***Equipped to Preach***

**Lent: Journey to the Cross #5, Luke 8:26-39 April 3, 2022**

***The man from whom the demons had gone out   
begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying,   
“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.*Luke 8:38-39**

**Next step on the journey: Transjordan**

*26 They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. 27 When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. 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!” 29 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.*

*30 Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”*

*“Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him. 31 And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.*

*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. 33 When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.*

*34 When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, 35 and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus’ feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. 36 Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. 37 Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left.*

*38 The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 “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.*

Luke 8 (see the ESV translation and the interesting details that Mark includes in Mark 5:18-20)

1. Luke continues the story of Jesus’ authority over creation: natural and supernatural

2. Jesus’ ministry is going to include even more Gentiles, even the “demonized”

3. Luke focuses our attention on God’s transforming power and our response of proclamation

**Why did the Messiah cross the lake?**

*22 One day Jesus said to his disciples, “Let’s go over to the other side of the lake.” So they got into a boat and set out. 23 As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.*

*24 The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!”*

*He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm.   
25 “Where is your faith?” he asked his disciples.*

*In fear and amazement they asked one another, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.”*

Luke 8 (see also Mark 4:

1. Luke takes us on Jesus’ journey into Gentile territory, and the start of the Transjordan church

2. Jesus’ expression of his authority is a faith lesson for his disciples – the object of our faith matters

3. Both pictures of Jesus’ authority end with the same fear and amazement (see Mark 4:20, 5:21)

**Why does Jesus make people afraid?**

*34 When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, 35 and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus’ feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. 36 Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. 37 Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left.*

Luke 8:34-37

1. Yes, Jesus is a threat to the community’s financial security, but it is a changed life that gets their attention

2. The “demonized” man isn’t just cured, he was saved – coming face to face with the transforming   
power of God is just as threatening

Two important thoughts:

1) The demon possessed man goes from fear to faith – after encountering Jesus

2) The people go from comfort to fear – after encountering Jesus

**Lessons for our *kerygma***

1) The content of preaching is Christ and his kindness

*18 As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. 19 Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” 20 So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.*

Mark 5

***4****But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,* ***5****even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—* ***6****and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,* ***7****so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

Ephesians 2 (see Romans 2:4, 1 Corinthians 1:10-31 with its focus on unity)

2) This preaching is apostolic (but not Apostolic)

*8 But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: 9 That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 11 As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

*14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!*

Romans 10

*11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

Ephesians 4

**Resources for our Lenten journey 2022**

*Bible.org* has some wonderful resources at [*https://bible.org/book/Luke*](https://bible.org/book/Luke)

I. Howard Marshall’s Greek commentary is my go to help (Eerdmans, 1978)

J. C. Ryle has an interesting commentary at [*https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/Luke.htm*](https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/Luke.htm)

Bob Deffinbaugh has two sermons on this text at [*https://bible.org/series/luke-gospel-gentiles*](https://bible.org/series/luke-gospel-gentiles)*.*

I appreciate J.C. Ryle’s commentary on Luke at [*https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/l13.htm*](https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/l13.htm)

Tim Keller has wonderful summary of the gospel at [*https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-story-of-the-bible-how-the-good-news-about-jesus-is-essential-tim-kelle/*](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-story-of-the-bible-how-the-good-news-about-jesus-is-essential-tim-kelle/)



**Luke’s chronology**

Graphical user interface, application, table

Description automatically generated

J. C. Ryle’s commentary on Luke 8  
at [*https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/l07.htm*](https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/l07.htm)

**Section 46. Jesus Calms the Storm, Luke 8:22-25**

*Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commands even the winds and water, and they obey him.*

The event in our Lord's life described in these verses is related three times in the Gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke — were all inspired to record it. This circumstance should teach us the importance of the event, and should make us "give the more heed" to the lessons it contains.

**We see, firstly, in these verses — that our Lord Jesus Christ was really *man* as well as God.** We read that as he sailed over the Lake of Gennesaret in a ship with his disciples, "he fell asleep." Sleep, we must be all aware, is one of the conditions of our natural constitution as human beings. Angels and demons require neither food nor refreshment. But flesh and blood, to keep up a healthy existence — must eat, and drink, and sleep. If the Lord Jesus could be weary, and need rest — then He must have had two natures in one person — a *human* nature as well as a divine nature.

The truth now before us is full of deep *consolation* and *encouragement* for all true Christians. The one Mediator, in whom we are bid to trust — has Himself been "partaker of flesh and blood." The mighty High Priest, who is living for us at God's right hand — has had personal experience of all the sinless infirmities of the body. He has himself hungered, and thirsted, and suffered pain. He has himself endured weariness, and sought rest in sleep.

Let us pour out our hearts before him with freedom — and tell Him our least troubles without reserve. He who made atonement for us on the cross — is one who "can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." (Hebrews 4:15.) To be weary of working for God is sinful, but to be wearied and worn in doing God's work is no sin at all. Jesus himself was weary, and Jesus slept.

**We see, secondly, in these verses — what fears and anxiety may assault the hearts of true disciples of Christ.** We read, that "when a storm of wind came down on the lake," and the boat in which our Lord was sailing was filled with water, and in jeopardy, His companions were greatly alarmed. "They came to Him and awoke Him, saying: Master, Master, we are going to perish!"

They forgot, for a moment, their Master's never-failing care for them in time past. They forgot that so long as they were with Him — they must be safe, whatever happened. It is only too true that sight, and sense, and feeling — make men very poor theologians.

Facts like these are sadly humbling to the pride of human nature. It ought to lower our pride and high thoughts, to see what a poor creature is man, even at his best estate — but facts like these are deeply instructive. They teach us what to watch and pray against in *our own* hearts. They teach of what we must make up our minds to find in *other* Christians. We must be moderate in our expectations. We must not suppose that men cannot be believers — if they sometimes exhibit great weakness. We must not think that men have no grace — because they are sometimes overwhelmed with fears. Even Peter, James, and John, could cry, "Master, Master, we are going to perish!"

**We see, thirdly, in these verses — how great is the *power* of our Lord Jesus Christ.** We read that when His disciples awoke Him in the storm, "He arose, and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the waters — and they ceased, and there was a calm." This was, no doubt, a mighty miracle. It needed the power of Him who brought the flood on the earth in the days of Noah, and in due season took it away — who divided the Red Sea and the river Jordan into two parts, and made a path for His people through the waters — who brought the locusts on Egypt by an east wind, and by a west wind swept them away.

No power short of this, could in a moment turn a storm into a calm. "To speak to the winds and waves" is a common proverb for attempting that which is impossible. But here we see Jesus speaking — and at once the winds and waves obey!

As *man* He had slept. As *God* He stilled the storm.

It is a blessed and comfortable thought, that all this almighty power of our Lord Jesus Christ, is engaged on behalf of His believing people. He has undertaken to save each one of them to the uttermost — and He is "mighty to save."

The *trials* of His people are often many and great. The devil never ceases to make war against them. The rulers of this world frequently persecute them. The very heads of the Church, who ought to be tender shepherds — are often bitterly opposed to the truth as it is in Jesus.

Yet, notwithstanding all this — Christ's people shall never be entirely forsaken. Though severely harassed — they shall not be destroyed. Though cast down — they shall not be cast away. At the darkest times — let true Christians rest in the thought, that "greater is He who is for them, than all who are against them."

The winds and waves of political and ecclesiastical trouble may beat fiercely over them, and all hope may seem taken away. But still let them not despair. There is One living for them in Heaven, who can make these winds and waves to cease in a moment! The true Church, of which Christ is the Head, shall never perish! Its glorious Head is almighty, and lives for evermore, and His believing members shall all live, also, and reach their heavenly home safely at last. (John 14:19.)

**We see, lastly, in these verses — how needful it is for Christians to keep their faith ready for use.** We read that our Lord said to His disciples when the storm had ceased, and their fears had subsided, "Where is your faith?" Well might He ask that question! Where was the profit of believing — if they could not believe in the time of need? Where was the real value of faith — unless they kept it in active exercise? Where was the benefit of trusting — if they were to trust their Master in sunshine only, but not in storms?

