

## A Vivid Picture of Spiritual Oppression

Luke 8:26-29

September 16, 2018

We're returning to our study of Luke's Gospel. So I ask you to open your Bibles to Luke Chapter 8, Luke 8. And we are entering into a story of really profound and far-reaching implications as Jesus heals what has to be the severest example of demonic possession found in all of Scripture, and I'd say probably the only exception would be the Antichrist himself, who is going to be inhabited by Satan. That's very profound, severe example of demonic possession. But this one, this one is a close, close second. Because of the profound and far-reaching implications of this passage, I'm going to have to spend a few weeks on it. So sorry, Ren Merry, but that blows the schedule a little bit. We're going to have to make some adjustments.

But you'll find the account there at the end of, well, it's kind of right in the end of Luke or the middle of Luke there, Luke 8:26 is where it starts, and it goes to verse 39. Let's, let's, begin this study by reading this amazing story of deliverance from this extreme case of spiritual oppression.

Luke 8:26. "Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. And when Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes. He had not lived in a house, but among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and said with a loud voice, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, son of the most high God? I beg you, do not torment me.' For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man for many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard, and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert. And then Jesus asked him. What is your name? And he said "Legion," for many demons had entered him, they begged him not to command them to depart, to depart into the abyss. Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside and they begged him to let him enter these, and so he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man, entered the pigs and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

"When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled. And told it in the city and in the country. And then people went out to see what had happened. And they came to Jesus and found the

man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. And those who had seen it told them how the demon possessed man had been healed. And then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them. And they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.' And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him."

That account actually starts back in verse 22 of chapter 8. Where we read that "one day Jesus got into a boat with his disciples and he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side of the lake.' And so they set out." And as we know, as we already studied by divine providence, they were briefly delayed in their journey by that violent storm which Jesus calmed by his word of command, and then as we read here in verse 26, Jesus and his disciples arrive at their originally intended destination.

"They arrived," verse 22 says, "on the other side of the lake," or more specifically, verse 26, they arrived in the region or the, the country of the Gerasenes. It's a place on the shore of the lake, which is opposite Galilee. So we need to see this entire section here from verse 22 and following as a single account. The single account starts in verse 22 and goes all the way to verse 39. There are two miraculous supernatural events, but both of them are part of a single account. One account meant to teach and convey a single larger lesson, profound lesson.

And here's the lesson. Jesus is God. Jesus is God. He possesses, as we see in these accounts, the power of God. The prerogative of God to use that power. He's moved by the compassion of God. He accomplishes here what only God can accomplish. For those who are afflicted and spiritually oppressed, he saves, he delivers, he heals, he restores. Jesus does what only God can do, because Jesus is God.

Remember back in Luke 4, look back to Luke 4 if you can turn their Luke 4 and verses 18 and 19. This is the beginning of Jesus' Ministry. In there we have here in Luke 4:18 and 19 really, what is the biblical prophetic thesis statement you

might say of Jesus' entire Messianic ministry. That text, Luke 4:18 to 19. You can see it's many Bibles, it's set apart from the rest of the font and the text there. It comes from Isaiah 61:1 and 2. So it's, this is biblical, it's prophetic, and you might think of this section here. As Jesus begins his ministry, it's like his inaugural address to the nation. He is the promised Messiah. He's coming to his kingdom and he is outlining the plan, his entire plan of his entire ministry and his kingdom.

"And he says this, 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me. Because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives. Recovering of sight to the blind. And to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' He closed up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and he said, 'This scripture is today being fulfilled right here right now.'" That's how he began his ministry.

So Jesus came as we see there not only to proclaim good news that is to proclaim gospel, not only to proclaim liberty to the captives, but actually to do it, to accomplish it, to set at

liberty those who are oppressed. He came to set the captives free. He came to liberate the prisoners, to deliver the spiritually oppressed, and that is what we're seeing in this narrative. You can go back to Luke 8. That's what we're seeing in this narrative in Luke 8. We are seeing the power of God. We're seeing the prerogative of God. The compassionate will of God to deliver the spiritually oppressed and we're seeing it effective, powerful, transformative.

And just to demonstrate the main point that I've just stated from the text in our text, look at the narrative that we covered last time when Jesus calmed the storm in verse 25. Remember how that narrative ended? Journey, it's interrupted by a storm at sea and after Jesus calmed the storm, that narrative ended with a question mark.

Verse 25, "Disciples marveled, saying to one another. 'Who then is this? That he commands even winds and water and they obey him.'" Look, this is the main point of the narrative before us, namely to ask and then answer that question which is a Jewish question from the mouth of Jesus' own disciples. Who is this? Who is he? The answer comes from, what might seem the most

unlikely of sources, first from the demons. Verse 28, that this is none other than Jesus, the son of the most high God.

Readers of Luke's Gospel knew that already because the angel Gabriel had already said that he told that to Mary, Jesus' mother, in Luke 1:32, he will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. So Gabriel, the angels, they knew who Jesus was. They knew from the past, from their past experience with him as the second person of the Trinity. But when he came, when Gabriel came and announced that to Mary, the word spread among the demons as well.

