

(Luke 8:26~39)

This morning we find ourselves, dealing with the subject of demon's...evil spirits. There seems to be an ever increasing interest in the "*Paranormal*" today. There's more and more TV shows coming out, pertaining to these things.

The bible clearly teaches, that demons, and evil spirits, are certainly real.

Hebrews 13...Tells us to entertain angels unaware...

This is an interesting story...by all appearances, looking at this situation from a distance, those who witnessed this event, saw what they thought to be, "*two ordinary men.*" True, the one they knew to be crazy, given his life story and how he acted, but nonetheless, no doubt, he was perceived as being an ordinary man, like me and you, with the exception, he had some *mental issues*. Obviously some severe ones at that, given some of the things he'd say, and how he acted, he needed to be locked up, put away, before he hurts himself or someone else. And according to the passage, that's exactly what the people of the town had tried to do, but to no avail, he'd just break the chains and run off again. (That makes you think about "*mental issues*" a little differently now doesn't it).

Though the contrast between the two men, couldn't have been any more different, given the soft, gentle nature of Jesus, and the wild, uncontrollable nature of this man, even so, no doubt those watching that day, thought they were looking at two ordinary men, when in fact, they were anything but... Hidden behind a "*veil of flesh,*" were two opposing kingdoms, spiritual beings, from two completely different worlds! These were anything but, ordinary men. Though they looked like you and me on the outside, inside, there dwelt supernatural spirits that are not from this world! In the one man, dwells the very "*Demons of Hell!*" The spirits of Hell had inhabited the body of this man. And in the other, Jesus, dwelt the "*Spirit of God,*" God in the flesh!

What the onlookers perceived to be an encounter between the lowly man from Nazareth, and their fellow countryman, whom they'd known all their life...was actually a face-to-face confrontation between the forces of heaven and the forces of hell. The only thing "*Earthly*" about these men, was their robes of flesh, meaning they both had "*human bodies.*" And the fact that the earth was their common battleground, but other than that, there was nothing human or earthly about either of these men. No doubt in my mind, that those "*looking on*" that day, (*those feeding the swine*) had no clue, that they were witness' to two worlds colliding. But that was exactly what was taking place...

Here we find a story, about a demon possessed man. Demons had literally taken over his body, and were making this man's life miserable. When you consider how this man must have suffered, how this poor man was tormented all these years, it's beyond imagination. Not only Luke records this account, but Matthew and Mark do as well. And when you combine the three accounts, the descriptions give a gruesome detail of torment on the life of this man. We learn that these demons had taken up residence in this man's body, for several years now, and he was completely defenseless against them. They literally had their way with him! We learned that he was wild, and could not be controlled by any man. Time and again, they would catch him, and chain him up, but he'd only break the chains and run off. We learn he lived in the tombs, similar to a cave, but these were man-made, and referred to a sepulchre. (The abode of the dead, "*What a fitting place*") Mark tells us that constantly, day and night, up in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones! Both tell us, that wore no clothing, but ran around naked... Think of the pain this man, and the shame that this man endured... Can you even begin to imagine, the agony and torment of the soul of this poor man?

I like to think, that when we read in verse 22, when Jesus decided to get into a ship and said, “*Let us go over to the other side of the Lake,*” I like to think that Jesus had this very man in mind! According to the testimony of scripture, everything Jesus said, and everything He did, He did so in accordance with the Will of the Father.

(Vs 26~28) ²⁶And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. ²⁷And 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. ²⁸When 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.

The encounter begins, that upon Jesus’ arrival, this demon possessed man, comes running up to him, and falling down before him, and begging for mercy, pleading with Jesus not to torment him. Mark actually writes that he fell down and “*worshipped*” him... Now that’s obviously not in the sense of adoration, but in the sense of recognition of who he was. He actually calls him by name, referring to Jesus as the Son of the most High God!

Which makes for a very interesting picture...considering the turn of events. For years, these demons had tormented and ravished the poor soul of this man, overpowering him, doing what they willed, in complete power over his life. But at the very moment they come into the presence of Christ, they cower down, in complete submission, crying out to him for mercy. To make it even more interesting, we learn that there were thousands of demons inside this mans body. When Jesus asked him what his name was, he answered “*Legion.*” Which is a Roman military term, speaking of an army unit consisting of anywhere from 3000~6000 men. They identified themselves to Jesus as Legion, declaring that there were thousands of demons inside this man’s body. This makes the event even more interesting, in that here we have thousands of demons from hell, cowering before Jesus Christ, begging for mercy...

Speaking of mercy, something that strikes me most as odd here, *is the way Jesus treated these devils*... Not at all the way you’d expect. Seemingly, he was very merciful to them. Three times they pleaded with him, and three times he honored their pleas. First they begged Him not to torment them. Next they pleaded with Him not to cast them into “*the deep.*” And then finally, they requested that He permit them to go into the swine. And He honored all three requests. I find that strange, not quite the way you’d think he respond. They certainly showed no mercy to this poor man, whose body they had taken over, so why would he show them any?

