



Grace for the Gadarene

Luke 8: 26-39

Items Needed

- ✓ Bible with marked scripture
- ✓ Items you can use to "bind" the Gadarene (i.e. Rope, scarf, chains, cardboard box to use as jail etc...)
- ✓ Copies of coloring page
- ✓ Copies of take home overview



Grace for the Gadarene

Objective of Lesson

This story is recorded in the Bible to demonstrate to us how the Lord Jesus delivers His people from their bondage of sin, and leaves them born again, and sitting in their right mind, glorifying their Lord and Saviour.

Scripture Reference

Luke 8: 26-39 Jesus and his disciples sailed to the Gerasenes' land, which is across the lake from Galilee. 27 As soon as Jesus got out of the boat, a certain man met him. The man was from the city and was possessed by demons. For a long time, he had lived among the tombs, naked and homeless. 28 When he saw Jesus, he shrieked and fell down before him. Then he shouted, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" 29 He said this because Jesus had already commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had taken possession of him, so he would be bound with leg irons and chains and placed under guard. But he would break his restraints, and the demon would force him into the wilderness. 30 Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had entered him. 31 They pleaded with him not to order them to go back into the abyss.[b] 32 A large herd of pigs was feeding on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs. Jesus gave them permission, 33 and the demons left the man and entered the pigs. The herd rushed down the cliff into the lake and drowned. 34 When those who tended the pigs saw what happened, they ran away

and told the story in the city and in the countryside. 35 People came to see what had happened. They came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone. He was sitting at Jesus' feet, fully dressed and completely sane. They were filled with awe. 36 Those people who had actually seen what had happened told them how the demon-possessed man had been delivered. 37 Then everyone gathered from the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave their area because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and returned across the lake. 38 The man from whom the demons had gone begged to come along with Jesus as one of his disciples. Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 "Return home and tell the story of what God has done for you." So he went throughout the city proclaiming what Jesus had done for him.

Lesson Instructions

1. Today we are going to learn another allegory. Do you all remember what an allegory is? It is a story that shows (illustrates) to us what happens when the Lord saves His people from their horrible sin. This is an amazing story. I will need a few volunteers to help me act out this story. I need one person to be the Gadarene. This was a mad man. He was crazy and he lived among the tombs and in the wilderness. I also need a few people to be the townspeople. You are going to try and tame the mad man. We are going to illustrate how only Christ has the power to cure a sinner from his sin.
2. In this recorded scripture in the Bible there was a Gadarene man. He was crazy and possessed of many evil spirits. The people in the city tried to tame him. They told him to stop acting that way, (have them to order the "Gadarene" to stop acting crazy) but he did not stop. They tried to teach him to be better. They tried to teach him the rules of how to act, but nothing worked (Have the children act this out to emphasize the point that he was beyond help of rules or education etc... the problem was beyond human repair).
3. Have the child run around like a "mad man". The townspeople, when they

could not get the mad man to act correctly, they tried to tie him up, but he broke the ropes. They then tried to chain him up, but he broke the chains. Lastly they tried to cage him, but he even broke the bars. There was nothing on earth that could tame him. (Have the children act this out to emphasize the point).

