

The Gadarene Demoniac  
Luke 8:26-39  
Prepared for WellSpring Church  
November 14, 2010

1. Introduction

a. Review

- i. The link between a wrong fear and a right fear is faith
- ii. We started to define faith last week—let me review this way:  
When you get into the boat of an uncertain sea, remember the truth that you stood on when you were on solid ground. Here we have Four Solid-Ground truths to remember when the winds and the waves threaten to topple the vessel of our life.
  1. Jesus is God and God is sovereign over all creation (weather included)
  2. Jesus is the perfect example of the life of faith during the storm
  3. God is always with us in our troubles.
  4. The storms of Life are no indication whatsoever that any of the first three truths have been invalidated.
    - a. Just because I have Jesus as savior doesn't mean that I won't have problems and storms in life (I Peter 4)
    - b. Just because we are assured of Jesus' presence—the presence of God in our lives and circumstances—doesn't mean that we will not have storms, or that the storms that we do have will be short-lived.
    - c. Just because I am following the directives, the directions, and the will of God doesn't mean that I will not have storms. Remember it was Jesus who said let's go over to the other side. (Paul's encouragement in II Timothy 4:17)

- b. Preview: Today we are going to see what happened when the master of the stormy sea—meets a man with a stormy life.

2. An unwelcoming Welcome Party

a. From Stormy sea to a stormy man

- i. What is his purpose? Threatening? Curious? Had he watched the little boat being tossed about in the storm and then seen 'the man' Jesus get up and all was calm? Was there a part of this man who longed for the kind of calm that the seas enjoyed?

- b. Who is this man? And how is he described?
  - i. A man who had a demon
  - ii. For a long time he had worn no clothes
  - iii. For a long time he had not lived in a house—but among the tombs
  - iv. Seized, chained, shackled and fettered. (Imprisoned, enslaved) But he broke the shackles in pieces (Mark)
  - v. Away from people—in the desert. Matthew adds that he was so fierce no one could come near him.
  - vi. Always crying out. Shrieking, wailing, howling.
  - vii. Cutting and bruising himself with stones.
- c. Here is a heartbreaking and tragic sight.
  - i. A man who has lost his natural shame and modesty, not caring that he naked.
  - ii. A man who is out of his mind—raving mad
  - iii. A Man who has frightened and alienated everyone in his life— He had parents, were they alive? Did he have siblings? Was he married, did his wife live alone in her bed and hear his shrieks and cries echoing in the tombs long for her lover to be restored? Was he a father of children, children he had frightened and traumatized? Children who needed a daddy other than a man that every one feared hated and snickered about.
  - iv. A man shivering in the cold, blistered in the sun, caked with dirt and excrement more and animal than a man, more an animal than an animal—An image bearer of God whose image had been effaced, erased and replaced with an animal's face.
  - v. A man driven and wild roving, raving, restless and untiring. Untamable, unbindable.

The great preacher and Princeton theologian of the civil war era, J. A. Alexander wrote, “As no one could confine his limbs , so no one could tame or subdue his will; it was equally impossible to bind and tame his indomitable fierceness. Always night and day he was in the mountains and the tombs and cutting himself with stone.” Was this the reason for his incessant crying and wailing? He was under unrelenting attack from the demons constantly, not occasionally cutting himself. A regular and continual laceration on his body “in the wretched sufferer’s frantic war upon himself—or with the demons....with sharp stones,”

- vi. A man who had destroyed relationships, friendships, trust, confidence—and even sought to destroy his own body.
- d. When the Master of the Waves and the Winds steps out his boat he meets a madman across the water.
  - i. Jesus shows no fear
  - ii. No shows no repulsion

- iii. He shows no rejection
- iv. Is this not the way his followers should respond?
- 3. An implacable Foe meets and Irresistible Power
  - a. When the man sees Jesus, he does two remarkable things
    - i. He falls down in worship—a man no one could bind or tame—falls down in submission to the Lord of the universe, who does nothing but step ashore. The term ‘fell down’ is descriptive of worship,
    - ii. The man speaks: “What do you have to do with me, Jesus Son of the Most High God? I beg you do not torment me.” The man—or the demon horde within the man knows who Jesus is immediately. **Interesting isn’t it. A man thought mad and out of his mind recognizes Jesus more readily than some of you who claim to be in your right mind!**
  - b. “What is your name?” Legion for we are many. How many we do not know. If he was calling himself Legion because of a specific number then it could mean that this man was inhabited and tormented by 5,600 demons since that is the number of soldiers in a Roman legion. One commentator says that there would have been 2,000 demons since there were 2,000 pigs (but it is possible that fewer than 2,000 demons in pigs could have incited and stampeded the rest of the herd.

“I am myself a host, a literal plurality of person...I am one, yet more than one, nay many, an embattled host, a legion sworn to the same cause and serving under one commander.” (J. A. Alexander)

- c. Do not torment us, do not send us to the abyss—even this powerful demon force fears Hell. **The ones who know Hell best fear it most.** It is going to be a benign place, a party with friends enjoying all of the sinful pleasures here—It will be a place of constant and endless torment
- d. The pigs—over the cliff.
- 4. An Unreceptive Audience Refuses the Savior
  - a. The herdsmen run to town to tell the story
  - b. The townspeople find the man “sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind.”

