

Gerasene Demoniac Luke 8:26 - 39

26 *And they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27 And when He had come out onto the land, He was met by a certain man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs. 28 And seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, "What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me." 29 For He had been commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard; and yet he would burst his fetters and be driven by the demon into the desert. 30 And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. 31 And they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss. 32 Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons entreated Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission. 33 And the demons came out from the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake, and were drowned. 34 And when the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported it in the city and out in the country. 35 And the people went out to see what had happened; and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they became frightened. 36 And those who had seen it reported to them how the man who was demon-possessed had been made well. 37 And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to depart from them; for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat, and returned. 38 But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying, 39 "Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.*

This morning is somewhat of a milestone for us. I went back and re-read what I had written about the parallel passages in Mark 5 and Matthew 8 and it turns out that the Mark 5 passage was the first Bible study that I ever gave at this

church on September 2nd 2011.

So there has been 8 years and one month of weekly teaching, at first in the evenings at the fellowship hall and then before very long, about a year and a half, you honored me by giving me this pulpet and making me your shepherd.

And it's fun to go back and read the older stuff and see if I would say anything different now, and in fact, I could almost preach the Mark 5 passage verbatim exactly as written over 8 years ago.

That's not a big deal really, considering people like John MacArthur who has preached in the same church for over 50 years now and you can listen to his early stuff and the consistency is remarkable.

That pattern is historical with othodox believing christians for 100's of years. John Owen was teaching the same things almost 400 years ago and Luther's reformation is now 500 years old.

And even in the dark ages there have always been a remnant of men who belong to God who teach what the book says. And that's the common denominator. The book doesn't change. The truth doesn't change. And those who rightly divide the truths of this book sound remarkably alike for 2000 years.

It isn't that tough. The language is fairly simple. God made His book understandable for anyone that He gives ears to hear it's truths. There's no reason to come up with anything different in 2019 than 119. Sound doctrine has never changed. Consistency is the shared heritage of all who simply hold to the authority of the simple words of this book.

Last week I finished our session on Jesus ordering the wind and the waves to obey His voice and cease with these words; "*If He is Lord of the wind and the sea, are you so foolish as to think He is not the Lord of you?*"

I began my teaching on the Mark 5 version of this story 8 years and one month

ago with these words. *"Everything in the universe obeys the voice of Jesus,.....except.....us??"*

I had long forgotten what I'd said 8 years ago but I was encouraged to find I'd said almost the same words to you the first time I taught the book here as the last thing I said to you just last week.

"If He is Lord of the wind and the sea, are you so foolish as to think He is not the Lord of you?" "Everything in the universe obeys the voice of Jesus,.....except.....us??"

The wind and the sea obey Jesus voice. The demons obey Jesus voice. Disease obeys Jesus voice. Death obeys Jesus voice. I'll modify my final words from last week; *"If He is Lord of the wind and the sea, Lord of the demons and Satan, Lord of every disease, and Lord of death, are you so foolish as to think He is not the Lord of you?"*

Every knee will bow to Jesus. He is Lord of everything. Every created thing, every atom, every molecule, and everything unseen in the spirit realm, it all belongs to Him. He is Lord over all that is. All that exists will bow down in worship to Him.

If that's true, don't you think, in view of the devastating punishment of spirits now in prison who cannot be redeemed that it might be a good idea to offer yourself up to the Lord of everything now in complete submission and forgiveness in His blood that bought you back.

And that's where we want to begin our look this morning at this passage about demon possession.

There is a sense in which, at the fall in the garden of Eden, the devil, Satan, robbed God of what God had created in order to give Him glory. When sin entered, through Satan, the whole world suffered beginning then and lasting to this day.

Let's look at the big picture for some moments first. 1 Jn. 5:18,19 states;
*18 We know that anyone born of God does not keep on sinning; the **One** who was born of God protects him, and the evil one cannot touch him. 19 We know that we are of God, and that the whole world is under the power of the evil one.*

There is a line drawn in the sand in those verses. Those who are born of God are separated out of this world. They no longer live continuously in a lifestyle of sin. They are protected from that by the ONE who was born of God. Jesus the Lord. And the Evil one cannot touch them. We are off limits.

But notice in that demarcation, that separation, that the entire world, everything else and everybody else, lies under the power of the evil one.