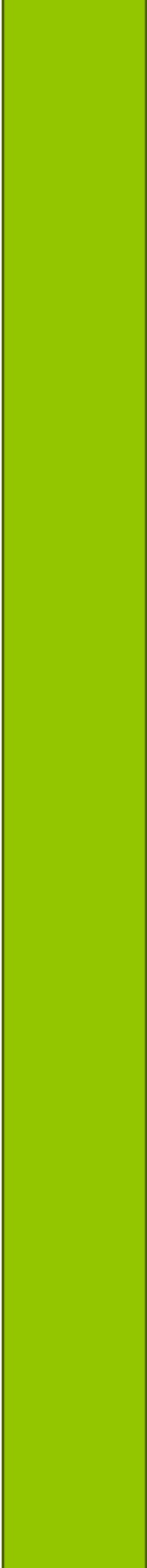
4. Our Lord knew about this man. This was the craziest man in the country. If you asked anybody they would have told you there was no hope for this man to ever be a good and just man; he was the worse man in the country. Oh, but there was hope for this man. Who do you think can make this crazy man sane, and cast out those evil spirits he was possessed with? Jesus Christ the Son of God can!! That is exactly what happened! Our Lord got on a boat and sailed to the country of the Gadarenes (v. 26). He was coming specifically to help this Gadarene. Did this Gadarene ask for help? No, he did not want to be helped. He was so crazy he just wanted to run wild, but God's appointed time of love had come. Christ Jesus was going to Gadara to save one chosen sinner.
5. How is this story a picture of how He saves sinners now? This is exactly what our Redeemer did for all His people. We are that crazy Gadarene man who cannot be tamed or taught or even bound up to act right. Christ came to this earth, like He came across that sea, died for our sins, cast out the evilness that had consumed us, and saved us. (Matthew 1:21; Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 1:15; Romans 5:8; 1 John 3:5; Hebrews 10:10-14)
6. How are we like this poor Gadarene? This was a pretty awful person. When we look at ourselves we don't see ourselves the same way as this. How can we be this awful? The way this crazy man acted is exactly how we act in God's eyes, ever since our Father Adam sinned against God in the garden; and since we all come from Adam we all act the same way. We are all just blind to how we act because we became blind when Adam sinned. We can't see ourselves as we really are. (Romans 3:10-19; 1 John 3:8; 2 Timothy 2:26)
7. Since no one else had control over this man does that mean there was no

hope? No! Who has absolute control over everything in our whole universe? Even evil spirits have to do as He commands - our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The evil spirits prayed for permission to enter into the herd of swine, so they must receive permission from our Savior to do anything.

8. Why would the Lord tell us this story? It is to show and teach others that He has mercy on worthless, crazy, mad men and women, and we are not without hope. Our Lord has the power AND mercy to save poor sinners like us and nothing can stop Him - not even the most vile and crazy men and women can stop Him.
9. When the Lord healed the man - what happened? Did he continue to act crazy? No! The Bible says, "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." (v. 35) (Have the "Gadarene" sit calmly, legs crossed and quiet and how the townspeople act surprised) What a change! It was a change everyone in town could see. This terror of a man had been born again - made a new person - no longer crazy and mad! He who had been possessed of the devil was now possessed by the Son of God. He who was before uncontrollably wild and wicked was sitting before his Master.
10. Someone accurately said, "Every man is out of his mind until he has the mind of Christ." This is the same with every child of God, when delivered from the power of darkness and taken away from the cruel bondage of sin and death into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Once we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, we cannot but long to be, "absent from the body, and present with the Lord."

Lesson Activities

- Act out the story (you will need rope, scarfs, and a box - items you can use to "bind" the mad man and try to contain him) This is to emphasize



that he was out of control and the only one that can heal him is Christ.

- *Coloring Page.*



Take Home Lesson Overview

Grace for the Gadarene

Scripture Reference:

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Lesson Overview:

This was the craziest man in the country. If you asked anybody they

would have told you there was no hope for this man to ever be a good and just man. He was the worse man in the land, not even accepted by his fellow men. Oh, but there was hope for this man. Who do you think can make this crazy man sane and cast out those evil spirits he was possessed with? Jesus Christ the Son of God! That is exactly what happened! Our Lord got on a boat and sailed to the country of the Gadarenes (v. 26). He was coming specifically to help this Gadarene. Did this Gadarene ask for help? No, he did not want to be helped. He was so crazy he just wanted to run wild, but God's appointed time of love had come. Christ Jesus was going to Gadara to save one chosen sinner. How is this story a picture of how He saves sinners now? This is exactly what our Redeemer did for all His people. We are that crazy Gadarene man who cannot be tamed or taught or even bound up to act right. Christ came to this earth, like He came across that sea. He died and paid for our sins, cast out the evilness that consumes us, and saved us. (Matthew 1:21; Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 1:15; Romans 5:8; 1 John 3:5; Hebrews 10:10-14)

Luke Chapter 8

Grace for the Gadarene

Sermon Notes by Don Fortner

"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 thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, 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 thy 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 that was possessed of the devils was healed. 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 thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him."

