

Luke 8:26-39

²⁶ Then they 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.

What to Do About Demons

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Good Morning. I am the Reverend Jeff Shimizu from FCC in Marietta, Georgia.

- I am honored to be back at First Christian to worship with you again.
- **I see they built this pulpit for Rev. Dave. When I grow up I'm gonna be tall like Dave.**

Once upon a time, there lived a young man who lived on the west coast. Like many young people he thought he was **immortal...invincible.**

He thought of himself as a sort of Superhero....**indestructible.** **But he wasn't a Superhero because he had a glaring flaw.**

Real Superhero's like Superman, Batman and Robin, Captain America, and the Avengers **help other people.**

They put other people before themselves. But this young man only cared about what he wanted...the fast free life.

Free from responsibility. Free from meaningful relationships. Free from thinking about others and their needs. **Free**

Life was a party. The parties started out on the weekends but soon became almost a daily routine.....**Drinking, drugs, and women.**

He thought he had 100s of friends but they were really just acquaintances that disappeared when the party was over.

He traveled the countryside on his **motorcycle.** He thought he had the perfect life but he was **going nowhere. Failed attempts at school, failed attempts at work, and failed relationships.**

He wasn't a bad person, just young, self-centered and stubborn...and **full of demons.** **The devil had his grip on him. His soul was dying and it was screaming for help.**

Then one night Jesus swept down on him and threw him off his motorcycle. **It should have killed him but it didn't. But it changed his life forever!!!**

Our scripture today is a familiar story. A man has demons. Jesus takes the demons and puts them in the pigs. The pigs run down a bank into the water and drown. **It's just another Jesus miracle story.**

But wait a minute...there is much more!!! But in order for us to discover the hidden treasures in this story we will have to unpack it and break it down...so stay with me. **It will be worth it!!!** But if it's not tell Reverend Dave, "Don't ever invite that guy back again."

Listen to...LUKE 8: 26 and 27. Then they arrived at the country of the Jare-uh-scenes, which is opposite Galilee. 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.

The man was filled with demons.

I don't know if you believe in the devil. Maybe you don't see the devil the way Hollywood betrays him...a **red man**, with **pointed ears**, a **long spiked tail**, and a **sharp pitchfork**. **That's okay..... but I think we can agree that there is great evil in the world...AMEN**

There are **temptations combined with human nature** that causes all sorts of suffering. It comes in many names like greed, weakness, excess, self-interest, disease, and more. **I have often thought everyone has demons of some sort.**

I know I've had my share of them. There are demons like.....

- Drugs, alcohol, cigarettes
- **Infidelity**
- Neglect of those who are really important to us. Neglect of ourselves and our bodies.
- **Physical and emotional diseases of all sorts**
- Procrastination
- **Gambling, excess spending and credit card debt**
- **Habits just taken to an excess** like...eating and drinking too much of the wrong things, too much time on the internet, Facebook, video games.

They are demons. They are evil perpetrated by the devil.

This is tricky business. Demons cause you to deceive yourself. You tell yourself.

- I don't really have an issue
- I do that because...this.....or that...
- I'll fix that tomorrow.
- I can stop anytime I want...I just choose not to today.

Demons cause fear, depression, health issues (short and long term) and human suffering of all types.

They are destructive and they are hard to get rid of. **Demons block the spirit of God from reaching us.**

Do you have any of these demons? Do you want to get rid of them???

Today I'm going to share a few options with you. **Some ways to rid yourself of your demons.**

1. **Option 1...You can Google it** on the Internet and find tons of advice. I did it.
 - a. There is burning incense and candles to wearing crosses and amulets.
 - b. There is reciting prayers and chanting creeds

Did you know there are **demon removal companies and consultants?**

There is some strange stuff out there. The problem is you can't tell what is **real** or a **hoax**. You can spend allot of time on the Internet but what is **good advice** and **what is not**...it's hard to tell.

It's an option. Maybe not the best one, but an option.

2. **Option 2...You can just do it yourself.**
 - a. You simply decide to rid yourself of your demons. **YOU JUST STOP!!!**
 - b. It can work. I've seen it happen.

Of course, you might want to ask yourself if you already tried that.

How did that work out?

3. **Third option...It's in the bible!!! LUKE 8: 28-33**

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”— 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. Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” He said Legion for many demons had entered him.

Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; 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.

Legion had been kept under constant surveillance. He was even bound with chains and shackles. **Nothing worked!!!**

But when Jesus arrived the man came out to meet him?

- **He sought Jesus out and asked him for help.**
- **And Jesus rid him of his demons**

I think the folks in Alcohol and Drug Abuse programs are on to something. They have a 12 STEP Recovery PROGRAM.