Jesus' disciples, they needed to know that too. So God threw a storm at them, they're on the ocean, they're on the sea, Sea of Galilee, and he crafted the storm and threw it at them. And that was so Jesus could demonstrate power over the impersonal forces of nature. Jesus, there, with the power of God, tamed the untameable, the powers of the material world obeyed their Creator's command. Then God directed them on their journey, to the Gerasene shore. To meet this demoniac. So the disciples could witness Jesus' power over the malevolent forces of the spiritual world. The demons.

We're seeing Jesus' power over the physical material world and also the spiritual immaterial world. Now look down in verse 39 of chapter 8. This is sort of an indirect but effective way of making the case that Jesus is in fact God. Jesus told the man, delivered from the suppression of the demons, now he's made new and now he is subject to a new and loving master, and that master tells him, "Return to your home and declare how much God has done for you." And what does Luke tell us there? That the man "went away proclaiming throughout the city the whole city, how much [who?] Jesus had done for him." Jesus said, "Go tell what God has done," and he goes and tells what Jesus had done. Why? Because he gets it. Jesus is God and so the question from verse 25 from the lips of his own disciples, "Who then is this?" That question is answered fully and finally in verse 39 the former Demoniac knew for certain he knew the depths from which he had come, and that there's no power except God's alone that can deliver him. This Jesus is God.

This is the one who has the power the will to proclaim liberty to the captives and not just to proclaim it, but to make it so. To set the captives free. And that's really what I want you to grasp here as we enter into this narrative as we get



going this morning. This is what you must hold onto, this is what you must cling to, because if you're here today and you belong to Jesus Christ, then you know what? You belong to a Savior who is able to dive down deep. He's able to snatch his own who are perishing from the very jaws of hell itself. He's able to rescue the spiritually oppressed.

So this narrative, as we go through it, should give you every reason to rejoice, no matter what's going on in your life. No matter what difficulties, no matter what trials. Remember this life is very short. And in just a few years' time for some of us, it could be a few moments' time. We're going to be before our creator God, and if we belong to Jesus Christ, we have every reason to rejoice to give thanks not to worry, not to be anxious, but to renew our confidence that nothing will separate us from the love of Christ, which is in, or the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But if you are here today and you're not yet a Christian. You know it's our prayer that you'll pay very close attention to what the spirit of God has recorded in this narrative. You need to hear it. Because what we see in this demoniac is really a

vivid picture of all spiritual oppression. What's true of the Demoniac is actually true of every unbeliever, because, because of the advanced state of the demoniac's oppression, which admittedly is tragically severe. This man seems extreme to us. He seems like a case that we could never enter into as unbelievers, but you need to realize that all unbelievers are in the same fundamental condition as this man. It's only a matter of degree what our oppression looks like on the outside.

For whoever walks through this narrative and takes the time to think about it, reflect upon it, meditatively, humbly, prayerfully before God, by God's grace, you too can see the elements here of your true unbelieving condition in sin and unbelief. You can see the power of the savior here to rescue, to deliver, to do what only God can do. And you can see as well the consequence of your response to him, whether you'll be like the Gentiles of the Gerasenes, who rejected him and sent him away. Whether you'll be like this delivered demoniac. That's actually the narrative flow of the text.

If you look at your Bibles, notice that Jesus deals first of all in verses 26 to 29, he deals with the demoniac. He deals,

it's like a one on one encounter with the demoniac. The condition of the demoniac as I said, is actually a vivid picture of all spiritual oppression. This reveals the ultimate end of all those who do not know Christ. So that's what we'll study today. Secondly, though in this narrative, verses 30 to 33, we see the power of the Savior. Who is able to deliver, not just from sin, but from the beings that embody and personify all sinful rebellion, the malevolent spiritual forces of the supernatural world that we know as demons. We know, 1 John 5:19, that "the whole world lies in the power of the Evil One."

But our Savior, according to Luke 11:20, is able to cast out demons by the very finger of God. And finally, in the last part of the narrative. Verses 34 to 49 we see the crucial factor of our response to what we have read and learned. Will you like the Gentiles on that foreign shore, will you ask Jesus to go away Will you prefer the company of demons to the company of Christ? Or will you respond like some who are delivered from sin, longing to remain with Christ, and then enlist in his service?

So first part verses 26 to 29. Jesus interacts with the demoniac; second part verses 30 to 33, Jesus interacts with the demons; and third part, verses 34 to 39, Jesus interacts with those who need to respond. Today we're gonna look at the first part only. Jesus and the demoniac. And this is where we're going to see, as I said, a vivid picture of spiritual oppression which portrays everyone in an unbelieving condition.

So first point in an unbelieving condition, you can write this down or see it in your outline in the bulletin, all sinners are, number one all sinners are alienated in hopeless isolation. Alienated in hopeless isolation.