(Luke 8:26-39)

For every chosen, redeemed sinner there is an appointed time when he shall be called by God's almighty grace. That time is called "The Time of Life" and "The Time of Love." Though born children of wrath, even as others, God's elect were from eternity the objects of immutable mercy, love and grace. Though we ran hell-bent to destruction, the Lord God, from old eternity said, "Hitherto shalt thou go and no further." Though Satan roared against us, though the legions of hell sought to destroy us, though our hearts were in league with hell itself, at God's appointed time of love, the Lord Jesus Christ came to us, and, by the power of his omnipotent grace, saved us. For the poor maniac of Gadara, when the time of love came, the Lord Jesus came to him with the mighty operations of his saving grace.

It is a story that is told by Matthew, Mark and Luke. All three of these Gospel writers were inspired of God the Holy Spirit to record this event in considerable detail. Mark gives us the most detailed account of what transpired that day in the land of the Gadarenes; but all three hold this story before us as a remarkable display both of our Lord's great grace to needy sinners and of his sovereign dominion even over the demons of hell. — As the Lord Jesus Christ vanquished hell in the heart and life of this poor demoniac in Gadara two thousand years ago, so he vanquishes hell itself in the hearts of chosen redeemed sinners by the saving operations of his grace.

The Savior of Sinners

"And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against

"Galilee" (v. 26). The Lord Jesus had just come from the other side of the Sea of Galilee to the shores of Gadara. When he set sail for Gadara, he knew that he was sailing directly into a storm. Yet, he set sail willingly. He was on an errand of mercy. He was going to Gadara to save one chosen sinner, for whom the time of love had come. The Lord Jesus came through the storm, across the sea, with willing heart to save the chosen sinner, when the fulness of time had come. When he had delivered the object of his grace, he returned to the other side of the sea, from whence he came.

This is exactly what our Redeemer did for all his people. He left his lofty throne in heaven, came across the sea of time and mortality, suffered the horrible storm of God's wrath as our Substitute to save us, and, when he had done that mighty work by which his chosen must be saved (when he had satisfied the law and justice of God and put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself), he went back to the other side again (Matthew 1:21; Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 1:15; Romans 5:8; 1 John 3:5; Hebrews 10:10-14).

He came to save the least likely of the Gadarenes, a wild man, a maniac, one who was entirely possessed of the devil. In fact, a legion of demons resided in his poor soul. However, as we shall see, this man would be the instrument of mercy by whom God would bring his grace and salvation to many others in days to come (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

The Son of God came to Gadara to dispossess Satan of one of his captives, to bind the strong man, take his house, and spoil him of his goods; and he did not leave until he had done what he came to do. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Savior of sinners.

A Miserable Wretch

"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 thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, 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 thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him." (vv. 27-30)

Matthew in his account tells us that there were two mad, demon possessed Gadarenes who met the Master on the shores of Gadara. Some point to that fact and say, "There, you see, the Bible is full of contradictions." I fail to see their brilliance. If there were two, there had to be one; and Luke was inspired of God to write about one, giving far more detail than Matthew did in his description of the two. Apparently, the man described by Luke was the more notoriously wicked of the two. Look at what the Holy Spirit tells us about this sinner. What a sad, sad picture it is.

This poor Gadarene was a miserable wretch. Though the picture falls far short of the thing portrayed by it, the distressing circumstances of the poor demoniac vividly portray the terrible consequences of the fall of our father Adam, and the utter ruin of our race in the fall. Every descendent of Adam is by nature under the full sway and influence of an unclean spirit. We are all by

nature ruled by our own depraved, corrupt hearts and wills, and are taken captive by Satan at his will (Romans 3:10-19; 1 John 3:8; 2 Timothy 2:26). Robert Hawker rightly observed, "Were it not for restraining grace, of which the sinner is wholly unconscious, what tremendous evils, in ten thousand times ten thousand instances, would take place!" We are, because of the fall and Satan's conquest of our nature, in bondage to sin with all its dreadful consequences. The flesh with its lusts, the world with its deceits, and Satan with his devices rule the fallen sons of Adam with absolute sway.

In addition to all this, we are justly condemned by the law and justice of God threatening us with everlasting torment, and by the accusations of our own consciences. This is the state and condition of every fallen son and daughter of Adam, which causes all to live all their life time in the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15).