J. A. Alexander: “Here their wonder at the strange death of the swine is lost for the moment in a sight still more surprising. The madman clothed and in his right mind. Sitting still, quietly, not roving and raving as before.

Alexander again: This sight was all the more astonishing because they recognized at once in this calm and decently dressed man, the famous maniac who had so long been a terror to the community...They were awe struck, seized with that religious terror which arises even in the irreligious, upon any striking indication of a supernatural power or the presence of a superior being.”

- c. They were afraid and asked Jesus to Go. Even the most powerful sign by the most persuasive preacher is not enough if God does not open the heart. They begged him leave
  - i. Gentiles who did not see his Messianic role, did not know him as a savior.
  - ii. They do see him as a greater threat than the demoniac.

Norval Geldenhuys: "[The People] instead of believing in Jesus because of the miracle and rejoicing or being grateful, only recoil in fear from the visible revelation of this supernatural power and probably also that further disasters might befall them. From this is evident that they had a guilty consciences; otherwise they would not have been overcome by such an unhealthy fear. In addition it is clear that they cared more about their earthly possessions [the pigs] than they did the salvation of the possessed man and their salvation as well. Complying instantly with the inhospitable and impolite request of the inhabitants, and showing how far he was from wishing to obtrude his presence or his ministry, in either of its great essential functions [of Messiah or Savior] upon those who were unwilling to receive him." (Commentary on Luke (p. 256)

- d. Did they even see their plight? How about you and me? **Let us pause here and bring this story into our own lives.**

What is your response today to the power, the glory and the wonder of Jesus the Son of God? Do you know who you are without Jesus?

- i. Without Jesus we stand naked and exposed before God—every part of our actions and thoughts known—the very secret places of our lives. Read Psalm 139 (my daily reading brought me here today.
  1. There is an incredible lack of shame and modesty in the one without Christ—living life according to one's own rules flaunting the rebellious heart before God
  2. We are exposed before the all-knowing judge—naked Heb. 4:12-13
  3. Naked also before those we know.—who know us. You cannot hide who you are from others, why try to hide from God?
- ii. Without Jesus we live with a madness
  1. It is the fool who says there is no God
  2. Sin is a futile attack upon the rule and authority of God, daring him to exercise his justice and holiness.
  3. Sin is believing and living a lie.
  4. Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.
  5. Professing to be wise they were fools Romans 1:22
- iii. Without Jesus we are bent on our own destruction—and very often on the destruction of others.
  1. Like "Cutters"
  2. suicides—we're all killing ourselves

- a. drinking the acid of bitterness and unforgiveness
  - b. tightening the noose of habitual sin and addiction around our necks until our very habits choke real life out of us.
  - c. eroding our strength with anxiety and worry
  - d. allowing the corrosive of fear to eat away at our hearts and confidence
  - e. seeking to push ourselves forward we in our pride we push ourselves over the precipice of destruction(God resists the haughty) like swine diving into the sea from a cliff.
  - f. like the blind man without a guide bumping into walls, tripping over curbs, and falling into holes we never look at ourselves honestly and blame others for our problems and troubles.
  - g. Like unfeeling lepers who rub their fingers off, wear away their faces, step into fires and plunge their hands into boiling water we suppress the voice of conscience and desensitize ourselves to the destructive nature of disobedience to and rebellion against God.
  - h. cutting others with the sword that is our tongue—while cutting ourselves off from all
- 3. We are no different than the madman of the Gadarenes cutting a lacerating his flesh
- iv. Without Jesus your dwelling place is among the dead—and the future holds an eternity of spiritual death away from God. Those who are Christ's are called from death to life—those who refuse the call stay in their death. The walking dead. Spiritual zombies.
  - v. Without Jesus you are enslaved to your desires
    - 1. You can't change
    - 2. You can't stop
    - 3. You can't reform yourself and buy new life and forgiveness and freedom.

Sin has not only stirred God's anger and wrath; it has also enslaved the whole of humanity. We live to 'gratify' self, but the self we gratify is in subjection to sin. Without Christ 'we live' in the ways of the worlds, as with a habit, which we neither can nor desire to break. Satan, the 'ruler of the kingdom of the air' is 'at work' in men, women, and children, thus ensuring their continued disobedience to God. Moreover this enslavement to sin relates to all our inner faculties. Our minds are ensnared, and so we follow the 'thoughts' of our sinful nature. Our affections and feelings are corrupted with the 'desires of the sinful nature. Our will is enthralled so that we choose to 'follow' the ways of the world. Of course it is not surprising that many do not acknowledge this description as being true of themselves. Only the Holy Spirit, by means of God's law, can bring a deep conscious awareness of sin

home to the sinner. But the reality is that like poison dissolved in a glass of water, sin has permeated every part of the human personality—mind, heart, and will. Sin’s contamination of every human being is total. (John Benton, [Evangelistic Calvinism, Why the Doctrines of Grace are Good News](#), p. 7)