So first of all, look at verse 26, where Luke sets the scene of this story in an isolated foreign location. It says, "Then they sailed to the country of the garrisons, which is opposite Galilee." And you say, well, how has Luke actually set the scene in a isolated foreign location? Because aren't they on the other side of the lake? I mean, aren't they neighbors of Israel? Don't they share the same body of water, fish in the same waters? Don't their boats bump up against each other in the lake? Well, yeah. Yeah, I guess so. Geographically this area is

continuous with the land of Israel. It touches the boundaries of the nation of God's chosen people. But you need to realize that historically and culturally, religiously, spiritually, this place and that place could not be further apart. In every way, this country of the Gerasenes is very much, as Luke tells us here, opposite Galilee.

Over in Matthews Gospel. He describes the location for the same miracle as the country of the Gadarenes, not the Gerasenes, but the Gadarenes, and he associates this place with the city of Gedara, ae chief city in the immediate area. Gedara was located about six miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee. But to Matthew's mind, and Matthew remember was a former tax collector who no doubt had tax and customs dealing, dealings with his counterparts in the city of Gedara. That city is the one with which he associated the region.

Matthew and Mark, though, they both described this as the country of the Gerasenes. It's not a contradiction, it's just how they thought of this part of the world. The city that they associated with was Garasa, which was about even further. It was about 35 miles away. So while Gedara was the chief city in the

immediate area, Garasa was the larger, more prominent city that provided the political identity of the region. Garasa was a city that was known to Ptolemy, Pliny, Josephus counted among the prominent cities of the Decapolis. The, the Decapolis is a reference to the 10 Gentile cities that lay to the east of the Jordan River. So Matthew's reference to Gedara and Mark and Luke's reference to Garasa, both Gedara, Garasa were cities of the Decapolis.

So you ask what is the Decapolis? Why is that important? The Decapolis was a league of 10 Greco Roman cities, and they dated back to the conquest of Alexander the Great after Alexander the Great's death in 323 BC, his four generals carved up his the places that he conquered, made them four separate kingdoms, and it was general Seleucid, who took the lands of Judea, Syria, and Persia, which is why the region became known as the Seleucid Kingdom. You'll find that in your history books. In the Seleucid Kingdom, like these, other kingdoms continued the Hellenization project that was begun by Alexander. And the Hellenization project was really to spread Greek language, Greek culture, that they were hellenists, so they spread this culture. Language, history, myths, all the portrayal of the, the Greek

mythology and all the rest, all spread by these kingdoms under Alexander, the lands that he conquered.

So the Jews? They didn't like that Hellenization. Some of them did. Many of them did, but in particular the Jews of Galilee they hated Hellenization. They hated the influence of the Greeks. They hated its paganism. They hated its rampant and flagrant immorality. They hated its defiling customs, that defiled the region. You can imagine that maybe living here in Northern Colorado and hating some of the immorality, and the perversion, and defilement that comes from urbanization, secularization. We hate all that too. We can understand these Galileans.

And so these Galileans resisted. They resisted politically, economically, culturally, sometimes even violently, they resisted. Jews became finally so odious to the Seleucids that one of the kingdom's most infamous rulers, An, Antiochus Epiphanes, he marched into Jerusalem itself in 167 BC. He walked up to the altar after conquering the city, desecrating it, locked up the altar of the Temple of God in Israel, in

Jerusalem, he sacrificed a pig on that altar to defile it, and also to honor his God Zeus.

Well, that may have sent a message, but it also sparked a Maccabean revolt. I don't know if you've read about Judas Maccabees and the Maccabean Revolt. But they ended up being very effective, they conquered the region. They were Galileans, they con, they conquered the region. They established Jewish rule and the Maccabees held power in what was known as the Hasmonean dynasty for the next 100 years in that region. They held power in the Hasmonean dynasty, over the Decapolis. All until the Roman conquest by General Pompei, who returned the region to Roman rule in 63 BC.

During the time of the Hasmonean dynasty, the ethnic Greeks that were under the Jewish rule, they absolutely resented the Jews just as much as the Jews resented the Decapolis and all their immorality. All the Greeks did not like the Jewish rule over them, so when the Romans conquered, they celebrated the return to their beloved pagan rule. They felt liberated from Jewish fanaticism much like you might think people underneath the rule of ISIS are rejoicing when the Americans come and drive



away ISIS. And they're, they're relieved of that oppression. That's how they felt.

So preferring the cultural sophistication of Rome and in exchange for military protection from Rome, Rome had stationed legions of troops in these cities to quell any Jewish uprising. The Gentile cities of the capitalists. They gladly welcomed Roman rule. They were eager to help protect, Rome, actually gave them an amount of autonomy to rule themselves, but they were eager to help protect Rome's interests. Economic trade interests in the East, and especially if it meant the squelching and the subduing in the end of Jewish power.

All that to say. Between, between the Decapolis in the east and the Galilee to the west of the Sea of Galilee, between the citizens of these 10 Gentile cities and the citizens of the towns and villages and cities of Galilee, quite the dysfunctional relationship, no love lost between these peoples. The antipathy between these regions, it went deeper than historical, political, cultural conflict. They differed more fundamentally more seminally in spiritual and religious matters. The Greco-Roman character of the Decapolis region was dominated

by paganism. Worshipping all myriad manner of gods. Dominated by idolatry and then of course all the attendant immoralities and impurities that attend false religion. And that's what you need to see here.