There is a sense in which Satan is the "ruler of this world". Jesus called him that several times. Currently, until Jesus returns after the tribulation period, at the second coming, Satan is the ruler of this world.

Listen to 1 Jn. 3:8 It says the same thing in a different way.
the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

People who have a life style that this book says plainly to be sin, are not christians. *the one who practices sin is of the devil . . .* and then John says;
The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

The entire book from cover to cover is the story of how Jesus takes back this world from Satan. That's the whole point of the book. Satan robbed God of His glorious creation by introducing rebellion, sin against God, and every baby born is born into that rebellion. All of them.

Satan has captured this world and everybody in it by rebellion and sin against God, the rightful owner. We are born in captivity. Born in sin. That's why

Jesus died to repurchase us out of that captivity. Angels who rebelled don't have that same opportunity.

But God, in His grace to us, made a way for us to come out of that captivity of sin and Satan, and we can belong to our rightful owner, the Lord Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. There is an ultimate sense in which everything, after judgement, all of the rebellious ones will be punished forever in the lake of fire, Satan and the demons included, and the Lord Jesus will be triumphant over everything. *The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*

But meanwhile, until that day comes, we are wise to have a working knowledge of Satan's activity in this world in which he is still the ruler.

I've said it before and will say it again; There's a very real sense in which Christians are enemy combatants in Satan's kingdom. We're protected. That's what John said in that verse. But never-the-less, we are enemy combatants in a war. God against Satan.

Even though Satan is the ruler of this world, he has limits set by God. And there's a very real sense in which part of what restrains Satan is the veneer of civilization that has come down to us even to this day because of God's people and the effect of His book.

Whatever civilization is left is derived from the words set forth in this book. You shall not steal. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not lie. Honor your mother and father. You shall not covet what doesn't belong to you.

Those are the building blocks of civilized society within Satan's world, whether he likes it or not. And he doesn't like it. And he works tirelessly, relentlessly to erode those building blocks away.

In my lifetime, the veneer of civilized society has gotten thinner and thinner until at this point, it's razor thin. People snap and go outside the boundaries all the time. Cut someone off on the freeway by accident and you'll find out what I'm talking about. Daily.

The ladies and the gentlemen of the victorian age are gone. Civilization has gotten vulgar. The ice is thin and we read about the fractures every day. That's Satan's job. That's what he does in his relentless war against God. Erode God's rules and God's standards away. Destroy the family. Destroy marriage. Destroy sex. Destroy anything that is according to God's standards in God's book.

The demons and the devil are tirelessly at work to break down God's rules and God's standards. It's a war and it's relentless. In Canada this year, a man was fined \$55,000 canadian dollars because he said that a transgender woman was a sinner but that the Lord Jesus could forgive him. He refused in court to refer to the person as her. \$55,000

That's coming, and I'm already doing the math. I'm 67. There's a good chance that before I die, if the Lord tarries, that will be happening here. I'm already preparing myself mentally to lose everything I have if that happens here in my lifetime. It's knocking at the door.

In the tribulation period, it all breaks down. The restraint, which is what remains of the church, is removed at the rapture, and Satan is given full charge to do what he wants. The limits while the church is here, are gone. Hell breaks loose on earth, quite literally.

How far we get into that scenario before the Lord arrives and removes His church, we don't know. But we need to think ahead of time about those possibilities. Across the border, it's already happening. There are no guarantee's here. Satan is the ruler of this world and his only restraint are the christians. And christians are getting pretty thin on the ground.

That's our introduction to our story this morning where we get a front seat view of a rather bizarre display of Satan's work in this world. Or is it? Do we have the same thing happening today but we just don't label it demon possession like they did?

26 And they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.

This is just due east right across the sea of Galilee from home base Capernaum. There is a town there to this day now called Kursi, then it was Gerasa. The similarity is obvious.

And the town is up the slopes which are very steep from the lake. And to this day there are tombs in that area which are natural openings in the rock. Probably sandstone but I'm not positive.

It's interesting that Luke says after the storm was calmed, they sailed to this place. I made a joke about break out the oars boys, because when Jesus told the wind and the waves to cease, they ceased. So graciously, enough breeze came along to move them over to the other side. About 13 miles across.

There is a national park at the site of Kursi where there are ruins. We could visit there but it's across the demilitarized zone and it's part of Syria now. It's fun to look at the pictures and imagine pigs running down the cliffs into the sea.

