

Jesus' Power and the Call to Tell

Second Sunday after Pentecost
Year C: Luke 8:26-39 – June 21-22, 2025
King of Glory Lutheran Church
Pastor Ruth Ann Loughry

Luke 8:26-39

²⁶ Then [Jesus and his disciples] arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me"—²⁹ for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰ Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. ³¹ They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

³² Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³ Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴ When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵ Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶ Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. ³⁷ Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸ The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

Galatians 3:23-29

²³ Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷ As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Jesus comes to dominate all systems of oppression and abusive power in His own time. He is the ultimate healer and asks us to share our experiences of God.

Hmm, hmm, hmm. Jesus went there on purpose. He left the familiarity of Galilee to go over to the country of the Gerasene's. He went to find this man. It was part of the mission.

Jesus finds the man living among the tombs. The demons inside know who Jesus is right away, for they address Him by name. "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you do not torment me!"

Now you and I hear – as we are limited to – the story and its words. But for Luke's audience, they would have interpreted a story of domination and power. For the demon to be named, Legion...people knew that meant an army of 6000 Roman soldiers – the occupiers. When the Legion seized this man, that word is used when Christians are arrested and brought to trial. The man was bound by shackles and chains. In Luke Acts, the disciples, both men and women who propelled the church forward in her earliest days, were often imprisoned, bound with shackles and chains. Pigs, the animals Jesus allows the Legion to go into, were seen on banners, coins and ordinary items. Pigs were the emblem of the Roman army.

Suddenly, Jesus' choice to go straight to this man and perform an exorcism, becomes a story with social and governmental implications. What He does here is not simply a healing.

Of course it's a healing, by which we see that God continually seeks out the least, the last and the lost. There are no boundaries that God will not cross to reach those living in their own tombs. But that's precisely the point.

Jesus, Son of God, will confront the powers that be of that day. He will take them on and He will ultimately win, through an empty and open tomb. There is no person Jesus cannot reach. There is no community that He cannot touch. There is no "Roman Army" that Jesus cannot ultimately bring down.

Let's begin with ourselves. What are our shackles and chains? What binds us?

Is there history of mental illness in our families? Maybe drugs and alcohol blind us to where disease ends and the person begins. Struggling to keep up with the Jones'? Shackled to needing more and more stuff to prop up our egos and self-identity? Or it's that choice we made years ago, which still holds us. The pain we

inflicted purposely or not upon another human, feels like that one unforgiveable sin.

This healing is just child's play for Jesus. He sends the Legion of demons into the herd of pigs. The man comes into his right mind. He sits at Jesus' feet to learn.

Where are the stories of healing in your life? God can use any means possible to heal us, bring us peace and hope. Was it a kind Dr that finally listened? Was it God asking you to go in a new direction through a counselor that got you back on track? Through reading the Bible and prayer did you realize God was leading you to new forgiveness? Have you seen God moving in your children or grandkids lives? Where has God been active? Look back over your life and what comes to mind?

The caretakers of the pigs saw this remarkable event and ran back to the village to tell everyone. If this had happened today, they with cell phones taking video and then posting it to social media. Crowds of people came back, aghast at what they saw. "Look! He's clothed! He's listening to Jesus! Who is this man?!"

But they had a strange reaction. Fear gripped them all. Fear held them hostage. The freedom that Jesus gave was too dangerous, too costly. Who knew what to do with that? The people begged Jesus to leave! "Go away from us!" Hmm, hmm, hmm. First the demon possessed man said it. Now the others are saying it. At least they knew that Legion would get lose and run around. But now, that Legion is gone...destroyed by God, what does that mean?

This story ultimately is a story for Luke's hearers about God's sovereignty and dominion over the power of the day. He wanted people to know He was going up against Rome. And even though his death on the cross looked like failure to the outside world, for God it was the ultimate victory. Victory over sin, death, and all things that take us away from God. And...until He comes again to make all things new, it's our work to continue God's reign of love.

I realize that what we do here each week is counter-cultural. Yet we come back week after week to hear God's word and the promises God holds for us. We re-center ourselves finding grace and forgiveness. We encourage one another as community of faith and hope. Here lies our hope for the world. We need worship to keep us centered on God.

The man wanted to go with Jesus, but the Lord told him to stay and keep telling his story of healing. Our call is to witness in Jesus' name, so more and more corners of the world know that unity and love. It's a process, one that is accomplished through your hands and mine, your words and mine, your heart and mine, our prayers and pleas for an end to violence and destruction.

There was a song this week at Vacation Bible School.
Go out and pray like it all depends on prayer.
Go out and love like it all depends on love.
Go out and serve like it all depends on us...
Until Jesus comes again!

Who can you share a story of God's love with this week?
Amen.