As Luke has introduced this narrative, setting the scene in the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. This is a people that, even though they are geographically close to Israel, religiously spiritually, it was located on the other side of the planet. On the other side of the universe. They couldn't be further apart. These gentiles, like all the Gentiles from a Jewish perspective, they inhabited an isolated foreign location which was defiled and corrupt. They lived in an alienated state, isolated hopelessly from the true God of Israel. Paul referred to that alienation when he wrote to the Ephesians. Ephesians 2:11 to 12, he reminds them, he says, "Remember that at one time you were you Gentiles in the flesh you called the uncircumcision. By what is the circumcision which is made in the flesh by ha, by hands? Remember that at that time [it is before Christ] you were at the time separated from Christ. You were alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of Promise, having no hope without God in the world."

Gentiles, they were never people of the book. They were never living in the light of divine revelation. They never had truth. They wandered in darkness, which Paul also described in Ephesians, Ephesians 4:17 to 19. "They were walking in darkness in the futility of their minds. They had a darkened understanding. They were alienated from the life of God, because the ignorance that is in them due to their hardness of heart." Paul described them there as "calloused, hard hearted, having given themselves up to sensuality and greedy to practice every kind of impurity."

Think about the worst impurity you see in our world. And think about someone who practices that impurity which is defiling and degrading and isolating and destroying. And they're greedy to practice it. Listen, Luke has brought us into a scene here that graphically portrays the spiritual condition Paul described in Ephesians. This is a lost people. Living in darkness and under the shadow of death, and that is clearly portrayed here.

Just let your eyes scan the narrative with me for a moment. Look in verse 27. This is a land that's full of foul demons, public nudity and the stench of death among the tombs. Verse 28, it's a land that's howling with the anguished cry and screams from the throat of demons. Verse 29, this is a land of unclean spirits. It's a land of imprisonment, and chains, and shackles and violence, and madness. Verse 30, it's a land of demons, and not only that, but legions of demons. In verses 31 to 33, we see it's a land that is kind of a gateway to the abyss. The habitation of unclean swine, and for a Jew they can think of nothing worse and more defiling, corrupt and impure, than thousands of swine that fed the pagans that became sacrifices and all their dark rituals as they worship their defiling gods. There's almost nothing as vile to a Jew then to imagine like it describes here thousands of pigs hurtling down a steep bank in a mountainside, falling into the Sea of Galilee, gurgling and drowning, swine flesh drowning. And they think. That's where I fish. That's where I get fish for my family and feed my family with that.

Clearly this is the people, as Paul described in Ephesians 2:12, "At that time they're separated from Christ. They're alienated from Israel. They're strangers to the covenants of

promise. They have no hope because [for them] they're living without God in the world." Theirs is a sad, sad, desperate condition. They are alienated in hopeless isolation. Now with the scenes set here in the desperate spiritual situation, these people are in.

Let's sharpen the focus just a bit more, sharpen it to think about this night. Think about this time we're going to enter the scene, Luke said for us, as Jesus has stepped out of the boat, they've reached the shores, he steps out of the boat, his footfalls on the shore, and what do we see?

There at the beginning of verse 27, it says when Jesus stepped out into the land, onto the land. What land exactly? Where was that exactly? It wasn't Gadara, which is 6 miles to the southeast. It wasn't Gerasa, which is about 35 miles to the southeast. It was just the region or the country of those places. The actual place where Jesus set foot was very likely a place called Gergesa, Gergesa. There's actually a textual variant that started to enter into the Greek manuscripts and show up in some of the later manuscripts after the time of origin, where, the change, it changes Gadara in Matthew and

Gara, Gara, Gerasa in Ma, Mark and Luke changes it to the name Gergesa following origin. Eusebius and Jerome, they believed like him, that they identified the exact location for this scene taking place very close by small city or Gergesa, now known as Kursi.

A very close to the shore of the Sea of Galilee. And there. In that place is the kind of topography that actually does fit the description in the gospel narratives, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Gesa is located about halfway down the Eastern Shore of the Sea of Galilee, which, as Luke tells us very precisely. Verse 26, It's directly opposite the Galilee. "In the immediate area, there are extremely steep hills coming right down to the shoreline. According to one source quote, "The sea is so near the foot of the mountain at this spot that animals, having once got fairly onto the incline, they could not help rolling down into the water." Another source says quote, "The mountain side there has caves and hewn tombs where according to Mark and Luke the demoniac had taken shelter."

So try to imagine this scene. Let your minds I take you their disciples, navigate their boat to the shore. Remember,

they just come through a storm. Jesus had calmed the storm, but now they're more afraid of the Jesus who's with them than the storm itself. It's perfectly calm, there's not a wind that's blowing. So they had to row there. You're tired. They come to the shore, arrive on foreign soil, a place they don't want to be. In this unclean territory of the Gentiles which is unfamiliar, and they probably feel it's even a bit hostile.

