



Outsiders

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Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Man

Week of October 3, 2021

Intro Discussion Question(s):

- *What have you learned most in your study of God's Word this week?*
- *What is the most miraculous salvation you have witnessed or heard of (someone whose conversion was a drastic difference from their previous life....someone that you were concerned would never come to Christ)?*

Read Bible Study Summary:

As we continue our study on the way Jesus interacted and ministered to outsiders, we now look at one particular encounter he had with someone taken over by evil. For the first and only time in the gospel of Luke, Jesus journeys outside of the boundaries of Jewish territory to the people of a pagan land. The unusual location, the extraordinary circumstances, and the results of his encounter with the demoniac show us the unsurpassed authority of our Savior and the intentions for his kingdom to stretch beyond normal boundaries.

Main Scripture

- ***Read Luke 8:26-39***

What does Jesus' healing of the demoniac teach us about ministry to outsiders?

1. Christ's Authority is Stronger Than the Strongest Evil (8:26-33)

- While there is clear evidence that some diseases of the body or mind have been wrongly labeled demonic, the number of explicit references to demons and demon possession in our New Testament, and similar descriptions in the Old Testament, simply do not allow us to ignore the idea that evil spiritual beings are at work in our world. Many enlightened modern thinkers scoff at the idea of demons or demon possession because they fundamentally reject the concept of evil as a spiritual force and any notion of Satan as a real individual personality of evil.
- However, a competing dilemma for God's people is often the distraction that comes from dwelling on Satan, demons and the demonic too much. So on the one hand, we cannot afford to entirely dismiss the schemes of evil that are at work in our world. On the other hand, this story and other New Testament doctrine assures us of Christ's complete authority over evil. It was Jesus alone versus a legion of

demons and he won. As a result, we can have complete assurance that we are safe from any eternal threat that might be posed by the forces of darkness.

- **Read Romans 8:37-39** - *37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- **Ask Questions:**
 - *In what ways does Christ's authority over evil give you comfort for this life?*
 - *Why would it be dangerous for Christians to reject or ignore the idea that evil spiritual beings are at work in our world?*
 - *In what ways can over-dwelling on Satan and the demonic affect a believer?*

2. Souls Are More Valuable Than Swine (8:34-37)

- The response of the Gerasenes is sad to see. Two facts were before them, the swine lost, and the man gained. But, which of them was greater? The *swine lost*. Losing the swine reinforced their fear of the Man who had landed on their shore. Instead of casting their minds on the Healer, they were focused only on what had caused them loss. The unbelieving Gerasenes were terrified and resistant to accept the One who could give them ultimate freedom like he did for the man who was in bondage to the demons.
- **“Leave us alone”** - This is the response of the unbelievers in the story, but aren't there occasions when the believer says the same thing in his or her heart: “Leave me alone Lord. I would rather the routine of my life be undisturbed. Life was going along well. That man found his place in the tombs and we didn't have to deal with him much. I would rather not have to deal with the reality of the lostness around me, especially the difficult cases.” However, the joy of seeing a man who was once an uncontrollable menace to society now at the feet of the one who set him free should teach a valuable lesson about the worth of a soul.
- **Read Ephesians 1:13-14 & 6:10-12**
 - *13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.*
 - *10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*
- **Ask Questions**
 - *Think about your ministry to others. Has fear ever overshadowed a calling to minister to someone in need of Christ? Explain.*
 - *Paul says to put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. Why would it be foolish to fight spiritual battles without the armor of God?*

3. The Cured Have a Commission (8:38-39)

- Obviously, the man who was cured wanted to go with Jesus. However, Jesus sent him home. It would have been a comfort to be with Jesus and join his ministry to people who never would have known his

past. But, Christian witness, like Christian charity, begins at home. It is our responsibility as Christ's ambassador to be a witness first where Christ has set us free. It is a challenge to us in which God says, "Go and tell every day what I have done for you." The former demoniac now possessed Christ. We too, have been cured from the chains of evil through salvation, and have the commission of Christ to tell others what he has done for us.¹

- **Ask Question**

- *If you were to tell someone who didn't know you what Jesus has done for you (healed you of, freed you from, etc.), what would you say?*
- *How does the man's obedience to share what Jesus had done for him all over his town challenge your obedience to do the same in yours?*

Evangelism Preparation

A. Share the Gospel Using Your Testimony

- Have someone in the group practice sharing their story of how Christ saved them and the abundant life they now have in him. They can use the following categories to help guide their conversation:
 - My life before Christ....
 - I accepted Christ....
 - My life with Christ....

Closing

- **Ask Question** - *What is the greatest challenge you are facing right now? Is there some way our group can help you specifically?*
- Pray together over those requests.

¹William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke* (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1956), 109.