The lesson now before us is one of deep practical importance. To have true saving faith is one thing. To have that faith always ready for use, is quite another thing. Many receive Christ as their Savior, and deliberately commit their souls to Him for time and eternity — who yet often find their faith sadly failing when something unexpected happens, and they are suddenly tried.

These things ought not so to be. We ought to pray that we may have a *stock of faith* ready for use at a moment's notice, and may never be found unprepared. The highest style of Christian is the man who lives like Moses, "Seeing Him who is invisible." (Hebrews 11:27.) That man will never be greatly shaken by any *storm* in life. He will see Jesus near him in the darkest hour — and blue sky behind the blackest cloud!

**Section 47. The Demon Possessed Man, Luke 8:26-36**

*And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with you, Jesus, you Son of God most high? I beseech you, torment me not.**(For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) And Jesus asked him, saying, What is your name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked. When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. They also which saw it told them by what means he who was possessed of the devils was healed.*

The well-known narrative which we have now read, is carefully recorded by all of the first three Gospel-writers. It is a striking instance of our Lord's complete dominion over the evil prince of this world. We see the great enemy of our souls for once completely vanquished — the "strong man" foiled by One stronger than he — and the *lion* spoiled of his prey.

**Let us mark, first, in this passage — the miserable condition of those over whom the devil reigns.** The picture brought before us is a frightful one. We are told that when our Lord arrived in the country of the Gadarenes, "He was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house — but had lived in the tombs." We are also told that although he had been "bound with chains and in fetters — he broke the chains, and was driven by the devil into the wilderness."

In short, the case seems to have been one of the most aggravated forms of demon possession. The unhappy sufferer was under the complete dominion of Satan — both in body and soul. As long as he continued in this state — he must have been a burden and a trouble to all around him. His mental faculties were under the control of a "legion" of demons. His bodily strength was only employed for his own injury and shame. It is difficult to conceive of a more pitiable state for mortal man to be in!

Cases of bodily possession by Satan, like this, are, to say the least, very rarely met with in modern times. Yet we must not, on this account, forget that the devil is continually exercising a fearful power over many hearts and souls. He still urges many, in whose hearts he reigns, into self-dishonoring and self-destroying habits of life. He still rules many with a rod of iron. He goads them on from vice to vice, and from profligacy to profligacy. He drives them far from decent society, and the influence of respectable friends. He plunges them into the lowest depths of wickedness. He makes them little better than self-murderers. He renders them as useless to society, as if they were dead, and not alive.

Where is the faithful minister who could not put his finger on many such cases? What truer account can be given of many a young man, and many a young woman — than that they seem possessed by demons? It is vain to shut our eyes to facts.

Demon possession of men's *bodies* may be comparatively rare. But many, unhappily, are the cases in which the devil appears completely to possess men's *souls*.

These things are fearful to think upon. It is fearful to see to what a wreck of *body* and *mind* Satan often brings young people! It is fearful to observe how he often drives them out of the reach of all good influence, and buries them in a wilderness of bad companions and loathsome sins! It is fearful above all — to reflect that in a little while, *Satan's slaves* will be lost forever, and in Hell!

There often remains only one thing that can be done for them. They can be named before Christ in prayer. He who came to the country of the Gadarenes, and healed the miserable demoniac there — still lives in Heaven, and pities sinners. The worst slave of Satan in England, is not beyond a remedy. Jesus may yet take compassion on him, and set him free!

**Let us mark, secondly, in these verses — the absolute power which the Lord Jesus Christ possesses over Satan.** We are told that he "commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man," whose miserable condition we have just heard described. At once the unhappy sufferer was healed. The "many demons" by whom he had been possessed, were compelled to leave him.

Nor is this all. Cast forth from their abode in the man's heart — we see these malignant spirits beseeching our Lord that He would "not torment" them, or "command them to go out into the abyss" — and so confessing His supremacy over them. Mighty as they were — they plainly felt themselves in the presence of One mightier than themselves. Full of malice as they were — they could not even hurt the "swine" of the Gadarenes until our Lord granted them permission.

Our Lord Jesus Christ's dominion over the devil should be a cheering thought to all true Christians. Without it, indeed, we might well despair of salvation. To feel that we have ever near us an invisible spiritual enemy, laboring night and day to compass our destruction — would be enough to crush our every hope, if we did not know a Friend and Protector.

Blessed be God! The Gospel reveals such a One. The Lord Jesus is stronger than that "strong man armed," who is ever warring against our souls. The Lord Jesus is able to deliver us from the devil. He proved his power over him frequently when upon earth. He triumphed over him gloriously on the cross. He will never let him pluck any of His sheep out of His hand. He will one day bruise him under our feet, and forever bind him in the prison of Hell.

Happy are they who hear Christ's voice and follow Him! Satan may vex them — but he cannot really hurt them! He may bruise their heel — but he cannot destroy their souls. They shall be "more than conquerors" through Him who loved them! (Romans 8:37.)

**Let us mark, finally — the wonderful change which Christ can work in Satan's slaves.** We are told that the Gadarenes "found the man the demons had departed from — sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind." That sight must indeed have been strange and astonishing! The man's past history and condition, no doubt, were well known. He had probably been a nuisance and a terror to all the neighborhood. Yet here, in one moment — a complete change had come over him. Old things had passed away — and all things had become new! The power by which such a cure was wrought, must indeed have been almighty. When Christ is the physician — then nothing is impossible!

One thing, however, must never be forgotten. As striking and as miraculous as this cure was — it is not really any more astonishing than every case of *true conversion* to God. As marvelous as the change was which appeared in this demoniac's condition when healed — it is not one whit more marvelous than the change which passes over every one who is born again, and turned from the power of Satan to God!

Never is a man in his right mind — until he is converted. Never is a man in his right place — until he sits by faith at the feet of Jesus Never is a man rightly clothed — until he has put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Have we ever considered what real conversion to God is? It is nothing else than the miraculous release of a captive — the miraculous restoration of a man to his right mind — the miraculous deliverance of a soul from the devil!

What are we ourselves? This, after all, is the grand question which concerns us. Are we slaves of Satan — or servants of God? Has Christ made us free — or does the devil yet reign in our hearts? Do we sit at the feet of Jesus daily? Are we in our right minds? May the Lord help us to answer these questions aright!

**Section 48. Christ rejected by the Gadarenes, Luke 8:37-40**

*Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to your own house, and show how great things God has done unto you. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him. And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him.*

We see in this passage, two requests made to our Lord Jesus Christ. They were widely different one from the other, and were offered by people of widely different character. We see, moreover — how these requests were received by our Lord Jesus Christ. In either case, the request received a most remarkable answer. The whole passage is singularly instructive.

**Let us observe, in the first place — that the** Gadarenes **besought our Lord to depart from them, and their request was granted.** We read these painfully solemn words — "Then all the people of the region of the Gadarenes begged Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left."

Why did these unhappy men want the Son of God to leave them? Why, after the amazing miracle of mercy which had just been wrought among them — did they feel no wish to know more of Him who wrought it? Why, in a word — did they become their own enemies, forsake their own mercies, and shut the door against the Gospel?

There is but one answer to these questions. The Gadarenes loved the world, and the things of the world — and were determined not to give them up! They felt convinced, in their own consciences, that they could not receive Christ among them and keep their sins — and they were resolved to keep their sins! They saw, at a glance, that there was something about Jesus with which their habits of life would never agree — and having to choose between the new ways and their own old ones, they refused the new — and chose the old.

And why did our Lord Jesus Christ grant the request of the Gadarenes, and leave them? He did it in *judgment* — to testify His sense of the greatness of their sin. He did it to show how great is the wickedness of those who willfully reject the truth. It seems to be an eternal law of His government, that those who obstinately refuse to walk in the light — shall have the light taken from them.

Great is Christ's patience and long-suffering! His mercy endures forever. His offers and invitations are wide, and broad, and sweeping, and universal. He gives every church its day of grace and time of visitation. But if men persist in refusing His counsel — He has nowhere promised to persist in *forcing* it upon them. People who have the Gospel, and yet refuse to obey it — must not be surprised if the Gospel is removed from them.

