

**Second Sunday After Pentecost – June 23, 2019**

**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**

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**Luke 8:26-39 (NIV)**

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 impure 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 Jesus 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 the pigs, 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.**

**“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.”**

(2 Peter 1:2, EHV)

Dear friends who have been set free by Jesus:

Have you ever experienced one of those days when you just had to ask – “I wonder what’s coming next?” I’m sure you have. Well, it was one of those days for Jesus’ disciples. It started out innocently enough. **One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out.** (Luke 8:22 NIV) As they were sailing Jesus fell asleep. But things didn’t remain calm for long. We are told that **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... In fear and amazement [the disciples] asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him."** (Luke 8:23-25 NIV)

That would seem like more than enough excitement for one day – but as our text reports the disciples would see Jesus do even greater things than this. As we consider this text let’s behold what Jesus has done. We’ll discuss the events of our text but ultimately we will

**Theme:** Behold What Jesus Has Done for Us

1. He has set us free from the control of the Devil
2. He has set us free to tell of his mercy and compassion.

The calm following the storm didn’t last long for Jesus and the disciples. They continued sailing to the opposite shoreline of the Sea of Galilee and landed in the region of the Gerasenes which was located in an area east of the Sea of Galilee known as the Decapolis (which means 10 cities).

**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.**

The Gospel of Mark tells us: [this man] **had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. (5) Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.** (Mark 5:4-5 NIV)

The Gospel of Matthew explains that there were actually two demon possessed men who met Jesus and that **they were so violent that no one could pass that way.** (Matthew 8:28 NIV)

The Apostle Peter reminds us that the Devil is our enemy seeking whom he may devour or destroy. (cf. 1 Peter 5:8). This account of the demon possessed man from the region of the Gadarenes who lived among the dead -- harming both himself and others – helps us to understand just how eager the Devil is to ruin our lives and bring about our destruction. But as the Apostle John reminds us, **the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.** (1 John 3:8 NIV) As this text unfolds that's exactly what we behold Jesus doing.

The demon possessed man had been chained so he wouldn't hurt himself or others, but chains could not stop the demons. Jesus comes to this man in his captivity and sets him free.

**When (*the man possessed by demons*) 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 impure spirit to come out of the man.**

After Jesus calmed the storm his disciples had asked, **"Who is this who commands the winds and the waves and they obey him?"** Interestingly the demons who were speaking through this man knew the answer to that question: **Jesus is the Son of the Most High God** who had come to destroy the works of the Devil and his evil demons.

Jesus is in complete control of this situation. He addressed the man and his demons. **Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him.** If we understand that a legion of soldiers would number in the thousands we will begin to comprehend the powerful forces that had overpowered this man and confronted Jesus.

The demons knew who Jesus was and why he had come. The demons also knew their eternal fate: damnation – in the Abyss of Hell. Fearful that they will be sent out of the man to the eternal fires of hell which were prepared for them before the appointed time; **[the demons] begged Jesus 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 the pigs, 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.** In Mark's Gospel we are told that the number of pigs in the heard was about 2000!

Behold what Jesus has done! Jesus set the demon possessed man free – free from the power of Satan to the power of God – he turned him from darkness to light. (cf. Acts 26:18) He not only provided a physical deliverance but he brought him a spiritual and an eternal rescue – providing him with the wonderful gift of salvation!

Perhaps as you heard about the terrible things that happened to man whom Jesus set free you might have had the urge to gasp in shock and horror. But what we have heard and seen in this lesson is really just the tip of

the iceberg so to speak. Let's not forget the universal trouble that the Devil brought upon the world when he led Adam and Eve to disobey the God who created them. Romans 5:12 explains: **sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people...**

The works of Satan affect all people. He constantly entices people to rebel and sin against the God who created. The sins that he champions often lead to sickness or suffering -- causing harm to individuals, families and society in general. He blinds the eyes of unbelievers so that they cannot see and believe the Gospel. He attacks believers by trying to seduce them into believe and accepting spiritual harmful teachings and errors.

Jesus destroyed the works of the Devil by successfully defeating his temptations – living a perfect life for us in obedience to God's will. Jesus taught the truth and exposes the lies of the Devil. And as we have seen he drove out demons set people free from their bondage to him.

As long as the Devil can keep people in their sin – he can torture them with the fear of death. But Jesus became one of us – freeing us from our sins by suffering God's wrath for them on the cross, dying in our place and then rising victoriously to demonstrate the victory he won for us. Hebrews 2:14-15 explained why Jesus become one us in this way: **Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- (15) and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.**

Behold what Jesus has done and rejoice that he has also set you free from the control of the Devil by calling you to faith in him. Jesus has removed the fear of death for you by washing away your sins and providing you with his righteousness. His victory over the Devil enables us to resist temptations by standing in the faith. (cf. 1 Peter 5:9) The apostle James encourages and assures of this by telling us: **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.** (James 4:7 NIV)

Behold what Jesus has done for you – he has set you free from the control of the Devil. As we continue to contemplate on the account of the rescue that Jesus provided for the man who had been possessed by a legion of demons we encounter the reaction of those who lived in that area including the owners of the pigs who were destroyed.

**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.**

The result of Jesus' actions was sitting right before their eyes but instead of rejoicing in the blessings that Jesus had brought to this man – the people were afraid. Their focus was on Jesus judgement of the demons and the destruction of the pigs rather than on the rescue of a soul. Even after witnesses explained what happened the people of the area asked Jesus to leave because they were overcome with fear. And so Jesus left them but not before he commissioned the man he had set free from the power of demons to **"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.** As a matter of fact the man didn't just tell people in his own town – according to Mark's account **he went and began to tell in the in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him.** (Mark 5:20)

Jesus didn't just set the man from the Devil. Jesus also set him free to tell of Jesus' mercy and compassion. By His death and resurrection, Jesus sets us free from our enemies, from sin, death, and Satan. We are also free to tell of Jesus's mercy and compassion.

Behold what Jesus has done for you – he has set you free to tell of his mercy and compassion. Perhaps it will help us to understand our mission better if we listen to what Jesus said to another person whom he had set free from the power of the Devil to tell of his mercy and compassion.

The devil had deceived a man by the name of Saul of Tarsus into thinking that he was doing the will of God by persecuting Christians. The risen and ascended Jesus appeared to Saul calling him to faith and service. Paul himself explained what Jesus said to him in Acts 26. Jesus told him, **“I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. (17) I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them (18) 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 26:16-18 NIV)

Jesus has entrusted that same mission to each of those whom he has called to faith. Set free by Jesus and following the example of the man in our text – may we go and gladly tell everyone how much he has done for us. Amen.

**“May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and in his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and establish you in every good work and word.”** (2 Thessalonians 2:16–17, EHV)