

JESUS HEALS A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN

Luke 8:26-39

Key Verse: 8:30

"Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' 'Legion,' he replied, because many demons had gone into him."

Study Questions:

1. After a storm-tossed night, where did Jesus and his disciples land? Who met them? Describe this man's appearance and lifestyle. What reveals his desire for absolute freedom?
2. What is the nature of the freedom that God gave mankind? (Ge 2:17) How should this God-given freedom be used? (Gal 5:13) How do sinful men use their freedom? With what results?
3. What did Jesus do when he saw this demon-possessed man? What did this man do when he saw Jesus? (28,29) Why did he act like this? Why did Jesus ask his name? (30) How did he reply? What does this mean?
4. Read verses 32-37. What was the demand the demons made of Jesus? Why did Jesus consent? What happened to the pigs? to the man? What was the result for Jesus? Why? What does Jesus teach about the value of one man?
5. Read verses 33-39. What did the man want to do? What did Jesus tell him to do? How did this man show that he remembered God's grace? Why is this important?

In today's passage Jesus heals a demon-possessed man. In this event we learn that just as there is the presence of the Holy Spirit, so there is the existence of demons--the evil spirit. We learn when and how the demons creep into a man. Most importantly, we are going to learn that Jesus is the only person who can drive out the demons from men.

First, a sinful man's freedom (26-28).

In the previous passage, Jesus and his disciples wanted to have a short vacation after working hard quite a while. So they got into the boat and sailed on a glassy sea. But soon the turbulent storm arose. As a result, their happy vacation turned out to be a storm training. When the lake was calm, again Jesus wanted to take them to another vacation spot. This time Jesus chose one of the cities of the Gerasenes, across the lake from Galilee (26). The disciples were so tired since they had a hard time in the stormy sea. The disciples had expected to get some sleep, even a catnap, as soon as they stepped on the shore. Their expectation was frustrated because a demon-possessed man was waiting for them. What kind of person was he? Luke describes him as a demon-possessed man from the town. He did not look handsome. He looked like a terrible sea monster. Verse 27b says, "For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs." What became of the man? He chose to be his own man, and enjoy unlimited freedom.

Of course, God gave us the freedom of choice (Ge 2:17). But how we use our freedom makes a big difference. If we use our freedom in God the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts and enables us to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit--love and joy and peace. But if we use our freedom to gratify our sinful nature, we become slaves of sin. This demon-possessed man is a good example. He chose to enjoy his human freedom for his sinful nature. At first, he said to others, "Leave me alone. Don't interfere in my life or I will kill you." His lifestyle distanced him from his family members and from others. His mom was afraid even to say to him, "Please eat dinner." When he lived in this way, this man inflicted small and big damages on others. His thoughtless talking and reckless actions wounded others every day. Whenever he enjoyed his human freedom, strangely he did not feel free. Instead, he felt burdened by everything, even brushing his teeth, because the demons in him made him powerless to do anything (Ro 5:6). This man felt that his clothes burdened him, so he took off his clothes and went around naked. In this way, he broke his relationship with God. Strangely, his relationships with others were easily broken like bruised reeds. He broke all the relationships with others. Finally

this man broke his relationship even with himself. This man looked like a Dracula, or Jean-Paul Sartre, who majored in human relationship problems from an atheistic point of view and claimed contract marriage.

When he lived according to what his sinful nature directed, he became a high school dropout; he got bundles of parking tickets. Because of his sinful freedom, he became a source of anguish to his mom and to all his townspeople. Biblically speaking, he was an object of God's wrath (Eph 2:3). People felt sorry. But there was no way to handle him. So they chained him hand and foot and kept him under guard so as to prevent his violence. But he snapped the iron chains like paper strings with the power of the demons and had been driven by the demons into solitary places.

The work of the demons is very deceptive. When this man chose to be his own man, and claimed unlimited freedom, it did not work as he had assumed. It is because there is no such thing as unlimited freedom in the world. For there are tremendous amounts of rules and regulations and laws in the world. In addition, we cannot avoid the systems of the world. In this part, we learn two results of enjoying sinful freedom.

Unlimited freedom leads a man to demon possession. According to the teachings of the Bible, we have freedom to live for the glory of God. We have freedom to dedicate ourselves to human happiness. Therefore, we must know that enjoying unlimited freedom is nothing but a fallen man's mentality. Still, since God gives man the freedom of choice he can use his freedom for sinful pleasure. But such behavior is suicidal.

How did this man turn out in the end? He was suffering unbearably instead of enjoying unlimited freedom. Look at verses 28-29. "When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!' For Jesus had

commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places." When the man tried to enjoy unlimited freedom, the demons captured him and treated him so harshly until the image of God in him was disfigured into that of the devil. This man became a demon-possessed man instead of enjoying unlimited freedom. We learn that the existence of the demons is reality. Therefore, we must use our human freedom precious in God. Galatians 5:13 says, "You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love."