Here is the essence of the first 3 steps of their program.

1. We admitted we were powerless – that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than us could restore us.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God.

While these steps are part of a substance abuse recovery program, **I think they represent the most effective way to eliminate demons of all sorts!!!**

But they aren't easy.

Step 1...Admitting you are powerless and your life has become unmanageable is difficult.

- Being in power and control seems to be foundational to our culture.
- We strive to be in power. Who has the power? The **Democrats or the Republicans?** We have **Presidential elections** to see who will have the power.
- We have **organizational hierarchies** in the government, in business, everywhere.
- Admitting we are powerless is not a very popular position to take. We think of it as a sign of weakness.

So what about **Step 2**? Maybe as Christians we don't have too much trouble with Step 2. **We believe there is a power greater than ourselves...AMEN.**

But when we are faced with adversity and tragedy our **faith can waiver.**
Where are you God? Why aren't you curing me? Why aren't you ridding me of my demons?

But it is **Step 3** that perhaps poses the biggest **hurdle.**

- **Turn our will and our lives over to the care of God?**
- **Give up control? I mean really give up control.**
- **We want to be in control.**
- **It gives us a sense of security...a false sense of security**

I admit I'm a bit of a control freak. This is how I do Step 3....

- God, I give you complete control.
- I turn this situation over to you.
- I know you have my back.....

But, just in case you are distracted or taking the day off I came up with this little backup plan.

Then when God does move fast enough for me I implement my back up plan.

I don't have to tell you....that plan almost never works.

What I have to remember to be patient and wait for God to answer my prayers.

These steps are about:

1. Admitting we have demons and wanting to do something about them.
2. Having faith in the power of God and Christ...and his ability to save us from our demons
3. Turning our will and control over to God

What happened after Jesus rid Legion of his demons?

LUKE 8: 34-37

When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country.

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. Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed.

Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Jare-uh-scenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned.

I found that an odd reaction. You hear Jesus performed a miracle and you **run away, you are afraid** and then **you even send him away**.

But maybe it wasn't so unusual. When non-believers and sceptics are faced with the prospect that Jesus just might be the Son of God they do just that. They **run away**, they **are afraid** and they **reject him**.

But not Legion. Listen to what he does.

LUKE 8: 38-39

The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, "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.

He asked Jesus if he could go with him. **He begged him.**

But Jesus sent him away. He sends him away to tell others what God had done for him.

He asks him to Witness. Witness to:

- The power of God
- To His healing and saving power
- To His power over demons, the devil and evil

Now that make sense. **Jesus needed Legion and others to witness.** He not that he couldn't do it all by himself. He wanted people to go out and tell others what they had seen, what they had experienced, what they believed.

To spread the word!!! To spread the Good News!!!

BUT here comes the miracle...

Jesus sends Legion out to tell others and **HE DID IT!!!**

I know your saying, "What type of a miracle is that?"

Jesus tells Legion to go tell everyone about his faith, what God had done for him and what God could surely do for them. **And he did it...What's the big deal?**

Jesus calls all of us to go out to a world in need and tell everyone about...

- The miracles we have seen
- The power and love of Christ
- What God has meant to us
- What God could mean to them

But who does that???

Who goes around telling everyone all that???

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When we do that, it is like a miracle because there are so many reasons why we don't do it.

- We are afraid it will make us **uncomfortable, or someone else uncomfortable**
- We are afraid of **ridicule**
- We are afraid of **rejection**
- We are afraid **it won't matter**

Afraid...Afraid

Jesus wasn't in some popularity contest or election.

Jesus was saying...

- Go tell others about me.
- I want you to help them.
- I want you to **help them get rid of their demons.**

Don't be afraid!!!

Who knows, when you witness to the power and grace of God

- **You might help someone rid themselves of their demons**
- **You might just save someone's life.**

And that would be a miracle!!!

Are you tired? Are you tired of fighting your demons?

Are you worried? Worried about what your demons are doing to your...

- Relationships
- Body and your health
- Well-being

Fighting demons is hard work.....but you don't have to do it by yourself.

Seek out Jesus. He is just a prayer away!!!

Once upon a time there was a young man using drugs, abusing alcohol, chasing women.

He was full of demons. He was spiritually dead.

Then one night Jesus threw him off his motorcycle. It should have killed him but it didn't.

It changed his life forever!!!

I often wonder what ever happened to that young man?

I guess you get to **finish the story** anyway you want to.

You get to finish **YOUR** story anyway you want to.

AMEN