An Unclean Spirit

Like this poor Gadarene, we all have an unclean spirit by nature. Yes, this man was possessed of the devil; but the devil could never have possessed him had he not been unclean by nature. Even so, the wicked, who opposing God oppose themselves, are this day "taken captive by Satan at his will" (2 Timothy 2:26). Isaiah declares that we are all as an unclean thing. Our hearts are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Out of our hearts come forth every abominable evil that exists in this world. Oh, if only we knew the evil of our hearts, the shocking horror of that wickedness that resides in us would prevent us from ever again saying, with regard of any vile act of a man, "How could a man do such a thing?"

Living Among the Dead

This poor, mad, depraved soul lived among the dead. Mark tells us that he was "dwelling among the tombs." Dead sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, live among dead sinners, like themselves. Is that the case with you? You who live without Christ live among the dead, for you are dead. This man was not dead physically, but he was dead spiritually. Therefore, he was most comfortable among the dead. That is where I was when the Lord found me; and that is where you are by nature (Ephesians 2:1-4).

Could not be Bound

This poor, wild man could not be bound with the fetters and chains that bind other men. The fetters of society, social acceptance, peer approval, social advantage, family pressure, reputation, and concern for the opinions of others, those things that bind most men and make them behave with an outward form of decency, simply have no effect on some. The law of God has no influence upon most. They refuse to acknowledge its power, and cannot be bound by it. Night and day they run to destruction in a life of mad behavior that will inevitably bring them to hell, except the grace of God intervene.

I say it to my shame, but that was my condition. Like the maniac of Gadara, social fetters could not bind me; and the fetters and chains of religion were no more effectual. I knew something of the terror of God's law. The wrath of God, the terrors of judgment, hell, and endless death tormented my soul, sometimes

for months on end. Those terrors would sometimes appear effectual; but those fetters were also easily cast off. The fear of hell never changes a sinner's heart.

Could not be Tamed

No man could tame this madman. When society sees that chains and fetters cannot bind a man and make him better, it tries by refinement, education, reward, and gentle persuasion to tame him into moral respectability. The Lord Jesus does not bind or tame. He renews, regenerates, and breaks! And when he gets done, the broken sinner rejoices to be broken.

This poor maniac, like me, like some who read these lines, was hell bent to the destruction of his own soul. He was "always, night and day, in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones." Imagine the terror that this man wreaked upon others as they passed by this place, especially at night. Imagine yourself living near such a man. You would put iron bars around your windows and doors, and sleep with a gun under your bed every night. Whenever you saw him coming down the street, you would nod politely to keep from incurring his fury; but you would hurry away and try every way possible to protect your family from the influence of his madness.

But, can you imagine what misery such a person is in himself. His wickedness is his own doing; and it is inexcusable. But I also know the misery of his soul. I have been there among the tombs, moaning, groaning, crying, and cutting myself, always playing with death, yet always terrified of dying, despising loneliness and isolation, yet always doing that which of necessity brought me into greater

loneliness and isolation.

Are you like this poor wretch? Were you once like him? If you are now in Christ, saved by his omnipotent mercy and infinite grace, you know that you were once unconscious of such mercy and grace. If you are yet without Christ, you are in the bondage of sin, Satan, and death, though you are completely unconscious of your lost and ruined condition.

A Worshipping Devil

"When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not" (v. 28). — Here is the confession of a demon spirit. I do not know much about demons and demonology, and I do not want to know much. But I do know this: — Demons are real! You will be wise to stay as far away from the occult, spiritism, witchcraft and Satanism as you can.

Here the devil pretends to be a worshipper of Christ. He does not hesitate to assume the character of an angel of light, when it serves his purpose. I have seen him at work often. He makes people religious and think they have become worshippers of God, though there is no worship in their hearts. What a cunning, crafty adversary Satan is! Many serve the devil best when they pretend to be worshippers of Christ! Worship from the teeth outward is not worship, but blasphemy! Many there are on the road to hell who have nothing but the faith of devils. They know that the Lord God is the most high God, and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but there is no commitment of heart to him as God. John Owen once wrote...

"Of all the poison which at this day is diffused in the minds of men, corrupting them from the mystery of the gospel, there is no part that is more pernicious than this one perverse imagination, that to 'believe in Christ' is nothing at all but to 'believe the doctrine of the gospel!'"