Hundreds of churches, and parishes, and families, are at this moment in the same state of the Gadarenes. They said to Christ, "Depart from us!" — and He has taken them at their word. They were joined to idols — and are now "let alone." (Job 21:14; Hosea 4:17.)

Let us take heed that we do not sin the sin of the Gadarenes. Let us beware lest by coldness, and inattention, and worldliness — we drive Jesus from our doors, and compel Him to forsake us entirely. Of all sins which we can sin — this is the most sinful. Of all states of soul into which we can fall — none is so fearful as to be "let alone."

Let it rather be our daily prayer, that Christ may never leave us to ourselves. The old wreck, high and dry on the sand-bank, is not a more wretched sight than the man whose heart Christ has visited with mercies and judgments — but has at last ceased to visit, because He was not received. The barred door is a door at which Jesus will not always knock. The *Gadarene mind* must not be surprised to see Christ leaving it and going away.

**Let us observe, in the second place — that the man out of whom the devils were departed, besought our Lord that he might be with Him, but his request was not granted.** We read that Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your own home — and tell them the great things which God has done unto you."

We can easily understand the request which this man made. He felt *deeply grateful* for the amazing mercy which he had just received in being cured. He felt *full of love* and warm affection toward Him, who had so wonderfully and graciously cured him. He felt that he could not see too much of Him, be too much in His company, or cleave too closely to Him. He forgot everything else — under the influence of these feelings. Family, relations, friends, home, house, country — all seemed as nothing in his eyes. He felt that he cared for nothing but to be with Christ.

We cannot blame him for his feelings. They may have been tinged with something of enthusiasm and inconsideration. There may have been a zeal not according to knowledge about them. In the first excitement of a newly felt cure — he may not have been fit to judge what his future line of life should be. But excited feelings in religion — are far better than no feelings at all. In the petition he made — there was far more to praise, than to blame.

But why did our Lord Jesus Christ *refuse* to grant this man's request? Why, at a time when he had few disciples, did He send this man away? Why, instead of allowing him to join with Himself and His disciples — did He bid him to return to his own house?

Our Lord did what He did, in infinite wisdom. He did it for the benefit of the man's own soul. He saw that it was more for his good to be a witness for the Gospel at home — than to be a disciple abroad. He did it in mercy to the Gadarenes. He left among them, one standing testimony of the truth of His own divine mission.

He did it, above all, for the perpetual instruction of His whole church. He would have us to know that there are various ways of glorifying Him — that He may be honored in private life as well as in the apostolic office — and that the first place in which we should witness for Christ, is our own home!

There is a lesson of *deep experimental wisdom* in this little incident, which all true Christians would do well to lay to heart. That lesson is our own utter ignorance of what position is good for us in this world — and the necessity of submitting our own wills to the will of Christ. The place that we wish to fill — is not always the place that is best for us. The line of life that we want to take up — is not always that which Christ sees to be most for the benefit of our souls.

The place that we are obliged to fill, is sometimes very distasteful — and yet it may be needful to our sanctification. The position we are compelled to occupy, may be very disagreeable to flesh and blood — and yet it may be the very one that is necessary to keep us in our right mind. It is better to be sent away from Christ's bodily presence, by Christ Himself — than to remain in Christ's bodily presence without His consent.

Let us pray for the spirit of "contentment with such things as we have." Let us be fearful of choosing for ourselves in this life, without Christ's consent — or moving in this world, when the *pillar of cloud and fire* is not moving before us. Let us ask the Lord to choose everything for us. Let our daily prayer be, "Give me what you will. Place me where you will. Only let me be Your disciple and abide in You."

# The Deliverance the Demoniac or "Unholy Fear" (Luke 8:26-39) Deffinbaugh at [*https://bible.org/seriespage/deliverance-demoniac-or-unholy-fear-luke-826-39*](https://bible.org/seriespage/deliverance-demoniac-or-unholy-fear-luke-826-39)

### The “Goat Man”

When I was growing up, there was a kind of farm that we would pass on our way to the city of Tacoma. The farm was owned by a man who was only known as the “goat man.” The “farm” was hardly that. Actually it was a large piece of property, stacked high with Army surplus goods. I can remember balsa wood life rafts, perhaps hundreds of them, piled there on the farm. The goat man’s house was a mere shack, with the most meager accommodations. (All of this I surmise from my recollections of what I saw from the road, as we would drive by.)

He was called the “goat man” because the only thing he raised on that farm was goats. I can vividly remember the man sitting on the porch of that little shack with the door open and goats freely going in and out of the house. I can especially recall one particular goat, which always had a rooster sitting on his back. I am telling you the truth. Every time we went by the goat man’s house that one goat had that one rooster sitting on his back, even as it walked about. It was an amusing sight.

The interesting thing about the goat man is that he was apparently very wealthy. The rumor was that this man owned an entire city block of downtown Tacoma. What an incredible thing it was for a man to live as he did, sitting on the porch of that shack, surrounded by goats and chickens, with a yard full of surplus rafts, when he could have lived in luxury and dressed elegantly.

Every place has its own “goat man” of sorts. There is always some “crazy person,” who is the talk of the neighborhood, and who provides entertainment for all who see them. I believe that the two demoniacs who lived in the region of the Gerasenes were the “talk of the town” in their day. At one point in time, these men must have lived in the town and carried on relatively normal lives.[155](https://bible.org/seriespage/deliverance-demoniac-or-unholy-fear-luke-826-39#P2729_857346) Then, something happened which turned the two into virtual beasts, who were so strong and uncontrollable that the people would no longer use the road which passed by the place where they dwelt.

The problem for us is to really grasp the reality of what is described here. Most of us have (gratefully) not seen men or women who were so demonically controlled that they had superhuman strength, spoke in strange voices, and seemed to personify evil. For most of us who live in the United States, we must accept this biblical account by faith. But such things do occur, as Don Baker, a pastor who experienced a face-to-face confrontation with a demoniac, reports. He had undergone a period of intense depression, which necessitated hospitalization and a long period of therapy by a Christian psychiatrist. He recounts this incident with a demon-possessed man, which occurred just a little while before his breakdown:

… it had been just a few days after my first personal encounter with a Satanist that I slipped into my black hole. That was a frightening experience. It happened as I was walking to my room at a conference center where I had been invited to teach for a week. Standing in my path was a handsome young man, twenty-seven years of age, dressed in army fatigues.

“Is your name Baker, or Barker?” he asked.

“Yes,” I replied, “my name is Baker.”

“I’ve been told to talk to you,” he said.

His manner was strange and threatening. His voice was flat and colorless. His eyes looked cold and empty. I felt fear as I looked at him. He came into my room with me, and I asked him to be seated. He said, “No, I’ll stand.” Then he said, “I must tell you something, but I cannot look at you; and you cannot look at my face.” With that he turned to the wall, pressed his head against the wallboard, and began reciting the most bizarre story I had ever heard. He had been a worshiper and priest of Satan for seventeen years. His devotion to the evil one had taken him all over the country and had involved him in every occult practice known to man. Every twenty-two days he was visited by a demon and driven to unspeakable acts of evil. He hated God. He hated Christ. He hated talking to me, but he was compelled …

After two hours he suddenly turned on me, his eyes filled with hate, and screamed, “Aren’t you afraid of me? Don’t you know I can kill you?” With supernatural calmness I looked into that enraged face and said, “No, you can’t, for greater is Christ Who is in me than Satan who is in you” ([1 John 4:4](javascript:%7b%7d)). Instantly he screamed, a hideous high-pitched scream, threw up his arms, and fell to the floor. In uncontrolled rage he began pounding his head on the concrete floor, uttering noises horrible beyond description. I looked around vainly for help. I called, but no one came. I was alone—alone with a demoniac. Face to face with the enemy for the first time.

“O God, what do I do?” I cried. I knelt beside that writhing human form, placed one hand between his forehead and the concrete and the other on his back. As I stroked his head and shoulders I prayed, “Lord Jesus, deliver this man from Satan.” I continued to pray, all the time shielding his head from the floor. “In the name of Jesus, Lord of heaven—Lord of all—I command you, Satan, to come out of this man’s body.”