27 And when He had come out onto the land, He was met by a certain man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs.

This poor deranged man who was demon possessed was living in the tombs with the dead, and he was naked.

To this day, we can note in our culture the obsessions with death and nudity. Both of those things are indicators of Satan's presence in our culture. And the more civilization erodes, the more we move in the direction of being

increasingly uncovered and the more we honor death.

As soon as Adam and Eve sinned and their eyes were opened to sin, they understood that they were naked and they clothed themselves. Then later, God slew animals, a picture of the death of His Son, and clothed them with skins.

Clothing to cover the shame of nakedness is a God thing, and the more exposure we see, the further into anti-God territory we've gone. This demon possessed man is a window into what happens when Satan just takes over. Nakedness is one thing, and preoccupation with death is another sign that civilized society is vanishing away.

I don't know if anyone else saw the clip yesterday of a deranged woman at an event held by Alexandria Ocasio Cortez. This poor woman was displaying many of the same traits we're looking at this morning. She was out of control, distraught about global warming and her solution was we have to eat the babies. I'm not making this up. We have to kill the babies, eat the babies.

Clearly a person who perhaps was demon controlled and her solution; death to babies. Although she did say we could solve some of the overpopulation by bombing Russia. Nut job. But I have to believe a lot of the nut jobs out there are the result of demon possession.

Demon possession or at least the recognition of the specific problem related to indwelling demons is unique in God's book to the time when Jesus walked the earth. You don't find it in the old testament, and you don't find it after the ascension of Jesus back into heaven.

Yes, they've always been here, but when Jesus shows up, they freak out. The demons are terrified of Jesus. Because demons have good theology. They know Jesus owns everything and they know that Jesus has authority over them and can send them to the abyss. They know of their impending torment after the tribulation. So when Jesus shows up, they freak out. Terror takes over.

James could have very well been referring to this very event when he says in his epistle 2:19 *You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.* The demons are terrified of Jesus and they react when He shows up.

28 And seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, "What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me."

Matthew in his version adds that the demons say, *have you come to torment us before the time?* The demons have good theology. They're pre-millennial. They know the torment comes after the tribulation, not before. What're you doing here Jesus. It isn't the right time according to our theology.

We'll see that this man was violent. He runs down the cliffs and attacks people. That's what he was doing this day as he sees the boat approach. He's running down to attack whoever gets off that boat. And when it turns out to be Jesus, who the demons all know about, they throw the man down to the ground and start in with the begging. *"What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me."*

29 For He had been commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man.

Jesus commands the unclean spirit. Unclean spirit. Again, the preoccupation with death and nakedness. Unclean spirit. Jesus commands the demons to come out of him.

Luke is going to fill us in with some background. *For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard; and yet he would burst his fetters and be driven by the demon into the desert.*

He was a complete mad man. Super human strength. Violent and dangerous to others. He gashes himself with sharp stones. He is driven into the deserts. A wild man to avoid.

We have these folks today. Charlie Manson is a well known case of this type of thing. Demon possessed. Nowadays we medicate people for this kind of behaviour. Nobody talks about demons. Some guy goes off his medication and picks up an assault rifle and mass murders ensue.

Demon possession is still with us, we just aren't bright enough to know what it is. We just think the lady that wants to eat the babies is probably off her meds. In our Godless world of science and physical truth only, that's all we've got left.

30 And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. 31 And they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss.

A legion was a Roman outfit of 6000 men. We don't know how many demons this poor man had, but Mark mentions there were more than 2000 pigs.

They don't argue with the Lord's command to come out of the man, their only argument is to beg Him not to send them into the abyss. The abyssos is a place where demons are imprisoned. In Revelation we see the abyss opened and demons come out like smoke. They are begging not to be sent to that place.

32 Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons entreated Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission. 33 And the demons came out from the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake, and were drowned.

It's Mark who gives us the number. He says there were about 2000 swine.

I believe this is a God thing. How would we know about the legion of demons if there wasn't a hillside full of swine? This becomes very visible to the disciples who can hear the demons speak but cannot see them.

The demons ask permission to enter the pigs. Jesus grants that permission, and over 2000 pigs run madly into the sea. This upsets P.E.T.A. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals folk.

The world full of rebellers judge the ethics of Jesus for doing this. How dare Jesus kill pigs. What right does Jesus have to kill pigs. And what right does He have to commandeer pigs that belong to whoever the pigs belong to. Was Jesus evil to do that?