Well, the answer seems to lie in the dispensations of time... Referring to the different aspects of Gods’ plan of redemption, and the timing of each one. All of history, is merely the unfolding of God’s plan. The first part of God’s plan was the implementation of His Law! Which He did so through Moses, setting the precedent for righteousness. The intent behind sending the Law was to reveal men’s guilt before God, and establish the requirement of “*Blood*” for man’s sins! For thousands of years, it was ingrained in the lives of Israel, that their sins were atoned before God by the sacrificial offering of life! This was the dispensation of the Law, the time of the Law. Again, setting the precedent of the requirement of a “*Sacrificial offering for Sin.*” The next phase of the plan, was to send His son, to fulfill the Law, by giving himself as an offering for sin. The Law was given to point to Him, thus when he came, He fulfilled the Law. After His death on the cross, the next phase was ushered in, called the dispensation of Grace, the “*Time of Grace!*” Meaning that in keeping with God’s plan, from the time of His death on the cross, until He returns in the air, God extends His offer of Mercy and Grace towards sinners, offering them the free pardon of sin, to all who come to His Son! This time of Grace and Mercy is set in place by God, just one more aspect of His plan of redemption of mankind. And it will continue, until Christ returns, a day and hour no one knows, but the Father... But once that happens, it will usher in the dispensation of Judgment and Wrath...the time of judgment of men. In other words, God is withholding His judgment on the world,

reserving it you might say, until the end of this time of Grace. Tragically, many have the sense that they are “*getting away with their sin,*” because of a lack of judgment. Sin continues to abound more and more, as a result of what they think is no repercussions. But nothing could be more untrue. Fact is, God is keeping a record of the lives of men, that in time to come, will stand before Him and given an account.

But the hope is, that men will come repentance before that day... God does not want to Judge man, He does not want to pour out His wrath on man. It is clear by what He has done in sending His son. God’s hope is that men will hear the gospel of His Son, and repent, by coming to Christ, and be spared! But all who do not, whether they die before He comes back, or whether they are alive when He comes, either way, they will stand before God in the Judgment.

Now I’ve said all of that, to say this... It is in understanding the dispensations of God’s plan, that we understand why Jesus did not destroy these demons...but rather restrained His judgment on them. Keep in mind, at His coming to earth in the form of a baby, we entered the time of Grace, the time of Mercy. Jesus said in John 3, *¹⁷For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

The first visit of Christ was not to Judge and condemn...but to lay down His life for an atonement for sin, extending mercy and grace to all who will come. The only reason that Christ did not destroy these demons, and cast them into the “*Deep*” as they pleaded with Him not to...was merely for the fact, the TIME had not come yet.

(Vs 31) Notice, they pleaded with Him not to cast them into the “**Deep.**”

³¹*And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.*

“*The Deep*” is an interesting word... The Greek word used is “*Abyss*”...which refers to the “**Bottomless Pit**” mentioned in the book of Revelation. In Revelation 20, speaking of the end of time, when Satan is cast into the “**Bottomless pit**” and locked up for 1000 years. Speaking of the Millennial Reign of Christ on the earth, referring to the fact that at the end of the Tribulation period, that is to come on the earth, Christ will set up His kingdom on the earth for 1000 years, and His people will reign with Him. During that time, it states that Satan will be cast into the “*Abyss,*” the “*Bottomless pit*” and kept locked up for the entire thousand years. Listen to what it says will happen at the end of that 1000 year period...

(Revelation 20) ⁷*And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, ⁸And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. ⁹And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. ¹⁰And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, **and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.***

Interestingly, in our story, the demons begged Jesus not to cast them into the “*Abyss...*” Considering what John wrote here in Revelation, they KNOW what their fate is! Satan, and all his angels are aware of what awaits them. But in our story we’re looking at this morning, they do not know (as did no one else) of this time of Grace! The cross was a “*mystery*” to Israel, no one could see it coming. They only knew that Messiah was coming, and when He did, it would be for the salvation of His people, and the destruction of His enemies! Which is true, for that is exactly what will happen in the very near future... But what they didn’t see or understand, was He would come prior to that day, and offer up His life on a cross to rescue all who would believe on Him, and follow Him.

Given that, when these demons saw Jesus walking towards them...they immediately recognized who He was, and thinking that He had come to cast them into the “*Abyss*” the “*Bottomless pit,*” they pleaded with

Him for mercy... Little did they know, that they too would be the objects of God's mercy. But only because "**THE TIME**" is not yet come.

There fate in eminent...there's no escaping the fact, that in due time, they will be cast into the "*Bottomless pit*" along with their master. But until that TIME comes...the powers of darkness, evil and spiritual wickedness will continue to reign here on the earth. It is but for a season, for in due TIME, Jesus will come and judge and cleanse the world, in carrying out the final stages of God's plan.

Therefore, for the time being...He grants them their request...and permits them to enter the swine...

³³Then 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. ³⁴When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵Then 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. ³⁶They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

*³⁷Then 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. ³⁸Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹**Return to thine own house, and show 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.*

Beloved... Our Lord is not only Lord of Heaven and Earth, but He is Lord over Hell as well! The very forces of Hell are subject unto Him... Though Satan and his angels have dominion over the earth right now, though they overpower us, and inflict pain and suffering in our lives...***his days are numbered!*** Beloved, until Christ comes back, he will continue to kill and destroy, and torment the lives of people. Even we, who follow Jesus Christ, are not extinct from his attacks. But that God, we can be victorious through the power and grace of God!

Beloved, this passage was written to strengthen our faith... Don't miss this, remember, His disciples are watching all this. They had just witnessed His power over the wind and the sea...the forces of nature, and now, they witness His power over the forces of hell. At the mere fact of being in His presence, they tremble and cower in fear. Beloved, take heart...all things are under His feet!

As we come to this most interesting story, we need to put it in its proper perspective. This is the second of four consecutive events, Luke records, aimed at testifying of the "*supernatural powers*" of Jesus.

Just prior to this...Luke wrote of *His power over the wind and the sea*...

Here...Luke writes of *His power over the demons of Hell*...

Next...we see *His power over an incurable disease*...

And lastly, we see *His power over Death*...

Though each one has a specific teaching point, collectively they serve as a reminder that there is nothing outside His control and His power...***all things are under His feet!***