If there was a precise formula, I didn’t know what it was. I did know that Jesus’ name always rang the death knell to the demons in the Scriptures. After what seemed an eternity, his body began to relax. He stopped jabbering and foaming. I urged him to speak the name, Lord Jesus—Lord Jesus. Each time I said that name he looked at me with pleading eyes and then grabbed his throat and his tongue to indicate that he could not speak. As I knelt beside him, clutching his body to mine, I prayed again, “Lord Jesus, release this man’s tongue, that he may speak Your name.” Finally, it happened. His lips began form words.

“Say it,” I urged. “Say His name. Say Lord Jesus.”

“I can’t,” he cried.

I prayed again. Finally he lifted his head, summoned the little strength he had left, and cried, “Lord Jesus.” With these words he slumped to the floor, unconscious. I covered him with a blanket, rubbed his head, massaged his shoulders and back, and waited for him to revive. His first words after opening his eyes were, “Lord Jesus.” He then raised up, moved to the side of my bed, knelt there, and gave his life to Jesus Christ.[156](https://bible.org/seriespage/deliverance-demoniac-or-unholy-fear-luke-826-39#P2742_862094)

Our text is important for us for several reasons. **First, this text teaches us much about the demonic forces which oppose our Lord and His church**. It reminds us of the supernatural forces at work contrary to the Christian. It reminds us as well that Jesus Christ has power over the demonic forces, indeed, even over an entire “legion” of demons. We owe a great debt to Legion, for he is an extreme illustration of the end result of Satan’s control. This description of Legion provides us with a kind of “untouched photo” of a man who is fully “spirit filled,” as it were, totally dominated by Satan, by means of his demonic assistants. Satan’s deception and destruction is unmasked, revealed in its purest and ugliest form. Let us look carefully as the finished product, for it is vastly different from what Satan claims he can produce.

**Second, the deliverance of the demoniac draws our attention to a fear of God which is unholy and unhealthy**. The fear of “Legion,” which is the fear of the demons who possess him, and the fear of the people of his home town, is an unholy fear, one which causes men to draw away from God, or, as in our text, to ask the Son of God to withdraw from their region. It is no great shock to learn that the unbelieving and the unholy would fear God. At the conclusion of this message, I will suggest that this same kind of unholy fear which is seen in Legion and the people of that region can be found in many Christians, and that it is this kind of fear which hinders, even opposes revival. Let us listen well to this text, for it has much to say to contemporary Christians, as well as to modern-day pagans.

### The Approach of This Message

In this message, we will begin by reviewing the setting, and then we will look at the events surrounding the deliverance of the demoniac as it is described by Luke, accented by the accounts of Matthew and Mark. We will then consider the “tension of the text,” which is the key to the interpretation of this event and its meaning for us. Finally, we will consider the nature of the fear of Legion and his fellow-townspeople, and seek to learn how it can be found in all people, including Christians.

### The Deliverance of the Demoniac

The day had begun with our Lord teaching the crowds from on board a boat (perhaps that one belonging to one of the fishermen of the disciples), anchored along the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. The use of the boat was not new (cf. [Luke 5:3](javascript:%7b%7d)), but our Lord’s method of teaching by means of parables was ([Luke 8:3](javascript:%7b%7d)ff.). Here, Luke records only the parable of the soils (8:3-18). At the end of His teaching that day, Jesus had His disciples set out for the other side of the lake (cf. [Mark 4:33-36](javascript:%7b%7d)). On the journey across the lake, a great storm arose, which threatened the boat and its passengers. After Jesus had stilled the storm, the boat continued on to the other side of the lake. It is here that our story picks up. It is as Jesus steps out of the boat to the shore that the demoniac appears.

The disciples’ hearts were still pounding from the scare they had experienced due to the storm. Their pulse rate was perhaps at last returning to normal. Now, as their boat glided gently up onto the solid ground of the shore, the disciples must have breathed a sigh of relief. I can almost hear one of the disciples sigh, under his breath, “Safe, at last!” What could happen to them now, after their safe landing? The solitude of the lonely shore was probably a welcome scene, after the crowds which had gathered along the other shore. No one probably gave a thought as to why no people were around, or why the road, which led to the nearby town, was empty.

The boat landed in sight of a road, which would lead into the town nearby. There, on the hill, was a cemetery of sorts, although I have the feeling another one may have been in greater use. Neither the road nor the cemetery were being used, however, for one reason: two demoniacs dwelt nearby, and no one felt safe to pass by, anywhere where they might be accosted by them ([Matthew 8:28](javascript:%7b%7d)). While these men had once lived normal lives in the nearby town (cf. [Luke 8:27](javascript:%7b%7d)), they now lived more like animals. The men were demon-possessed, and so they were will and dangerous. The townspeople had tried by contain and to control the men, even using chains, but their superhuman strength proved too much for the chains ([Luke 8:29](javascript:%7b%7d); [Mark 5:3](javascript:%7b%7d)). They no longer wore clothes, and they often cried out in loud, but inhuman voices, often lacerating themselves with stones ([Mark 5:5](javascript:%7b%7d)). They were dangerous not only to any passer-by, but to themselves as well.

The two men and the townspeople seemed to have come to an understanding. They would live in seclusion, where they would not hurt anyone else, and the townspeople would leave them alone. It was the best solution, it seemed, under the circumstances. The men were left to themselves, so that whenever the demons chose, they could torment them, but without harm to anyone else. Everyone seemed to know that the place where Jesus had landed was, by common consent, a no-man’s land.

Matthew alone tells us that there were two demoniacs, and not just one, as a reading of either Mark or Luke would lead one to conclude. Mark and Luke, who tell only of the one demoniac, also include the report that this man, once restored to sanity, became a follower of our Lord. It take it that the other demoniac did not. Mark and Luke tell us only of the one demoniac, for they are interested in his faith, a faith which the other seems not to possess.

As we seek to relive the incident with the demoniac and the herd of swine, we need to recall that the whole scenario was being witnessed by the “pig pokes” or “hog herders,” who saw everything from their elevated vantage point. If we can replay the event in the form of a mental movie, we need to begin with a wide angle lens. The Lord and His disciples have just arrived, and they are standing on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Also, near the lake seems to be the road, which passed beside the graveyard (where the two demoniacs dwelt among the tombs) and which continued on to the nearby town. Slightly higher, somewhat on a hill (it would seem) was the graveyard, where the demoniacs lived. From their position, they could see the boat approaching the shore and the party on board landing. Even higher up were the “pig pokes,” who were tending the hogs, who would later plunge down the steep bank into the Sea of Galilee and drown.

Tending the hogs was probably not all that taxing, and thus the herdsmen must have been gazing out on the lake below, and have seen the boat approaching. (They may also have watched the storm, which had threatened this and other boats on the lake.) When they realized that the boat was going to land here, in this virtual “no man’s land,” they must have been expecting that their day would have a little excitement.

They knew, of course, that the demoniacs were nearby (no doubt they kept their distance, too) and that no one ever used this road ([Matthew 8:28](javascript:%7b%7d)), nor did anyone land on the shore near the graveyard. I can see these “pig-pokes” nudging each other in the ribs, saying, “Hey, Joe, watch this. This is going to be good.”

They watched as the two demoniacs swooped down on the unsuspecting disciples, shrieking in a way that would chill anyone’s blood. They giggled as they saw the disciples’ apprehension. They waited for these two violent men to brutalize these men, sending them back in their boat, to wherever they had come from. How they must have marveled to see the two demoniacs fall before Jesus. How their faces must have shown bewilderment as they overheard the statements of these two, screamed loudly enough for them to hear, even from their distance (cf. [Matthew 8:29](javascript:%7b%7d); [Luke 8:28](javascript:%7b%7d); [Mark 5:7](javascript:%7b%7d)), declaring Jesus to be the Son of the Most High God ([Luke 8:28](javascript:%7b%7d)). And then, can you imagine the uneasiness of these herdsmen when they saw the demoniacs turn in their direction, and point toward the herd of hogs, obviously asking Jesus something about them? When the hogs left the two demoniacs and possessed the pigs, the “hog herders” were the first to know, and to run the other way. When the people of the town asked these herders what had happened, they were able to tell it all, for they had seen the entire incident, located as they were above the entire scene. (It was from this same height that the pigs plunged, over a cliff, or at least a steep bank, into the lake.)

