And it really is an incredibly moving picture. And you can imagine, Jesus sitting under a tree, sitting on a log, speaking to this man, laughing, joking, talking about experiences for the first time in years.

The man's thinking rightly for the first time in years. Jesus, the Creator of the universe, listening to this man. Jesus is massive.

[23 : 04] This man is tiny. He's speaking to him, helping him to understand, coaching him along. He saved him. He's brought him near. So what is it, what is it going to look like to be a disciple of Jesus?

Well, three things to note on this. And the first thing we notice is that the man, whatever his state was, comes to Jesus in verse 27. When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a man. The next thing we notice is that the man sits at Jesus' feet. The man goes to Jesus. He sits at his feet.

He becomes an eager student. He wants to learn. He wants to hear what Jesus says. And by sitting at the feet of Jesus, this man has his humanity restored.

And this passage makes it clear, doesn't it? So look down at the end of verse 35 again. The man is dressed and in his right mind. And it's a powerful image, isn't it?

[24 : 10] Of a restored dignity. But it is really only a physical picture of a spiritual reality, isn't it?

The man may appear more reasonable to men, but the real change here is that he is no longer alienated from God. So here's the question.

What is it to be human? Well, humanity is defined by its relationship to its creator. This man will never be more human than he is at this moment.

As a creature who is in communion with his creator. Creator. And that's the glorious picture here that we have for us. So no matter where we've come from today, no matter what's gone wrong in our life, no matter how we've managed to offend others and our friends, God is going to make it right in a way that's unimaginable.

He is going to restore us better than what we were when we were first born. He is going to bring us into a relationship with him in a way that's simply unimaginable in the future.

[25 : 27] He will restore us better than we can ever, ever imagine. And he'll make us more human in doing so. But it's not just here that the man is a model of discipleship, but that he is a model of discipleship in contrast to the disciples of last week who are still spiritually at sea, such as that Jesus asked them, where is your faith?

And he's a model of discipleship in contrast to the people who at the end of this account, ultimately reject Jesus. So look down with me at the end of verse 35.

And what do we read there? We read, they were afraid. You see, seeing the man afraid leaves the, seeing the man restored leaves the people afraid.

And this is an astounding verse, isn't it? But we should not be surprised by it. You see, what it is telling us about the people, what is it telling us about the people's hearts then?

And what is this verse suggesting about our hearts now? You see, what it is telling us about the people then is that those who witness this miracle and see the evidence of this man restored are more comfortable with the demonic than with the divine.

[26 : 59] and that's a frightful insight, isn't it? That perhaps we are more comfortable with the demonic in many instances than we are with the divine.

So when we look at our world and we see the world openly commending what is wrong, we should not be surprised by that. and when we look at our own hearts and we see, well, we look at them and we think sometimes, why have we done that?

Why have we gone off and done that and done what we've known is wrong? We should not be surprised by that because in many times we are more comfortable with the demonic than the divine.

So when people, so when the people hear and see the man's salvation, rather than rejoicing, what do they do? They reject Jesus. So in verses 36 and 37 we read, those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured.

Then all of the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them because they were overcome with fear. And it's amazing here because the reaction of the people mimics very closely the reaction of the demons.

[28 : 19] they both come to Jesus, they both see or hear Jesus' deeds, they both fear Jesus, and they both reject Jesus.

And this is an absolutely astounding comment to make on the hardness of the human heart. Now the third aspect of how this man models discipleship is finally found in the last two verses of this passage, which is really the same thing being said twice.

So when you read the passage, it could end in verse 37 quite happily. It could, couldn't it? But Luke goes on in verse 38 because this is where he wants our hearts to land.

So if we see and we show that we have come to understand the passage and we know what's going on in this passage, this is what Luke wants us to do to show that we have understood what this passage is about.

So we read in verse 38 and 39, the man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away. Return home and tell how much God has done for you.

[29 : 38] So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him. And this is the third aspect of how we see discipleship modeled for us in this passage.

That the man goes and tells others of all that God has done for him. So let's reflect for a moment briefly at what we've seen over the last two Sundays.

It's really been the most extraordinary Sunday after church jaunts. You could have ever imagined. So what happens? They get on the boat. They go on the storm.

The disciples with Jesus. They see this amazing storm. Jesus stands up, quiets the storm, displaying his authority over nature. They sail onto the other side of the lake.

They get off the boat. They speak to a demon-possessed man. Jesus rebukes the demon, shows his authority over the supernatural. That is displaying that Jesus is God absolutely, restores the man and then they sail off.

[30 : 44] It's the most, in many ways, it's the most unremarkable story ever. But in another way, it's absolutely astounding and remarkable. And it's no wonder then, that the demon-possessed man here begs to go and be with Jesus and is devoted to Jesus.

and he shows this by his actions as a model of discipleship. You see, unlike the demons that fall at Jesus' feet in fear, this man sits at Jesus' feet in love.

The demons beg Jesus repeatedly not to judge them. This man begs to go with Jesus as a savior. Whereas the people reject Jesus and ask him to leave, this man welcomes Jesus.

and longs to follow him and learn more. It's the most unlikely of people to be saved, this demon-possessed, homeless, naked, pagan, undignified, a Gentile, who is truly and honestly and hopelessly lost.

But he shows that he understands what it is to be saved by Jesus. that is to love and long for Jesus and not just what Jesus can give.

[32 : 09] And because of this, because this man understands what it is to be saved by Jesus, Jesus commissions him to go home and tell of how much God has done for you.

And the man shows that he gets it completely. And what does he do? the man went away and told all over town of how much Jesus had done for him.

Now friends, as we live on the other side of the cross than this man, how much more do we have to rejoice in Jesus than this man, having seen the full extent of Jesus' love for us?

Let me close in prayer for us. Father, we thank you that you save unlikely and undeserving people. And we thank you that your son is God over the natural and the supernatural. We thank you for this model of discipleship.

[33 : 19] Please help us to go and tell others of what Jesus has done for us. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Ukraine Stand on on,