Storm they just came through happened at night. So it's very likely they, they arrived well, it was still dark. Maybe in the wee or the early morning hours. Pale moonlight probably cast strange shadows on the ground. Set in eerie landscape and the relief of the landscape like the steep cliff like slopes that rose above them. The mountain side in that eerie light is pockmarked with caves hewn out of the rock, becoming permanent resting places for pagan corpses. It's like a haunted horror movie, isn't it?

You're supposed to feel that. As maybe the chills go up your spine. This is, isn't it, a perfect moment to come face to face with a demon possessed maniac, running down the steep mountainside screaming at the top of his lungs, blood curdling

screams that must have pierced this night air, sending chills up the spine and all the way down to the bone. Absolutely terrifying. Let's meet this poor soul. Having set the scene, let's meet this one, this one that pictures for us. Another aspect of the fallen unbelieving condition.

This is point two in your outline. Like this demoniac. Sinners are not home, just hopelessly isolated. But sinners are likewise enslaved in cruel degradation. They're enslaved, sinners are enslaved. You need to see that. Enslaved in cruel degradation. There's more background on this guy coming in verse 29, but Luke introduces us to him here in verse 27. He brings us into the scene almost as it were in real time, so we can kind of picture this in real time as Jesus and his disciples experienced it. Verse 27, 7 says, "When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons, and for a long time he had worn no clothes. He'd not lived in a house, but among the tombs."

Luke tells us, as Mark does, there is a man as in singular one man, but Matthew tells us there are actually two demon possessed men that met him there. So there were two men present,



this mark and Luke do not contradict that. Mark and Luke just choose to focus on the more prominent of the two. We're meeting here, the spokesman, the leader, the chief of these two. And whatever we learn about him, we can apply to his partner as well.

Nevertheless, we're gonna get a focus on the one man. And first Luke tells us, in verse 27, it was a man that met Jesus. He is a man. He is a human being. We need to see that he is a human being, but he's an anonymous human being. He's not named in this account, nor is he named in Matthew's account or Mark's account. He's kind of like the sinful woman that we met in Luke 7:37, and this man remains unknown to Luke's readers. Why? Why don't we know his name? Because his ignoble and degraded past, it's about to be eclipsed and erased by the grace of God. What he is, is to us now as a new creation in Christ. But at this point, just a man. And yet he's a man.

Secondly, this is a man from the city, probably the nearby city of Gergesa, the city nearest to this location, and that means that even though he remains unknown to Luke's readers, this man was well known to the herdsmen, and the townsfolk, and

the villagers. They knew his name. They knew his family. They knew his background. They knew where this man once lived, how he'd earned his living. They knew his character. They knew his comportment how he handled himself. They knew his personality. Sadly, they also knew and had all witnessed his tragic transformation. Changing from the man that they once knew and becoming this crazed demoniac.

Leads us to a third of the description that Luke gives this man from the city had demons. We don't know how they got there, but he had demons, plural. According to verse 30, we find out he was inhabited by a lot of demons. This had to have perplexed his neighbors frightened them. His speech had become confused. His ramblings incoherent. He'd gone nuts. His behavior, odd, socially unacceptable, and not just like that weird cousin or uncle you've got. You know, this guy was off the charts. No more dinner invitations from his neighbors. Parents kept their kids away when he passed by. And eventually authorities had to figure out how to subdue him.

Fourth thing we see here is that he was naked. And he'd been naked for a long, long time. And you can imagine that means

the sight of him was embarrassing, shameful. It also means, though, that his skin unprotected from the elements had taken on a, a weather beaten leather like look. And not in any attractive way like the Marlboro man or something cool. Someone frequenting tanning salons or something, this this man imagine someone today who you see on the streets and you know that person's been hooked on methamphetamine for a long, long time. That's what this guy was like.

Fifth, like meth addicts, this guy is homeless. He's abandoned his house in the city. Means he doesn't have a roof over his head, yes, but it also means there's no place for a rest. Think about this as a restless soul. There's no sense of privacy. He's restless, he's exposed. None of the civilizing aspects that come from living in a home, which means he hasn't been grooming himself very well. So you got this leatherly, leathery skin guy. His hair is grown out wild, probably filled with sticks, matted down with oil and dirt. He appeared to others certainly like an animal: unkept, wild, shocking in appearance, probably didn't probably, didn't smell very good either. No public restrooms there in the tombs. Perhaps he took care of his necessaries in the Sea of Galilee. The bathing in lake water doesn't exactly leave the body smelling fresh and

clean, so. He is not looking, appearing, smelling. All the senses tell you stay away from this guy.

Sixth, not only has he abandoned his home in the city, not only has he left civilization behind, but he's taken up his residence among the dead. This man is frightening. He's an alien and stranger to the living. He's become familiar with the dead. He's a necromancer. He's living among the tombs. He's wandering around haunting these graves like some kind of a disembodied ghost or some kind of a ghoulish monster. This tormented soul, he is living a cruel and degraded existence because of the indwelling presence of these demons.