As the demoniac[157](https://bible.org/seriespage/deliverance-demoniac-or-unholy-fear-luke-826-39#P2760_870703) rushed downhill from the tombs toward Jesus, eyes crazed, screaming at the top of his lungs, it must have been a frightening sight for the disciples. Perhaps they considered jumping on the man as a group, hoping to have the combined strength to contain him. The demoniac seemed only to see or to care about Jesus, and as he drew near, he fell to his knees. As this man speaks, it is not the person, but rather the demons which are in control. Thus, it is the demons addressing our Lord, as we shall soon see.

The demonized man immediately recognized Jesus, even from a distance, as the Son of God and Israel’s Messiah. In Luke’s account, Jesus is acknowledged as “Jesus, Son of the Most High God” ([Luke 8:28](javascript:%7b%7d)). When Jesus commanded the demons to come out of this man, whose demonized name was Legion, the demons began to speak through the man.

It is very important to take note of the fact that although the demoniac fell at Jesus’ feet, it was **not an act of worship**, as it would later be, when the demons were cast from the man. The demons did recognize Jesus’ identity, and they also acknowledged His superiority, His authority over them. They recognized, for example, that He could do with them as He pleased. Their petitions were addressed as those of inferior beings to One who was infinitely superior to them.

If I were to characterize the response of the demonized man to Jesus, and thus the response of demons to the Son of God, there is one word which would best summarize their reaction to Him—**FEAR**. Notice the following characteristics of fear which are evident in Legion’s words:

**(1) Legion was fearful of the presence of God**. The fear of Legion is very different from that of the disciples, in the midst of the storm. The disciples were fearful because they did not realize that God was with them in the boat. The demons are fearful because they know that God is present among them. Their first words to Jesus are a testimony to the fact that they recognize Him as the “Son of the Most High God” ([Luke 8:28](javascript:%7b%7d)). They are frightened because they know God is in their midst.

**(2) The demons were fearful of torment, of the judgment of God**. Why would the appearance of Jesus on the other shore of the Sea of Galilee be a cause of fear for the demons? Because they knew that the coming of God’s Messiah spelled destruction for them. Jesus Himself will say of the devil,

“Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of the world shall be cast out” ([John 12:31](javascript:%7b%7d)).

In the beginning, God said that the “seed of the woman” would destroy Satan:

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” ([Genesis 3:15](javascript:%7b%7d)).

It is interesting to note that while the demons dread their own torment, they have no qualms about tormenting those whom they possess.

**(3) The demons were frightened by the timing of His coming**. The thing which caught the demons off guard was the timing of His coming. They knew that their time would come, but they did not expect it to come so soon. To them, Jesus had come prematurely, at least according to their scheme of eschatology. Listen to their surprise as they say, “*Have you come to torture us before the appointed time?”* ([Matthew 8:29](javascript:%7b%7d)).

The demons knew that Messiah’s coming spelled their doom. What they did not expect was His coming to be so soon.

We are inclined to give Satan and his evil hoard too much credit. We think that they are all-knowing when they are not. They, like the Jews of that day, and even like the disciples of our Lord, had a distorted grasp of Messiah’s coming. They looked for but one coming, not two. The demons were looking for the “second coming of Christ,” but they did not expect the first. When Jesus appeared, they were shaken, they were frightened. The fact that Legion ran to Jesus, rather than from Him, indicates (among other things) the demons’ fear and frantic confusion, caused by the unexpected appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**(4) The demons were fearful of the outcome of Christ’s coming for the man they had demonized**. The demons dreaded the deliverance of the demoniac. The reasons for this will be seen next.

**(5) The demons feared disembodiment**. Jesus almost immediately began to command the demons to come out of the man. They, just as quickly, began to plead for “mercy.” They knew better than to ask Jesus to continue to possess this man, although that was their preference. If Jesus must cast them out of the man, at least let Him give them some body to possess: “*If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs.”*

Demons would naturally prefer to possess people. Their destructive work would give them greater pleasure, and they could more fully manifest themselves this way (demons could speak through a man’s vocal cords, but we do not find demons speaking through animals). To be dispossessed of a body was, to the demon, torment. Disembodied spirits could not as fully display themselves and they could through a body.

**(6) The demons feared the restriction of their freedom to continue their destructive work**. There is a very interesting fact revealed by a comparison of two of the parallel accounts. Notice the difference between these two requests of the demons:

And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss ([Luke 8:31](javascript:%7b%7d)).

And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area ([Mark 5:10](javascript:%7b%7d)).

It would seem that in putting these two requests together we would have to conclude that to send the demons out of the country would be to send them into the Abyss. Torment, for demons, is to be kept from doing evil.

Combining what we learn from various biblical texts enables us to understand what the demons dread here. It would seem from Isaiah (chapter 14), Ezekiel (chapter 28), and Daniel (10:10ff.) that demons seem to have certain geographical boundaries. That is, they seem to have certain territories or spheres of activity, beyond which they cannot venture. We also know from 2 Peter chapter 2 that some demons have already been confined to the “pit” ([2 Peter 2:4](javascript:%7b%7d)), just as Satan himself will be put in chains for 1,000 years ([Revelation 20:1-3](javascript:%7b%7d)) in the future. Thus, it would seem that to be sent out of the country would mean being thrown into the Abyss, into a kind of captivity which would greatly confine and restrict their activity.

The demons therefore appear to fear any restriction to their present activity, even though they know that they await the judgment of God in the future. There is no repentance here, but only regret if they are restricted from doing what they have always done, which is to rebel against God, to work against His purposes, and to torment men.

I believe that the fear of the demons can be summed up in these words: THE DEMONS FEARED THE PRESENCE AND THE POWER OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, BECAUSE THEY KNEW THAT HIS PRESENCE AMONG THEM WOULD RESULT IN CHANGES WHICH WERE NOT VIEWED BY THEM AS DESIRABLE

The demons were evil. They delighted in doing evil. Torture, to them, was being hindered from torturing men. Since they loved to do evil and since Jesus was both good and God, they knew that His coming would have to result in hindering them from continuing to do that which is evil. To an evil creature, bent only on doing evil, good is a most dreaded thing. The evil demons dreaded Jesus’ coming, for they knew it meant good.

The demons pled not to be tormented, which, according to our text involved two things. First, they did not wish to be disembodied. Second, they did not wish to be sent from the country. The demons did not wish to be disembodied. It would seem that a demon cannot fully manifest its character and nature apart from possessing a body. To press the matter further, it would seem that apart from possessing a person, with a tongue, the demons could not speak. While it was vastly inferior to possess a pig than a person, at least it was a body. Thus, the demons begged Jesus to allow them to possess the nearby herd of hogs than to be disembodied.

Jesus granted the demons’ request to enter the herd of swine, and when they entered them, the entire herd plunged, headlong, into the sea. It is interesting to me to observe that while the disciples had feared drowning in that very sea just a short time earlier, it was a herd of pigs whose fate it was to drown, not the disciples.

When the pigs plunged into the sea, there was little doubt as to what had happened. The herdsmen went off to tell all that would listen about what had happened. The entire town came out to see the scene, and the swine, but most of all to see the Son of God, who had come to their shores.

It is very important for us to observe the response of the crowd, and the reasons for their response. Look carefully at Luke’s report (which squares with those of Matthew and Mark):

And the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus’ feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear ([Luke 8:35-37](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Several observations are critical to understanding why the people of the Gerasene region rejected Jesus and asked Him to leave their country.

**(1) All of the people of the nearby town came out to meet Jesus**.

Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus ([Matthew 8:34](javascript:%7b%7d)).

This was not a small group, not even a delegation. Everybody gathered there to see Jesus. The people were not interested in the swine, but in the Savior.

**(2) The people are overcome with fear**. The fear of the people is prominent and emphatic:

When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid ([Mark 5:15](javascript:%7b%7d); cf. [Luke 8:37](javascript:%7b%7d) above).