Run to Christ

Yet, Matthew, Mark and Luke show us in this Gadarene a picture of a poor, lost sinner coming to Christ. I cannot pass this without pointing out the fact that our great Savior sovereignly and graciously used the very devils who would destroy the Gadarene to bring him to him for mercy!

Look at this man. He was "afar off!" That is our place by nature. He was afar off from Christ, and the Lord Jesus was afar off from him. In character he was afar off. This man and the God-man had nothing in common. In knowledge he was afar off. The demoniac knew who Christ was, but did not know him. In possessions he was afar off. This man had nothing to offer Christ, no good feelings, no repentance, no good thoughts, no holy desires. He cried, "What have I to do with thee?" The poor demoniac was utterly helpless and hopeless.

If you are yet without Christ, no words can paint the picture of your desperate need. You are so far off from God that you cannot and will not, of your own accord and by your own ability, return to him.

Though he was afar off, the Lord Jesus came to him, and he saw him coming! How he knew, I do not know; but this poor sinner knew some things about the

One coming to him. I suspect he knew, because whenever Christ comes to a sinner in saving mercy, he makes himself known as the God of mercy and the Savior through whom mercy comes. He saw that the Lord our God is God almighty, the most high God. He saw that the man Christ Jesus is God the Son. He saw that this great Savior has total, sovereign power over all things, even the devils who possessed him. And he saw that if he would, he could deliver him from the devils and from himself.

"He ran and worshipped him." — The poor soul was in a terrible mess. He was torn by powerful influences. Here is the Son of God who has come to save him. Yet, there is within him a legion of devils bent on destroying him. He loves the evil that is destroying him; yet, he has grown to hate it, because it is destroying him. He did the only thing he could do. In utter despair he ran to the only One who could help him, prostrated himself before his sovereign majesty, and worshipped him. C. H. Spurgeon said...

"A needle will move towards a magnet when once a magnet has moved near to it. Our heart manifests a sweet willingness towards salvation and holiness when the great and glorious good will of the Lord operates upon it. It is ours to run to Jesus as if all the runnings were ours; but the secret truth is that our Lord runs towards us, and this is the very heart of the business."

Do you need the mercy and grace of God? Run to Christ! With nothing but sin within you, with time fleeing from you, with eternity pressing upon you, with hell gaping beneath you, with heaven above you, O sinner, run, run to Christ! If you would have forgiveness, peace, pardon, and eternal life, run to Christ! This I know — If you do, you will find God your Father running to you in saving mercy,

love and grace! When sinners need mercy, they run to get it and God runs to give it!

What a blessed picture we are given of this in Luke 15:20. When the poor prodigal came to himself, as he was coming to his father, with overwhelming shame, we are told that, "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." What a picture that is! The only time in the Bible we have any indication of the eternal God ever being in a hurry, it is here, hurrying to welcome his darling, chosen prodigal home! In a sermon preached almost 400 years ago Tobias Crisp made the following comments on Luke 15:20. The quote is lengthy, but too precious and needful to be omitted or edited.

"His father sees him first. He spies him afar off. He stands ready to welcome a sinner, so soon as his heart looks but towards him. He that will draw nigh to them that are afar off will certainly draw nigh to them that draw near to him (Jeremiah 31:18). Nay, the father had compassion on him. His bowels yearn towards him, whilst he is afar off. Nay, he runs to meet him. He prevents a sinner with speed; mercy comes not on a foot-pace, but runs; it comes upon wings, as David speaks, 'He rides on the cherubs, he did fly; yea, he did fly on the wings of the wind' (Psalm 18:9-10)...The son's pace is slow. He arose and came. The father's is swift. He ran. Though the son had most need to run, bowels moving with mercy out-pace bowels pinched with want. God makes more haste to shew mercy, than we to receive. Whilst misery walks, mercy flies; nay, He falls on his son's neck, hugging and embracing him.