And listen folks, except for the common grace of God, these demons would be inhabiting and indwelling all unbelievers. They've demonstrated that desire back in Genesis chapter 6. Trying to inhabit the women and the men. They cohabit. They don't care one bit about humanity, except that human beings represent the only creatures that God made in his image. And so the demons, they're enraged by that perceived inequity, and slight to themselves. The demons hate the image of God and man,

And because they cannot strike out against God himself, they go around, defacing his image in all creatures. They will drag them down into cruel degradation. They will strip human people of dignity. They will remove all sense of civility and decency. They immerse people in impurity and in filth, trying to soak and saturate human beings in all that angers and offends a holy God. And as I said, if they could do this to every unbeliever, they would. Why don't they? Because the common grace of God covers all mankind. The evil and the good, the just and the unjust and protects them, and restrains this kind of demonic fiendishness in everyone.

Now that said. You still need to see that this is a graphic and vivid portrayal of all spiritual oppression. And just because the grace of God has restrained the demons from having their way with fallen humanity doesn't mean that fallen humanity does not resemble this demoniac in a spiritual manner of speaking. Like the Laodiceans, people, many, are self-deceived. They believe themselves to be doing just fine for they say, or you say, Revelation 3:17, Jesus is speaking to this church is saying, "You say I'm rich. I've prospered, I need nothing. Not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked."

Contrary to many people, self-perception, unbelieving sinners are dead in their trespasses and sins. They literally live and move and have their being among the dead every single day. They share more in common with this crazed maniac, who's naked and degraded? Homeless, undignified, uncivilized, frightening, foul. They share more in common with this man as dead in sins. Not only that, but they share more in common with demons than they do with actual humanity as represented embodied in Jesus Christ. "The whole world lies in the power of the evil one," 1st John 5:19. And Ephesians 2:1 says, every single unbeliever walks in a condition continually of spiritual death, which means that they are all Ephesians 2:2, "following the course of this world. They are following the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience," and that is why the demons feel right at home moving into this poor sinner's life and body.

It can happen, listen, it can happen with any unbelieving sinner. Absolutely vulnerable to the presence, power, oppression of demons. Wide open to their oppression and possession because the spiritual rebellion of demons is in perfect harmony and close communion with the spiritual rebellion of unbelieving

sinner. Their partners in rebellion against a holy God. They share the same spiritual condition. They share the same spiritual cause of shaking a fist at God. They will share the same spiritual fate, which is eternity in the lake of fire.

Beloved let that heart fill your own. Let this or let this scene all this fill your heart with, with thankfulness that you have been delivered from this kind of a condition, this kind of a fate, where a demon being your brother as a close companion for all of eternity could have happened to you, but for the grace of God. But also let all this fill your heart with compassion toward unbelievers. Toward an unbelieving family members, and friends, and neighbors, and coworkers, and frankly, outright strangers. They may look pretty as they dress up on the outside. But inwardly they look like this demoniac. This is how God sees each and every unbeliever, not pretty.

So this is the man who met Jesus at the shoreline. Disciples have landed by the perfect Providence of God, by the way, at the exactly the right time, exactly the right spot on the shoreline, directly below this man's home among the tombs. He looks out his front porch and who should arrive, but this

group. So he thinks to himself, "Was I expecting company? I think not." Perhaps in his humanity, he's able to clear away the cobwebs of his mind and focus on maybe one coherent thought, and you can imagine him running down to greet these strangers on the beach as a human being, longing for human companionship and company. But the indwelling demons rise up and sour his mind with beguiling hostile thoughts. "No! confront them! Terrify them! Chase them away!"

The verb in verse 27 actually portrays that when Jesus, when Luke there tells us "there met him, a man from the city." The word is *hypantao*, which in some context can indicate going out to meet and confront an enemy on the battlefield. So when we learn that their self-designation is legion, verse 30, that makes perfect sense. Luke is preparing us to understand there's a conflict here. So expecting to meet some lost sailors, these demons, hoping to ambush unsuspecting men and terrify them. You know what happens? The tables are turned. Verse 28, When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell facedown before him, and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, son of the most high? I beg you do not torment me."



This man, this poor soul. He doesn't know Jesus. He'd never seen or heard about Jesus before in his life. But these demons, these demons know who he is. They're absolutely terrified. Out of the man's throat comes these, these shrieks that pierced the stillness of the night, and the demons throw this man's body down before Jesus, making him bow before him in craven fear, and dread. They strain this man's vocal cords to do their bidding to shout and scream, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, son of the most high God?" They're trying to keep Jesus away.

We're to look more carefully at Jesus interaction with these demons next time. For now, though, let's look to a third point in our outline. We've seen how fallen unbelieving sinners are pictured in this demoniac, alienated in hopeless isolation, enslaved by cruel degradation. Thirdly, this Demoniac portrays how sinners also are trapped in pitiful subjugation. Unbelieving sinners are trapped, enslaved, overcome in pitiful subjugation.