**(3) Out of fear, all the people ask Jesus to leave their country**. It is a unanimous verdict from all but the one delivered demoniac (was the other demoniac siding with the crowd?)—Jesus must go. They want Jesus not only to stay away from their town, but to leave their country. They want Him nowhere around. It is amazing, but emphatically evident.

**(4) The fears of the people are not in response to the drowning of the swine, but due to the miraculous change in “Legion,” the delivered demoniac.** I do not know how many times I have heard the fear of the people and their request that Jesus leave them explained in economic terms. If this view were correct, we would expect that it would be the owner(s) of the pigs that would have been singled out as having come, that they came and looked upon the bodies of the pigs, washing up on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. But we are not told this at all.

We are told, instead, that all the people of the town came out, and that they looked at the delivered demoniac (not the pigs), and that they learned that Jesus delivered him. It is not because the pigs died that the people are frightened, but because Legion was delivered. Imagine this: from the actions and the words of the people of this region, they would rather have had Legion as he was, dangerous, destructive, and uncontrollable, than to be whole, healed, clothed, and a constructive member of society.

The reason why we so quickly accept the economic explanation for the actions of this crowd is because no other explanation seems plausible. We simply cannot fathom how these people could reject and resist Jesus for having done good to this man, and for their whole region. After all, they no longer have to worry about traveling on this road.

Here we find the “tension of the text,” the problem in the passage which provides us with the key to the interpretation of the passage, and to discovering its meaning for us. The tension of the text is this: HOW CAN THE PEOPLE OF THIS REGION BE MORE FRIGHTENED OF JESUS THAN OF THE DEMONIAC, SO THAT THEY WOULD RATHER HAVE HAD THINGS AS THEY WERE, AND THAT THEY WOULD RATHER HAVE JESUS LEAVE THEM THAN STAY WITH THEM? HOW CAN PEOPLE FEAR THE SON OF GOD FOR DOING GOOD MORE THAN THEY CAN FEAR SATAN AND HIS DEMONIC HOSTS FOR DOING EVIL?

**(5) Nowhere in the New Testament are we told how anyone who was demon-possessed became that way.** Before we can come to the solution of our problem, we must observe that we are never told how demon-possession begins. That is, those who are brought to Jesus who are demon-possessed have been brought to him in that condition. Jesus never asked, “How did it happen?” There is a clear biblical explanation, as we shall see.

**(6) The fears of the people are like the fears of the demoniac, before he was delivered from his demon-possession.** The Gerasene demoniac and the Gerasene-dwellers share one thing in common in our text—a fear of the Lord Jesus Christ. Both “fears” are of the same kind. Just as the demons dreaded the arrival of the Lord Jesus, so did the people of the nearby town. They were frightened by the good thing which had happened to the demoniac. They feared that Jesus might do other “good” as well. They would rather that Jesus go away from them than to remain among them. Although it is not clearly stated, it seems obvious that they would rather have the demoniac as he once was—even though it was detrimental to them and frightened them—than to have him as he now was—sane, clothed, and a contributing member of society.

* They share a common fear of the Lord Jesus.
* They share a common fear of the good which He can do.
* Both are afraid of the changes which Jesus’ coming threatens.
* They both have a “territorial” dimension to their fear. The demons fear being sent out of their country. The dwellers of this area fear Jesus and send Him out of their territory.

The coming of Jesus to the region of the Gerasenes was an occasion for fear, both on the part of the demoniac and on the part of the people who feared him. As the demoniac feared the good which Jesus was about to do—namely his deliverance—so the people of that region feared the power of the Lord Jesus to do good for them. Ultimately, the people feared that Jesus’ coming meant a change, not only for the demoniac, but for them, a change which they did not want, and did not feel that they needed. They wanted things just as they were, and Jesus threatened the status quo. The thought of the kind of changes which Jesus would bring was tormenting to the people of this place. Thus, they wanted Jesus to go because they wanted nothing to change.

If the essence of repentance is change, then we must conclude that repentance was a thought which was repulsive to the Gerasene populace.

Our first response to the realization that the entire town wanted Jesus to go ***because He was good*** is to view this as an oddity, as an exception to the rule. After all, didn’t other towns beg Jesus to stay with them (cf. [Luke 4:42](javascript:%7b%7d); [John 4:40](javascript:%7b%7d))? The next observation focuses on the reality of man’s rebellion against God.

**(7) All unsaved people are, to a certain degree, demon-possessed, in the sense that they are Satan’s slaves, and that they manifest the same character and conduct as Satan and his evil host**. We need to recognize that the response of the people to Jesus was not the exception, but rather the rule. We need to realize that it was not just Legion that was dominated by Satan and his horde of demons, but it is every unbeliever. All those who are unsaved are the slaves of Satan through their bondage to sin.

The difference between Legion and the populace of the Gerasenes was not one of kind, but rather one of degree. This is why the Bible does not tell us how demon-possessed got that way. The Bible has given us the answer: Man is born in sin, in hostility and opposition to God, and is thus of the same mind toward God as is Satan and his host of demons.

To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me’ ([Acts 26:18](javascript:%7b%7d)).

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies ([John 8:44](javascript:%7b%7d)).

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God ([2 Corinthians 4:4](javascript:%7b%7d)).

He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work ([1 John 3:8](javascript:%7b%7d)).

We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one ([1 John 5:19](javascript:%7b%7d)).

The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him ([Revelation 12:9](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Initially, many of those who first saw and heard the Lord Jesus Christ welcomed Him. For those who had been prepared by the ministry of John the Baptist and had repented of their sin, He was heralded as God’s Salvation. But for most, He was first welcomed because people thought that He would comply with their mistaken conceptions of His kingdom and His reign. Once He make it clear that His kingdom was not “of this world” many forsook Him. Eventually they decided to reject Him. In this sense the Jewish people, the people from the other side of the lake, were far worse than the inhospitable people of the Gerasene region—they sought to rid the world of Him. They put Him to death on a Roman cross. Their animosity and fear of Jesus is of the same kind as Legion and as his fellow-countrymen, but only greater in degree.

One of the first manifestation of man’s fall in the Garden of Eden was a fear of God, rooted in man’s sin and disobedience. While Adam had once looked forward to the Lord’s arrival and their walking together in the garden, this was no longer true after his sin:

“I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid” ([Genesis 3:10](javascript:%7b%7d)).

There is an unholy fear of God, the kind that fears God for what He is and will do, the kind that fears the good which He will do, which will hinder us from persisting in our evil deeds. It was this fear which caused Legion to run to Christ; it was this fear which caused the people of that place to as Christ to leave them alone; and it was that same kind of fear which caused our Lord’s own people to cry out, “Crucify! Crucify!”

But they shouted, “Taken him away! Take him away! Crucify him!” ([John 19:15](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Pilate pressed this further, “Shall I crucify your king?” To this, the crowds responded, “We have no king but Caesar” ([John 19:15](javascript:%7b%7d)).

The nation Israel was willing to renounce all their messianic hopes, all hopes of independence, just to be rid of Jesus.

John has summed up man’s response to God incarnate, in a way that precisely agrees with all we have seen:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it … He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him ([John 1:1-5](javascript:%7b%7d), 10-11).

John also tells us very clearly why it is that men fear the holy God, and to not want Him to dwell among them. It is because sinful man wants to persist in his sin, and he thus views a righteous and holy God as a threat to his way of life. Men who wish to persist in their sin do not welcome God’s arrival. They wish only His departure, even if it requires that we put Him to death on a cross.

It is from this bondage to Satan, to sin, and to death, to which every unbeliever is subject, that Jesus came to save us:

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— ([Hebrews 2:14](javascript:%7b%7d)).

That is why He could say, with reference to His sacrificial death,

“Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself” ([John 12:31-32](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Jesus died to break the power of sin and of Satan. He died to bear the penalty for your sins and for mine. And all who have trusted in Him will readily acknowledge, with the apostle Paul, that we have been saved from the power and the dominion of the Satan, whom we formerly served:

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature object of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved ([Ephesians 2:1-5](javascript:%7b%7d)).

