

The unfolding of your words gives light.

## To Seek and to Save

### *An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke*

<sup>26</sup>Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee<sup>a</sup>. <sup>27</sup>And when He came out onto the land, He was met by a man from the city who was possessed with demons<sup>b</sup>; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs<sup>c</sup>. <sup>28</sup>Seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me<sup>d</sup>.” <sup>29</sup>For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man<sup>e</sup>. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, and yet he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert<sup>f</sup>. <sup>30</sup>And Jesus asked

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<sup>a</sup> 8:26 **Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.** The waters of Galilee had become the road that took Jesus on His ministry circuit. This time the field of service was on the east side of the lake. This area was also known as Gadara and Gergasa. The commonly accepted location of this event is the modern city of Kursi, a prominent fishing village in ancient times.

Matthew 8:28 (NASB) says “Gadarenes” instead of “Gerasenes.” There is no error here. Gerasa and Gadara are both historic locations in the same region, known by different names through the years. You might similarly call a Norwegian, a Swede or a Dane “Scandinavian” without contradiction.

<sup>b</sup> 8:27 **when He came out onto the land, He was met by a man from the city who was possessed with demons.** Matthew (8:28) says there were actually two demon-possessed men. Mark and Luke mention only one, but this is like reading three different news accounts of an event involving a number of people. Some of the stories look at a bigger picture while others focus on the most prominent person or segment of the story. Remember that Matthew and Luke focused on Jesus’ boat in the previous passage while Mark backed up the camera and showed us there were other boats as well.

The welcoming committee of Gerasa was not a group of smiling young people with fruit and flowers but two screaming, naked maniacs. The disciples may have been saying to themselves *He had to choose this spot to land.*

We picture demon possession as the simple habitation of a fallen angel within a person’s body. It is more than that.

<sup>c</sup> 8:27 **who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs.** You learn about the behavior of some people who are demon-possessed from this one statement:

- They care little for natural modesty.
- They are anti-social.
- They have a preoccupation with death.

<sup>d</sup> 8:28 **Seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me.”** Demons are personal beings, not impersonal vices like liquor or lust. They reason and feel and make choices. They recognize Jesus because He created them. They also know the Scripture well enough to understand that their destiny is destruction.

<sup>e</sup> 8:29 **For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man.** The presence of Jesus meant that the demons had to encounter someone of great authority who could command them to leave.

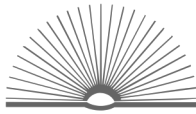
<sup>f</sup> 8:29 **it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, and yet he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the**

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him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him<sup>a</sup>. <sup>31</sup>They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>32</sup>Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and *the demons* implored Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission<sup>c</sup>. <sup>33</sup>And 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<sup>d</sup>.

<sup>34</sup>When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported it in the city and *out* in the country. <sup>35</sup>*The people* went out to see what had happened; and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they became frightened<sup>e</sup>. <sup>36</sup>Those who had seen it reported to them how the man who was demon-possessed had been made well<sup>f</sup>. <sup>37</sup>And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to leave them, for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat and returned<sup>g</sup>. <sup>38</sup>But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup>"Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him<sup>h</sup> <sup>i</sup>.

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**desert.** Another mark of demon possession can be extraordinary strength. Notice once again that the demon isolated the man from other people when given opportunity.

<sup>a</sup> 8:30 **Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him.** A Roman legion was a contingent of soldiers numbering anywhere from hundreds to thousands.

<sup>b</sup> 8:31 **They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.** The word "abyss" is used in the New Testament to refer to the abode of the dead (Romans 10:7) as well as a place of detention for evil spirits (Revelation 9:1-2, 11:17; 17:8; 20:1, 3). The fallen angels knew their Creator had authority to expel them from the physical earth.

<sup>c</sup> 8:32 **the demons implored Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission.** At least some demons must crave embodiment.

<sup>d</sup> 8:33 **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.** This shows that even demon-possessed humans maintain some personhood and ability to resist the destruction and death that demons seek. Animals have no such restraint.

<sup>e</sup> 8:35 **The people went out to see what had happened; and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they became frightened.** The presence of true power is frightful.

<sup>f</sup> 8:36 **Those who had seen it reported to them how the man who was demon-possessed had been made well.** Some thought the story was the pigs destroyed but others saw that a man had been rescued.

<sup>g</sup> 8:37 **all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to leave them, for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat and returned.** Why would anyone ask Jesus to leave them? While Jesus may have been perceived as bad for the local pork producers, Luke tells us He made the people afraid. Remember that Peter felt unworthy of Jesus' presence and asked the Lord to leave (Luke 5:8).

<sup>h</sup> 8:39 **"Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.** Jesus told the man that his place of ministry was to be at home. The best witness to the power of God is a changed life.

<sup>i</sup> 8:26-39 Believers with "a past" should remain humble about their past sinfulness. Staying away from the extremes of glorying in the disgusting details or pretending there were none, God is glorified when He receives credit for the changes He brings.

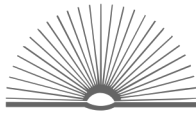
This man would now have no shame saying, "I am the man you remember as the demoniac of Gerasa." He could say that because he was that no longer. Paul reminded the Corinthians that

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they were formerly something else (1 Corinthians 6:11). Is your life a testimony of the power of God? Here are the ways you advertise that your Redeemer is mighty:

1. Learn to elevate Christ in everything you do. This means that you learn to recognize that there is no relationship or moment or object outside the scope of His rule (Colossians 1:18). It means you actually talk about His greatness outside of church like Jesus told the man to do.
2. Refuse to be ashamed of the gospel. A transformed (as opposed to *rearranged*) life is a clear witness to the resurrection of Christ (Romans 1:16). Jesus commanded the man to “describe” the change.
3. Seek to be a servant where you are. Where can you see that power? Your most effective place of service is most likely where you are right now. Content yourself that the sovereign God did more than allow you to be where you are. He sent you there.

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