Why did the demons here shriek as they did? Why don't they cry out, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, son of the most high God? I beg you, do not torment me"? Because notice in the sentence, verse 29 the first sentence there, Jesus had commanded

the unclean spirit to come out of the man. Luke has been taking us through the encounter or helping us to picture this as it happened to the disciples in real time, but here in verse 29 he takes us back in time a bit, and he kind of fills in the gaps. What prompted the shrieking of the demons? What elicited their protest? It was the immediate compassionate action of Jesus Christ, this savior who came to set the captives free. He commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man.

Jesus immediately, he sees this man's pitiful subjugation to a host of foul demons. When he acted immediately, there's no hesitation on his part. He knows what to do. So authoritatively, he commands the unclean spirit to come out of him. He intends to set this poor man free from his enslavement. Then we see in the rest of verse 29 Jesus tells us even more of the story so we can see this wretched man that was a monster, but as a man. With the eyes of compassion, like Jesus saw him.

Look at it there, "For many a time, the demons had seized him. He was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds, be driven by the demon into the desert." Look, it's not just his mind that's under the power of

the demons. Even his body is under control, total subjugation. Total domination and control the demons. It says here that "they seize the man." The idea is seized him violently, repeatedly. It's actually the *synarpazo* which is used to describe in Acts 6:12 of the mob violence of the Jews against Steven as they grabbed him violently and dragged him before the Sanhedrin. It's it's actually used of mob violence again in Acts 19 when, when the Ephesians rise up against Paul.

The demons had seized this man in an act of, of crazed mob violence. Convulsed him, shook him violently, and dragging him away to do their bidding. That kind of controlled by unseen forces of demons make this man totally unpredictable to other people. Obviously, he was a threat. So the villagers of Gergesa had tried to bind his hands with, with handcuffs. Prevent him from injuring himself and others. They bound his feet with fetters and shackles to prevent him from leaving. Which would cause him to get lost and maybe fall into harm.

Some commentators believe binding the man with chains and shackles as evidence, so the townsfolk were cold at heart and cruel to this man. But I don't see it that way. Certainly

they're trying to protect themselves, but we also read that they had kept this man under guard and to keep somebody under guard is an evidence of, of a costly and time-consuming, perhaps compassion.

I mean, if they just were cold and, and found him threatening, they would have driven him away with spears. Who cares what happens to him? I see some attempt here at showing some level of compassion. Yes, they restrained him to protect themselves and to protect other people. Of course. But I think they were also concerned about his own safety. They're concerned lest he break free from the restraints and they lose sight of him, so they guarded him. Until that didn't work.

You know human solutions are always incapable of dealing with deeper spiritual problems. Whether it's a man's own spiritual problems and sins and rebellion and all manner of confusion in the mind. Or whether it's exacerbated by the presence of demons. We still use restraints made of iron and steel, don't we? We've also developed, with modern medicine, pharmaceutical restraints to subdue mind and body.

But listen, without any spiritual sense, and today, in our very sophisticated culture, denying any of these spiritual realities where they can make sense of things like this. Having no access to any spiritual remedy, what can the world do to deliver people from possession of demons? Let alone any form of spiritual oppression and its effects. Shackles and bars, right? Prescriptions and therapy. Send them away, put them in an asylum. What else are they gonna do? As we know, ultimately none of that works. None of that reaches through the exterior. It touches the real problem at the soul. The actual issue of spiritual oppression caused by alienation from God because of sin.

Well, the demons, they turned this man into a violent animal. They imbued him here with superhuman strength, allowing him to tear apart all physical restraints. When you think about it, I mean having iron shackles on your hands and feet, you tear that apart? That's going to leave a mark, that's gonna hurt. Drive this poor man against his will. You know? The sense of the verb used here shows this man still retained a will. He had a will of a human being. It's just that he was inhabited by another will or other wills, plural.

But the sense of the verb used here to drive, to urge forward into the desert. There's an implication there of struggle and resistance. The verb is used of straining at the oars during a storm at sea. It's, it's rowing against a contrary wind, which is hard and it takes effort. These demons are taking effort. They're pushing. They're driving against this man's will. They're sending him away into the desert, into the wilderness, into deserted, abandoned places.

This is a tragic, tragic picture here of spiritual oppression. This poor man's filled with demons. He's utterly enslaved in this pitiful state, of demonic subjugation and control. So, no wonder we read, beginning at verse 29, that Jesus' immediate response was compassion. He commanded that unclean demon to come out of this man because his heart is touched with pity with compassion, and so he intends to rescue this man just out of a sense of pure, unmitigated mercy. He's gonna deliver this man from the torment of demonic possession.

As we read at the beginning, spirit of the Lord is upon Jesus for exactly this purpose. "Because he's anointed him to proclaim liberty to the captives and to set at liberty those who

are oppressed." Jesus came to seek and save the lost, to set the captives free, to liberate the prisoners, to deliver the spiritually oppressed. And I just want you to notice, beginning of verse 30, that Jesus turns and asks the man a question, verse 30. He's not speaking to the demons there when he asks a question. Jesus is asking a question of the man. "What is your name?" And just a footnote there. There has been so much bad teaching on demonology and on exorcism, and it's been developed from a misunderstanding of what Jesus is actually doing here.