We owe a debt of gratitude to the demoniac, for he shows us something which we very much need to know, something which we very much want to avoid. He shows us the miserable condition of the one who is totally “spirit-filled” in following and being controlled by Satan. Notice that this man is tormented, self-destructive, alienated from others and a menace to society. This man has no real identity, and surely no fulfillment or freedom.

This week I read, once again, these powerful words from the pen of R. C. Sproul, who speaks of unregenerate (unsaved) man’s utter hatred of God:

Jonathan Edwards preached another famous sermon that can be viewed as a sequel of sorts to *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.* He titled the sermon, *Men Naturally God’s Enemies.* If I can presume to improve Edwards’ title, I would suggest instead *God in the Hands of Angry Sinners.*

If we are unconverted, one thing is absolutely certain: we hate God. The Bible is unambiguous about this point. We are God’s enemies. We are inwardly sworn to His ultimate destruction. It is as natural for us to hate God as it is for rain to moisten the earth when it falls.

[Romans 5](javascript:%7b%7d) teaches clearly: “For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son.…” The central motif of the New Testament is the theme of reconciliation. Reconciliation is not necessary for those who love each other. God’s love for us is not in doubt. The shadow of doubt hangs over us. It is our love for God that is in question. The natural mind of man, what the Bible calls the “carnal mind,” is at enmity with God.

We reveal our natural hostility for God by the low esteem we have for Him. We consider him unworthy of our total devotion. We take no delight in contemplating Him. Even for the Christian, worship is often difficult and prayer a burdensome duty. Our natural tendency is to flee as far as possible from His presence. His Word rebounds from our minds like a basketball from a backboard.

By nature, our attitude toward God is not one of mere indifference. It is a posture of malice. We oppose His government and refuse His rule over us. Our natural hearts are devoid of affection for Him; they are cold, frozen to His holiness. By nature, the love of God is not in us.

We must be more precise. God is our mortal enemy. He represents the highest possible threat to our sinful desires. His repugnance to us is absolute, knowing no lesser degrees. No amount of persuasion by men or argumentation from philosophers or theologians can induce us to love God. We despise His very existence and would do anything in our power to rid the universe of His holy presence.

If God were to expose His life to our hands, He would not be safe for a second. We would not ignore Him; we would destroy Him. This charge may seem extravagant and irresponsible until we examine once more the record of what happened when God did appear in Christ. Christ was not simply killed. He was murdered by the hands of malicious men. The crowds howled for His blood. It was not enough merely to do away with Him, but it had to be done with the accompaniment of scorn and humiliation.

But we are Christians. We are lovers of God. We have experienced reconciliation. We have been born of the Spirit and have had the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. We are no longer enemies but friends. All of these things are true for the Christian. But we must take heed, remembering that with our conversion our natural human natures were not annihilated. There remains a vestige of our fallen nature with which we must struggle every day. There still resides a corner of the soul that takes no delight in God. We see its ragged edge in our continued sin and we can observe it in our lethargic worship. It manifests itself even in our theology.[158](https://bible.org/seriespage/deliverance-demoniac-or-unholy-fear-luke-826-39#P2843_895927)

No matter what Satan may promise, the demoniac is a shocking demonstration of what he delivers. It is only when freed by the liberating power of Jesus Christ that a man can be what he wants to be, what he ought to be, fully human, fully forgiven, worshipping at the feet of Jesus. Let us never forget Legion in his misery, nor the new man in his sanity and devotion to the Savior. Let us remember as well that there was another demoniac, who was delivered from Satan’s total control, but who was not delivered from his sin, nor from Satan’s more subtle dominion, from which he did not wish to be saved. May each one of us look to Jesus as our Deliverer and as the object of our devotion.

Edward’s words remind us that the salvation of lost men requires a miracle of divine liberation, of divine calling, of divine regeneration and salvation. Salvation is something which only God can do. We can share the message of salvation, and we must. We can pray for men’s salvation, and this is our duty. But only God can save, only Christ can deliver men from death and from bondage to Satan, the adversary and our enemy.

Edward’s words also remind us that Satan is a very formidable enemy for the saint. While his control is limited, with respect to the Christian, he is still a dreaded enemy, one who can only be defeated by divine power. The Scriptures have much to say to the saint about Satan’s schemes and attacks.

I must say that I, as a Christian, sometimes have an unholy fear of God, of the same kind as the demoniac, and as the people of his home town, and the people of Jesus’ home land as well. Sometimes I dread God’s power to deliver me from sin, wanting to wallow in it, foolishly supposing that I am missing something if it is taken from me. In my own feeble efforts at worship I realize that I often resist drawing near to God, wanting to withdraw as Legion and his countrymen wanted to keep a distance between themselves and Jesus. Let us beware of the same kinds of fear that were (and are) evident in the lives of unbelievers, which are rooted in our rebellion and in our resistance to repentance and the righteousness of God, which are rooted in our sin.

It is my conviction that our church and our nation desperately needs revival, and that begins with repentance. Repentance, in a word, is change, and yet it is the very change which we desperately need for revival that we most fear. May God expose our unholy fears, and give us faith to repent and to seek those changes which God requires in our lives.

### In Summary

What I have been trying to say in this message can be briefly summed up in this way. The fear of Legion was of the same type of the fear of his fellow-countrymen, an unholy fear of God and of His power, threatening to change us and to keep us from the evil we desire to continue to do. This kind of fear is not unusual, but is the same kind of fear of God which every unbeliever manifests. It is the evidence of satanic dominion in one’s life. Unfortunately, this same kind of fear can be found in Christians, too, the evidence of Satanic opposition, deception, and influence.

Satan can be expected to produce and offer a counterfeit counterpart for every good which God offers man. Satan’s counterpart to a “holy fear” of God, which causes us to draw back from sin and to draw ever more closely to Him, is an “unholy fear” of God which tempts us to draw away from God and to resist His working in our lives, and to cling to our sins as though they were good.

155 Luke tells us that the one demoniac was a man “from the town” ([Luke 8:27](javascript:%7b%7d)). From this statement, combined with other details supplied in the text pertaining to the demoniac’s secluded life among the tombs, I would deduce that the men once lived normal lives, only to later become dominated by demons, and thus to live in isolation, outside the town.

156 Don Baker and Emery Nester, *Depression: Finding Hope & Meaning In Life’s Darkest Shadow* (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1983), pp. 98-100.

157 From here on, I will speak only of the one demoniac, since this is the focus of Luke’s account.

158 R. C. Sproul, “God in the Hands of Angry Sinners,” *The Holiness of God*, (Tyndale House: Wheaton, 1985), pp. 228-231.

**κηρύσσω** impf. ἐκήρυσσον; fut. κηρύξω; 1 aor. ἐκήρυξα, inf. κηρύξαι (also κηρῦξαι, so Tdf.); on the accent s. B-D-F §13; PKatz-Walters, The Text of the Septuagint, Cambridge ’73, 97); pf. inf. κεκηρυχέναι (Just., D. 49, 2). Pass.: 1 fut. κηρυχθήσομαι; 1 aor. ἐκηρύχθην; pf. κεκήρυγμαι (Just.) (s. two prec. entries; Hom.+; ins, pap, LXX; PsSol 11:1; TestLevi 2:10; GrBar 16:4 [-ττ-]; Philo, Joseph.; loanw. in rabb.; apolog. exc. Ar.).

① **to make an official announcement,** ***announce, make known,*** by an official herald or one who functions as such (Maximus Tyr. 1, 6c κηρύττομαι=I am being announced by the herald) MPol 12:1 of the pro-consul, who announced three times that Pol. had confessed to being a Christian.—**Rv 5:2.**

② **to make public declarations,** ***proclaim aloud***

ⓐ gener. *speak of, mention publicly* w. acc. κ. πολλὰ τὸν λόγον *spread the story widely* **Mk 1:45.** The hospitality of the Cor. church 1 Cl 1:2. W. indir. discourse foll. **Mk 5:20**; **Lk 8:39.** Abs. **Mk 7:36.**—S. below 2bβ.