Oh! The depth of grace! Who would not have loathed such a person to touch or

come near him, whilst he smells of the swine he kept? Could a man come near him without stopping his nose? Would it not make a man almost rid his stomach, to smell his nastiness? Yet, behold, the Father of sinners falls upon the neck of such filthy wretches! Mercy and grace are not squeamish. The prodigal comes like a rogue. Yet the father clips him like a bride. He falls a kissing of him, even those lips that had lately been lapping in the hog trough and had kissed baggage harlots. A man would have thought he should rather have kicked him than kissed him. Yet this token of reconciliation and grace he gives him, with this seal he confirms his compassion. Nay, he calls for the best robe, and kills the fatted calf for him. The son's ambition was to be but as a hired servant, and lo, he is feasted in the best robes. God will do far better for a sinner than he can imagine, above all he is able either to ask or think. How then do poverty, nakedness, emptiness pinch thee, because of thy riot? Canst thou see enough in thy father's house, and therefore begin to pant in heart after him? Wouldest thou then have admittance? The Father of mercy is ready to deal thus with thee. Therefore object not unworthiness; for who more unworthy than such a son?"

I say, again, run to Christ for mercy; and you will find the God of heaven running to you with mercy, infinite, overwhelming, saving mercy. Oh! That every poor sinner God the Father has given to his Son, whose redemption Christ has purchased with his own precious blood, may be led by God the Holy Spirit to flee to Christ, as this Gadarene demoniac was for deliverance.

Christ is Lord

Read verses 28-36 again.

"When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, 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 thy 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 that was possessed of the devils was healed."

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the absolute Monarch of the universe. These demons, a legion of them, were compelled to Christ's feet like a whipped cur bows at its master's feet. As they prayed for permission to enter into the herd of swine, so they must receive permission from our Savior to do anything. I can think of at least two good reasons for our Lord allowing the demons to enter into and slaughter the herd of hogs: (1.) He wanted this poor Gadarene to know and remember what these demons of hell would have done to him, had it not been for his divine, saving intervention. And (2.) he wanted to get the attention of the

people of the city.

Our Lord's purpose of grace was toward many others in Gadara, others for whom the time of love would soon come. In order to prepare them for what he had in store for them he demonstrated both his awesome, sovereign power over the demons of hell and the creatures of his hand, and his awesome, saving grace in this man who had once been the terror of the city.

"What is thy name?" — Our Savior asked this question and compelled the demons to answer him audibly, not for his own information, but for the benefit of his disciples, both those then present with him, and all who shall be his disciples to the end of time. The enemy of our souls is truly a legion. Multitudes of his soldiers reside within us, in the lust of our flesh, and are at his command. But such is the greatness of Christ's power and grace that he has made us more than conquerors in himself (Romans 8:37, and says to his redeemed, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel...Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" (Isaiah 41:14; 43:1).

A Heaven-born Sinner

"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" (v. 35). — What a change! It was a change everyone in town could see. This terror of a man had been born again. He who had been possessed of the devil was now possessed by the Son of God. He who was before uncontrollably wild and wicked was sitting before his

Master. He who once roamed about half naked, or totally naked, was clothed.

We were by nature naked before God. Now we are clothed with the very righteousness of God in Christ. Like the prodigal, our Father has placed upon us the family robe of Christ's righteousness, the family ring of everlasting covenant love, the family shoes of gospel peace, and feeds us at the family buffet upon the sacrifice of Christ!

He who was before a madman was now in his right mind. Someone accurately said, "Every man is out of his mind until he has the mind of Christ."

But those who saw what had happened, but had not experienced it, were afraid. When God saves a sinner, others who thought they were all right are terrified by it, especially if the saved man was once one of them. These poor souls were terrified in the presence of almighty mercy, omnipotent love, and saving grace. Why? Because they knew nothing about it. They still lived in bondage. The only difference between them and the demoniac was that they were held by fetters and chains, and tamed by society. They mistook their fetters for righteousness and their tameness for goodness.

Some have asked, "Why did Christ permit the devils to possess the swine?" He did not do so merely to gratify the devils. Rather, he permitted them to possess the herd of swine to fulfill his own purpose. As Satan obtained permission to tempt Job, our Lord Jesus gave this legion of devils permission to enter into and destroy this herd of swine for the good of his own elect, the glory of his own name, and Satan's confusion. Just as Job's trial brought him great benefit and joy, and Satan's confusion, so it shall be with all the works the devil is permitted

to perform in this world (Job 1:8-12; Romans 8:28-30).