Jesus is not here addressing the demons. He does talk to the demons, but after this here he's addressing the man and he asks him what is your name? He's speaking to this man as a man. And he asked him a simple question of identity to call him to his senses. To help him to reassert his independence of thought and will, to help him resist the will of these indwelling demons. Even this here is an act of mercy as Jesus even before he expels the demons, he starts to help restore this man's humanity, his sense of dignity, his sense of will. Why? Because Jesus sees him as he created him, as a man.

I like the way Frederic Godet explained that. He wrote this, "There is nothing so suitable as a calm and simple question to bring a madman to himself. Above all, there is no more natural way of awakening in a man who is beside himself. The consciousness of his own personality than to make him tell his own name. A man's name becomes the expression of his character and a summary of the history of his life. And now the first condition of any cure of this afflicted man was a return to the distinct feeling of his own personality." End Quote.

What happened? What was the result for this man? Take just a quick look at the effect of Jesus' command in verse 29. The demons, as we see in verse 32 to 33, they left the man they entered into the herd of pigs which and he killed them. One clear indication to everyone who watched that they had indeed departed. But more importantly, look at the effect on the man in verses 35 and 36, "Then the people went out to see what had happened. And they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind and they were afraid those who had seen and told them how the demon possessed man had been healed."



We don't have time to de, develop the point here, but notice that this man hadn't just been healed of demonic possession. This man had become a disciple. Why do you say that? Well, because look, he's wearing clothing, yes. His mind is restored, yes. But the clearest mark of his deliverance is how full and complete it is, because he has been converted. He is, notice it there, sitting where? At the feet of Jesus. Sitting before the rabbi. This is discipleship language in scripture. But sitting at the feet? That's worship language.

Remember the forgiven woman of Luke 7? Remember the emphasis there in that passage on Jesus' feet. We actually took time to develop that and unpack that. Luke 7:38 says she was standing behind him where? At his feet. She's weeping and she began to wet, wet his feet with her tears and wiped, his feet with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed his feet with ointments. Is that five references to his feet in one verse? What is that on her part? That's worship. What is it here when he's sitting at Jesus' feet? It's worship.

Beloved, what are we to learn from this? Just quickly let me give you two thoughts. Number one, only God can turn a crazed

demoniac into a sober minded, joyful, grateful worshiper. Only God can change someone from a demoniac into a disciple. God converts the sinner. Makes him worshiping disciple, one who sits and learns sober mindedly, gratefully at the feet of his new master, and Jesus has done that to this man demonstrating, once again, that Jesus is God with the power of God, the prerogative God, the compassionate will of God to save any sinner no matter how lost and desperate the condition of their fallen state and this guy, he's really lost. Turned him into a sober minded worshiper.

But also, what else can we learn? Secondly, and in the coming weeks, we're going to see this, but Jesus he commissions forgiven sinners. He converts them into his disciples, and then he sends them out with a message of their own deliverance in their own sin. If you do not know how to recite your own testimony to other people on a dime, learn. Learn to do that. Verse 39 Jesus man, Jesus told this man return to your home and declare how much God has done for you.

Listen, are you a disciple? Has God done much for you? Then don't you want to tell others? You bet. Listen as you go this

morning. Be sure to keep in mind the nature of the task to which you've been called. This account portrays in a very vivid and graphic way, the true condition of spiritual oppression. And it also exposes to us the true nature of the Gospel Ministry. This is a battle with spiritual forces for human souls. Let's never you lose sight of that. Let's not get caught up in what we see on the surface. This is a battle that goes deep. And lest you be afraid and think that it's too much for you, well, it is too much for you alone. First John 4:4, "Little children, you are from God. And you have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

Well, we have to stop and pick it up there next time. Let's pray. Our Father, we want to thank you for your grace and mercy to each and everyone of us who calls Jesus Savior and Lord. We're so grateful that you have rescued us from spiritual oppression, our lost condition before you and, and really in a desperate state, not just being vulnerable to the demonic forces of the world and lead along by the, the Prince of the Power of the Air, the one who is at work in all the sons of disobedience. That's not the scariest thing. Scariest thing is to be before your holy wrath. The fact that you know, by your omniscient gaze, everything that we have done to offend you and break your

law. You know all of our thoughts, and our words, and our deeds. You know how many times we've sinned against you and offended you and your holiness in your judgment and your wrath hovered above us like the Sword of Damocles, ready to fall, kill us, to remand us to an eternal death in the lake of fire, along with the company of Satan and his angels. Oh, but God, you've been so gracious to us. And we who are saved and forgiven with clear consciences before you, because of your, your grace and forgiving our sin because of Jesus Christ sacrifice on the cross. Because of the fact that you have covered us with perfect righteousness, and we stand before you with no condemnation. Fearing nothing because you've given us perfect salvation. Father, we thank you. Thank you for your kindness to us in Christ. It's in his name we pray, amen.