ⓑ of proclamation that is divine in origin or relates to divinity (Epict. 3, 13, 12 of the peace of wise men, which does not originate w. the emperor, but is ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ κεκηρυγμένη διὰ τ. λόγου. Of the [objectionable] myths of the Greeks ταῦτα … οἱ … συγγραφεῖς καὶ ποιηταὶ κ. Theoph. Ant. 1, 9 [p. 78, 13]).

α. of the proclamation or oracles of the older prophets (Jo 2:1; 4:9; Jon 1:2; 3:2; Jos., Ant. 10, 117; Just., A I, 54, 2) Ἰωνᾶς Νινευΐταις καταστροφὴν ἐκήρυξεν 1 Cl 7:7 (Jonah as Jos., Ant. 9, 214; Just., D. 107, 2f; Orig., C. Cels. 7, 57, 3); cp. vs. 6; 9:4 (Noah as SibOr 1, 128); 17:1 (Elijah and Elisha, also Ezekiel); B 6:13 (ὁ προφήτης). προφήτας [ἐξ]έπεμψεν κ. … χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν AcPl Ha 8, 17//Ox 1602, 19–21//BMM recto 21f. Ἰωνᾶς … [ἵνα] εἰς Νεινεύη μὴ κηρύξῃ AcPl Cor 2:29. οἵτινες τὴν ἀπλανῆ θεοσέβειαν ἐκήρυσσον *who proclaimed the inerrant way of revering God* 2:10.

β. of contemporary proclaimers (POxy 1381, 35; 144 [II a.d.]: of the great deeds of the gods; Herm. Wr. 1, 27; 4, 4.—Philo, Agr. 112 κήρυξον κήρυγμα τοιοῦτον. S. κῆρυξ 2.—Also of false prophets: Jos., Bell. 6, 285), of Mosaic tradition and its publication, the preaching of John the Baptist, and propagation of the Christian message in the widest sense: Μωϋσῆν *preach* (=*advance the cause of*) *Moses* i.e. the keeping of the law **Ac 15:21.** περιτομήν *proclaim circumcision* i.e. the necessity of it **Gal 5:11** (here and 2a the mng. *praise publicly* is also prob.: X., Cyr. 8, 4, 4; Polyb. 30, 29, 6). κ. μὴ κλέπτειν *inveigh against stealing* (=*preach: No stealing!*) **Ro 2:21.**—κ. τι *proclaim,* someth. (ἕνα θεὸν παντοκράτορα καὶ ἕνα μονογενῆ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν κ. Iren. 1, 9, 2 [Harv. I 82, 5]; τὸν ἄγνωστον πατέρα 1, 26, 1 [Harv. I 211, 11]; Hippol., Ref. 1, Prol. 7; Did., Gen. 183, 6; 209, 13) **Mt 10:27**; pass. **Lk 12:3.** ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτόν **4:19** (cp. Is 61:1f). τὸν λόγον **2 Ti 4:2.** τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως *the message of faith* **Ro 10:8.** τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ **Lk 8:1**; **9:2**; cp. **Ac 20:25**; **28:31.** τὸ εὐαγγέλιον **Mk 16:15**; **Ac 1:2** D; **Gal 2:2**; B 5:9; GMary Ox 3525, 28; 32. τὸ εὐ. τ. βασιλείας **Mt 4:23**; **9:35** (cp. τὸν περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ λόγον Orig., C. Cels. 3, 40, 20); τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ Hs 9, 16, 5. W. dat. of pers. (Hippol., Ref. 5, 26, 30) **1 Cor 9:27** (on the topic of dreaded failure s. APapathomas, NTS 43, ’97, 240); **1 Pt 3:19** (CCranfield, ET 69, ’57/58, 369–72; see lit. s.v. πνεῦμα 4c); GPt 10:41. εἰς τὰς συναγωγάς *in the synagogues* **Mk 1:39**; **Lk 4:44.** τινί τι *someth. to someone* (of Jesus κ. μετάνοιαν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ Orig., C. Cels. 7, 57, 4; τὸ κηρῦξαι αὐτοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον Did., Gen. 53, 13) 4:18; B 14:9 (both Is 61:1). τὶ εἴς τινα *someth. to someone* τὸ εὐαγγέλιον εἰς ὑμᾶς **1 Th 2:9.** εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον Hs 9, 25, 2. Pass. εἰς τὰ ἔθνη **Mk 13:10** (DBosch, Die Heidenmission in der Zukunftsschau Jesu ’59, 159–71); κ. τὸ εὐ. **Mt 24:14**; **26:13**; **Mk 14:9**; **Col 1:23.**—βάπτισμα *proclaim baptism* i.e. the necessity of it **Mk 1:4**; **Lk 3:3**; **Ac 10:37.** ἐκηρύχθη ἡ σφραγὶς αὕτη H 9, 16, 4. κηρυχθῆναι … μετάνοιαν εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν *repentance for the forgiveness of sins* **Lk 24:47.** ἵνα μετανοῶσιν **Mk 6:12.** [ἀνδρῶν τῶν] κηρυσσόντων, ἵνα μετανοῆται (read:-ῆτε) AcPl Ha 1, 17.—τινά (τινι) *someone (to someone)* Χριστόν **Ac 8:5**; cp. **1 Cor 1:23**; **Phil 1:15.** Ἰησοῦν **Ac 19:13**; **2 Cor 11:4.** οὐχ ἑαυτοὺς κηρύσσομεν ἀλλὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν κύριον *we do not publicize ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord* **4:5.** Pass. ὃς (Χριστός) … ἐκηρύχθη **1 Ti 3:16**; cp. Hs 8, 3, 2; 9, 17, 1; Dg 11:3. διά τινος *through someone* (cp. Epict. 3, 13, 12) Χρ. Ἰ. ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν διʼ ἡμῶν κηρυχθείς **2 Cor 1:19.** W. an addition that indicates the content of the proclamation, introduced by ὅτι (cp. Epict. 4, 5, 24): κ. w. acc. and ὅτι foll. **Mk 1:14** v.l.; **Ac 9:20**; pass. Χρ. κηρύσσεται ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται *Christ is proclaimed as having risen fr. the dead* **1 Cor 15:12.** κ. τινί, ὅτι **Ac 10:42**; οὕτως κ. **1 Cor 15:11.** The content of the proclamation is introduced by λέγων **Mt 3:1f**; **10:7**; **Mk 1:7**; cp. vs. **14**; IPhld 7:2. Beside λέγειν w. direct discourse (Epict. 4, 6, 23) **Mt 4:17.** Abs. **Mt 11:1**; **Mk 1:38**; **3:14**; **16:20**; **Ro 10:15**; 1 Cl 42:4; B 5:8 (Jesus’ proclamation defined as teaching and the performance of wonders and signs); 8:3. κηρύσσων *a proclaimer* **Ro 10:14.**—S. lit. under κήρυγμα; also MGrumm, translating *kērussō* and Related Verbs: BT 21, ’70, 176–79.—B. 1478. DELG s.v. κῆρυξ. M-M. EDNT. TW. Sv.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Root | ESV**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| αγγελος | angelos | angel | 301 |
| ἄγγελος | angelos | angel | 175 |
| **ἀπαγγέλλω** | apangellō | report; announce; tell | 45 |
| παραγγέλλω | parangellō | command; give orders | 31 |
| καταγγέλλω | katangellō | proclaim | 18 |
| ἀναγγέλλω | anangellō | proclaim; announce; disclose | 14 |
| παραγγελία | parangelia | instruction; exhortation | 5 |
| διαγγέλλω | diangellō | report; proclaim; announce | 3 |
| ἀγγελία | angelia | message | 2 |
| ἀρχάγγελος | archangelos | archangel | 2 |
| προκαταγγέλλω | prokatangellō | foretell; announce beforehand | 2 |
| ἀγγέλλω | angellō | report; announce | 1 |
| ἐξαγγέλλω | exangellō | report; proclaim | 1 |
| ἰσάγγελος | isangelos | like an angel | 1 |
| καταγγελεύς | katangeleus | proclaimer | 1 |

1. Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). [*A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*](https://ref.ly/logosres/bdag?ref=Page.p+543&off=8529) (3rd ed., pp. 543–544). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)