Christ Despised

"They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. 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." (vv. 36-37)

I cannot imagine reading sadder words than these. Here stands in the midst of a congregation of eternity bound sinners the Savior of the world. He has just demonstrated his saving power and grace. Yet, their hearts are so full of the world that they fear he may cost them their living. So they pray; but it was a very strange prayer. They prayed for him to leave them; and he did! Matthew tells us that the whole city was united in urging the Son of God to depart from them (Matthew 8:34). As long as this poor Gadarene was possessed of the devil, he was a terror to them all. Yet, they preferred to have the devil raging among them, to having the Lord Jesus manifesting his grace and mercy!

Do we not observe the same behavior day by day? Multitudes, who hear the gospel of Christ, like these Gadarenes, by their unbelief, say to the Son of God, "Depart from us!" Once, we did the same. Are we now sitting at the Savior's feet, clothed and in our right mind? Let us ever pray, "Blessed Savior, do not go away, and never let me depart from you."

Request Denied

"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 thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him."

(vv. 38-39)

This young convert wanted to go immediately with Christ and become a preacher; but the Lord would not allow it. How many there are who have mistaken a desire to be a preacher for a call to the ministry. It is not. The Lord Jesus sent him home to his family and friends with a message to deliver to them.

The Master would not allow him to go where he wanted to go, or do what he wanted to do; but he was given something far better, far more useful to do. God made him a witness to his own community. Now, that's a preacher! The Lord told him exactly what to tell those of whom he would be a witness. He was sent to tell his family and friends what great things the Lord had done for him and how he had compassion on him.

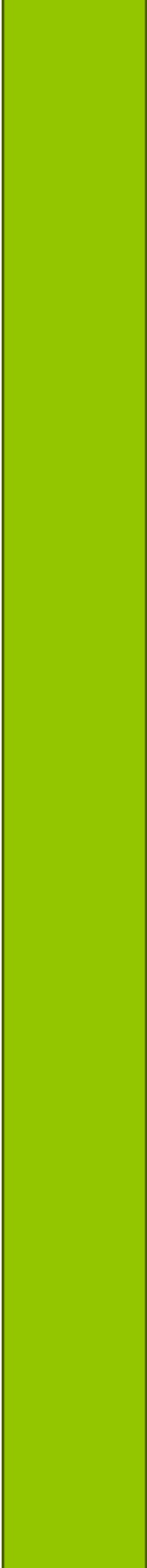
And this sinner, saved by the grace of God, did what the Lord told him to do. — "And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him." Notice the language here. He was told to publish what great things God had done. So he told everyone what great things Jesus had done. He knew that Jesus the man is God the Lord. He learned it by experience from the Lord God himself.

The Lord Jesus graciously used this man in Decapolis for the good of many. The next time the Savior came into the region, he was readily received. Many came to him. Many were healed by him. Multitudes were fed by his hand (Mark 7:31-8:1). Mercy came to many, because one sinner saved by grace faithfully told other sinners what great things the Lord had done for him!

Something Better

What a wonderful change grace had wrought in the Gadarene! He who was a madman, possessed of the devil, was immediately so transformed by the saving grace of Christ that he desired never to leave his Lord's side. Is this not the case with every child of God, when delivered from the power of darkness and translated from the cruel bondage of sin and death into the kingdom of God's dear Son? Once we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, we cannot but long to be "absent from the body, and present with the Lord." But this must not immediately be the case. "To abide in the flesh is more needful." Saved sinners are to go home to their lost families and friends, and proclaim "the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light."

Christ has, by his saving grace, made us members of his church upon earth. In this capacity we are to serve him and the souls of eternity bound sinners, until the time comes he has appointed to take us home. None of us will live here beyond that appointed time. And that appointed time cannot be too long, if God our Savior will be pleased to employ us for the welfare of his chosen. Mr. Hawker wrote, "Let this make us happy in waiting 'all the days of our appointed time, until our change come.'" Until then, may God give us grace to make it our lives' business to tell our family and friends, and all who will hear us, "what great



things the Lord hath done for us, and hath had compassion on us."

Don Fortner

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