Unlimited freedom leads a man to have a split personality. Look at verse 28. "When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!'" His yelling was the expression of his pathetic sinsick soul. He knew that Jesus was the Son of the Most High God because he was still a man with the inborn knowledge of God. Why did he shout at the top of his voice, saying, "Jesus, Son of the Most High God!?" The immediate cause was that this sinsick man was afraid to confront Jesus, the holy God. But the root cause was that his personality was split into two parts, between God and the demons in him. With his split personality he worshiped Jesus, bowing his head to the ground like a pious monk in the Middle Ages. At the same time, he was afraid of Jesus on account of the demons in him. Men of split personality are mainly men of self-torture. Mark 5:5b says he would cry out and cut himself with stones. Also, they hate others and they hate themselves.

Second, "What is your name?" (29-31).

What did Jesus do when he saw the demon-possessed man? Look at verse 29a. "For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man." Jesus saw him. He knew immediately that he was a demon-possessed man. Out of his messianic compassion, Jesus commanded the demons to come out of him. The townspeople thought

that this man was an evil man. But Jesus did not think so. To Jesus, he was a precious child of God with many abilities and much potentiality. He could have done many good things. But he did many evil things, by being controlled by the demons. Here we learn that Jesus is God who cares even for a monstrous demon-possessed man. Thank God that he chose us to take care of monstrous demon-possessed men in this generation.

The demons have never been afraid of anyone in history, such as the Emperor Genghis Khan, who conquered Russia and mixed Russian with Mongolian blood for 300 years. But when the demons confronted Jesus they were frozen by fear. The demons had power to snap iron chains at a stretch. But the fearless demons were in great fear in the presence of Jesus, the Most Holy God. Some people are very fearful all the time. They must know that they are fearful, not because of their future security problem, but because of demon possession.

Look at verse 30a. "Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' 'Legion,' he replied." A legion is a regiment of 6,000 Roman soldiers. This man must have seen a Roman legion on the march, and his people's suffering. Through his sentiment, the demons crept into his heart. Now he is occupied by 6,000 demons and became a 6,000-unit apartment of demons.

Let's see what happened next. Verse 31 says, "And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss." Up until now, the demon-possessed man spoke. But from verse 31 the demons in him were speaking on his behalf, asking Jesus not to send them into the Abyss. Here the Abyss means hell. Even the demons acknowledged the reality of hell. The demon-possessed man was no more himself; he was beside himself. He was as tragic as King Macbeth. Why did Jesus ask him, "What is your name?" Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" so that he might somehow come back to himself, for one's name represents one's character. Jesus asked, "What is your name?" so that he might make friends with him. By making friends with him, Jesus wanted to win him over to God so that

he might somehow restore his relationship with God and with others. Jesus believed that he could restore his personal relationship with God and live as a normal man. Jesus believed that he might come to know how to enjoy God only who is the fountain of true freedom.

Third, Jesus paid the ransom payment for him (32-37).

Look at verse 32. "A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into them, and he gave them permission." The demons did not want to release their captive without a ransom payment. The demons requested a large herd of pigs for their prisoner. The demons made an impossible demand. Those pigs were not Jesus' own property. However, Jesus said, "You have my permission." Jesus violated others' property rights. But Jesus was not afraid of the owner's reaction. Jesus was ready to do anything, if only he could save this one poor child. Here we see that we also must pay the cost to take care of God's flock of sheep under our care.

What happened to the pigs offered to the demons as a ransom payment? The demons came out of the man and went into the pigs (33). Then the pigs' pride was greatly hurt. Pigs' only joy of life is eating. But as soon as the demons came into these pigs, they suddenly lost their appetite and could not eat. They lost their only joy of life, eating. They also lost the meaning of their existence. So they rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned (33). They committed mass suicide. When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they reported this to the people in the town and countryside. All the people went out to see what had happened. They saw that their pig industry was completely ruined. On the other hand, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind (35b). The townspeople should have rejoiced for the healing of the demon-possessed man. But all the people rejected Jesus and cast him out of town. So Jesus got into the boat and left there with his disciples, who were weary from the storm training the night before and from watching Jesus care for a

Gerasene demoniac.

Fourth, remember God's grace (38-39).

The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with Jesus (38). Probably he wanted to be one of Jesus' disciples and become a great man of God along with the twelve disciples. His new desire to be one of his disciples was burning in his heart. But Jesus did not allow him to follow him. Instead, Jesus told him, "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him (39). In this way, the man became the director of Decapolis, ten cities. The most important thing in our lives is to know how much God has done for us. When we know God's grace we can have the love, joy and peace of God (Gal 5:22).

The people of the world are eager to obtain God's blessing. But when God blesses them, most people do not remember even one thing that God has done for them. For example, on the way to Jerusalem, Jesus healed ten lepers. But only one person came to Jesus to say, "Thank you." Jesus asked him, "Where are the other nine?" (Lk 17:17) Obtaining God's blessing is easy. But maintaining God's blessing is not easy at all. In reality, the life of faith begins when we have obtained God's blessing. Those who forget God's grace are sinsick people.

In this passage we learn that there are two kinds of freedom. One is human freedom of sinful man which leads to demon possession. The other is true freedom in God which leads man to God's grace. May God help us to use human freedom or human rights in Jesus so that we may not be like Gerasene demoniacs but heavenly princes and princesses.