Listen again to Psalm 50:

*10 "For every beast of the forest is Mine,
The cattle on a thousand hills.*

*11 "I know every bird of the mountains,
And everything that moves in the field is Mine.*

*12 "If I were hungry, I would not tell you;
For the world is Mine, and all that is in it.*

Those are His pigs, waiting to glorify Him. He doesn't ask permission. Demons ask permission. The pigs are His. Just like the waves and the wind. Just like the demons and illness and death. All His, to do with as it suits Him. Everything created belongs to Him and was made for the purpose of His glory. Even pigs.

34 And when the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported it in the city and out in the country. 35 And the people went out to see what had happened; and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they became frightened.

Everybody in that region knows about the maniac of Gerasa. Everybody avoids going near that ravine where he dwells in the tombs. He is wild and dangerous. Uncontrollable. He breaks chains with superhuman strength. As Joe Biden would say, he's a bad dude. A wild man.

Then one day a man shows up and the demons throw the man down prostrate on the ground in a worship position, and they beg not to be sent to the abyssos, and the man sends them into a herd of pigs that perish, and the end result is that the wild man is no longer wild.

Last week the disciples asked, “*Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?*” And now it's the people of Gerasa's turn to be terrified as they ask themselves; “Who then is this, that He commands the devils in the demoniac mad man and they obey Him?”

When God shows up terror is the norm. Because we are small and He is all powerful, and because we are sinners and He is Holy Holy Holy. The normal reaction is the one in Revelation where men call out for the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the presence of Holy God.

Fallen man is comfortable with sin. We abhor the presence of Holy God, unless He redeems us and removes our sin. Sinners are comfortable with sin. We sit in the bar and laugh about sin. The comfort of sin to sinners. The terror of the Holy, to sinners.

36 And those who had seen it reported to them how the man who was demon-possessed had been made well. 37 And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to depart from them; for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat, and returned.

Some commentators say it was the businessmen who owned the pigs who took a huge business hit that caused them to ask Jesus to leave.

No, it is the terror of sinners in the presence of the Holy that caused them to ask Him to go away. They are traumatized by being in the presence of God.

Luke 11:20 He summed up the reason by saying this, "If I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the Kingdom of God has come to you." The authority to reign of God has come for a visit, and that authority is terrifying to sinners.

Matthew and Mark both say the people entreated Him to leave their region. They didn't command. They didn't approach it as those who have power over someone to force their departure. They begged Him to go away. Please let us return to the comfort of sin. We'll take a mad man or two. We prefer the demoniac over the terror of the Lord in our midst.

Our world, our culture loves sin. Hates God. John 3:19,20 Just a couple verses beyond the most quoted verse in the bible, Jesus says;

19 And this is the verdict: The Light has come into the world, but men loved the darkness rather than the Light, because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come into the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

37 And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to depart from them; for they were gripped with great fear;

And then these pathetic words. Light departs. and He got into a boat, and returned.

The demons departed the man, but Satan ultimately keeps his territory. The people want the comfort of sin. Satan isn't so bad. We're comfortable under his reign, his kingdom. We choose darkness, please. Go away from us, please, Jesus. How sad that is.

But there is one final surprise ending to the story.

38 But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying, 39 "Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

The maniac, dressed and in his right mind only wants one thing. Be as close

to Jesus as possible. He begs to come with Jesus. Jesus says No.

Why. Later in the gospel story we'll return to Decapolis where Jesus feeds 4000. Is that reception in the region where they begged Him to leave because of the missionary work of this one man? We'll ask when we get to heaven.

They chose darkness on this day. But God in His infinite grace did not allow a total victory for Satan. In the darkness, one small light remained, and he must have faithfully shared over and over the magnificence of being delivered from Satan. The joy of knowing the Saviour.

Finally, notice the little play on words in the final verse. Jesus says go tell what great things **God** has done, and the man who was freed from sin and Satan goes and tells everyone what **who?** had done for him. **Jesus**. Jesus and God are interchangeable in that verse.

Jesus has left us in the dark world just like He left this man at Gerasa. We are to be salt and light in this present world, just like this man was for his people who received him back whole.

We are to be the flavor of Christ in Satan's world, and we are to tell everyone what great things Jesus has done for us.