[http://www.cvbbs.com/inventory.php?target=indiv&search\\_back=keywords%3Devangelistic+calvinism%26searchstyle%3Dall%26page%3D1%26title\\_keyword%3D%26isbn\\_keyword%3D%26publisher\\_keyword%3D%26author\\_keyword%3D%26sort\\_by%3D&bookid=9971](http://www.cvbbs.com/inventory.php?target=indiv&search_back=keywords%3Devangelistic+calvinism%26searchstyle%3Dall%26page%3D1%26title_keyword%3D%26isbn_keyword%3D%26publisher_keyword%3D%26author_keyword%3D%26sort_by%3D&bookid=9971)

- vi. Without Jesus you Are forced to a more and more inward life
    - 1. fearing others will know you as you are
    - 2. living only to self—selfishly, rejecting others, incapable of real love
    - 3. caught in self pity
  - e. Oh but what a joy and a change in status for those who do have Jesus
    - i. No longer naked and exposed in our shame and vulnerable to the condemnation of God—we stand dressed in his righteousness alone! Naked and transparent, known loved and accepted, because of the perfection of Christ.
    - ii. No longer living in the madness of a futile and hopeless rebellion against God suppressing the truth and living according to the deceits of our hearts and the lies of this world and its prince the great enemy of our souls- we are now able to rejoice in the truth, recognize the lie, take our thoughts captive, transform our lives by the renewing of our minds, set our minds on things above—no longer hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, but softened by the love of God.
    - iii. no longer pursuing a deadly course of self-destruction but moving ever more to a fullness of healing and restoration and realization of who I am in God’s eyes because of Jesus.
    - iv. no longer living as dead men walking among the dead but given new and eternal and abundant life—real life.
    - v. no longer enslaved, but freed—free indeed!
    - vi. no longer living only for ourselves but finally able to joyfully begin to love God with all and neighbor as self.
  - f. And how is this possible? It is possible because of the death of the perfect man—the God-man
    - i. naked on the cross
    - ii. driven the city
    - iii. accused of being out of his mind and possessed by Satan
    - iv. gave his own body to destruction—even death
    - v. made captive not to chains, nails, but by love and sin
    - vi. he cried out in agony—the shriek of abandonment “my God why have you forsaken me?”
5. An unlikely Missionary is sent to the hardest field.

- a. But the “the man who had a demon” asked to go with Jesus. Why do you suppose?
    - i. Feared a relapse
    - ii. To disavow or separate himself from the actions or attitudes of his compatriots who refused the Lord.
    - iii. The desire to be with Chris from personal attachment springing out of gratitude for what he had experienced, and that saving faith which seems to have so commonly accompanied his miracles of healing.
  - b. “No!”
    - i. Go Home—to your house, to your family, to those you have abandoned, hurt and terrorized
    - ii. tell what the lord has done
    - iii. the great things and
    - iv. the compassion and mercy.
  - c. Is there any thing harder than convincing your family who knows you best that there has been a real and lasting change?
  - d. And he went. without following Jesus without training in theology, in telling his testimony...
  - e. Everyone has a story—and every story of conversion is equally a miracle and a wonder. The experience of the compassion of God is enough to make anyone of us an effect missionary
    - i. A witness merely tells what he has seen-heard
    - ii. You as a Christian know more about the power, the wonder, the reality, the grace and the mercy of God than any non-believer. Do not be afraid of their arguments, show them a changed life.
  - f. Everyone has a mission field of familiarity—a web of influence.
6. Conclusion
- a. When Jesus steps onto the shore of the madness and confusion of you life and exposes you madness, reluctance, self-destructiveness, slavery and tomb dwelling—what will you do?
  - b. And when you have left Nakedness and are clothed in the Righteousness of Christ; when you are given a right mind in exchange for the lunacy and madness of sin; when you are invited to come out of the tombs and live in the light of the living; when your chains fall off and you are free to leap unfettered, unencumbered in praise to your divine liberator—It is not because you have found religion; it is not because you have found some unnamed higher power; it is not because you have turned over a new leaf. When you have stopped believing the lie and started living in the truth--It is because you have Heard the good news! You have met the one whom even the seas and the winds must obey; you have met the one before whom devils shudder; you have met the one who has taken you sin, its guilt, your

shame, your condemnation and He has given you forgiveness, new life, and eternal freedom

- c. And you have a story, in the name of Jesus –Go and tell it early, often and always. But don't be surprised if people reject you and ask you to leave. They did it even to Jesus
- d. And you have a story, in the name of Jesus –Go and tell it early, often and always

“While we know that we have to wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against the powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places (Eph. 6:12), it is heartening to be brought by this story to a fresh realization that Christ Jesus is the conqueror of all evil spirit. In the light of his holiness and might they are unable to proceed with their devilish works. And where God still permits them to make assaults on the faithful, this is only to test and refine us, and he never gives them free play. ere long an end will be put forever to their activities, when he comes in power and glory to establish his everlasting and heavenly kingdom upon the earth.” (Geldenhuys)