

## **Scripture Reading:**

**Luke 8:26** “Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. **27** And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. **28** When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?

I beg You, do not torment me!" **29** For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. **30** Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. **31** And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. **32** Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. **33** Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. **34** When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. **35** Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. **36** They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. **37** Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned.

**38** Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him.

But Jesus sent him away, saying, **39** "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you."

And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.”

# *Go & Tell What Jesus Has Done*

Thanksgiving is early this year which has everyone scrambling, but we are also approaching the end of “normal time” in the church calendar and will begin a new church year with the first Sunday of Advent in just two weeks!

As we have in the past, I have asked the members of Church of the King who are ordained Elders to share various Advent messages with us. Then we have Christmas and the Sundays that follow, so we will likely return to the Gospel of Luke the last week in January: That is where we began this journey through Luke and Acts earlier this year... How time flies!

If I had hurried just a bit more we would have taken this break in Chapter nine where Jesus brings His ministry in Galilee to a close. We are told in verse 51: “Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that HE steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.”

- Jerusalem: Where God directed Abraham to sacrifice his son, teaching him that God Himself would provide the sacrifice for sin.
- Jerusalem where David established His Kingdom and instructed his son Solomon to build the Temple.
- The City of Jerusalem which King Cyrus commanded God’s people to rebuild so that hundreds of years later, Jesus could set His face to go to the City where He was to be offered up for the sins of His people.

While that verse might be a more systematic place to pause, I think the two passages we will cover in these final two weeks before the Advent season will be a good reminder of what Luke is sharing...

The theme of Luke’s orderly account is that Jesus has come and that this changes everything:

- The sins of His people are forgiven
- The Church is established
- His Kingdom will fill the earth.

**As the New Heavens and New Earth are ushered in, we of necessity must also see that the old creation is passing away. God will judge those who have broken His covenant and failed to minister to the nations AND God will crush the head of the Serpent who will no longer deceive those nations.**

**Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee to confront these demons of the Gadarenes in this morning's account: Next week Jesus will return to the other side where he will be healing and restoring His people.**

- **In both cases, we will see the ravages of Satan and sin and the full restoration that Jesus has brought.**

**This morning we will focus on TWO simple lessons from this account!**

**Here we see Jesus reach briefly outside the nation of Israel.**

**This region is predominantly populated by Gentiles and there is no indication in any of the three Gospel accounts that would dispel this notion. Jesus has crossed this lake to confront Satan and remind us that His Gospel is going to the ends of the earth, including the Gentile nations:**

- **God's Kingdom will fill the whole earth, and the disciples begin to learn how in this morning's account!**

**The first important lesson is to see the incredible destruction that Satan and sin have brought upon the world: There is no conflict with Matthew: Critics of the Bible love to highlight this – But they want to have their cake and eat it too. [porch example] Luke may have talked with this man putting together his orderly account! This man knew the full force of evil!**

**We see with the swine that Satan and his demons destroy just for the sake of destruction [reference the three part series on Satan].**

**So here is the first Lesson: DO NOT play with demonic forces!**

**We must also notice & ponder what happens after the man is restored:**

- **His deliverance is quick and complete:**
- **By the time that the hog-herders ran to town and brought folks back out, this man is clothed and sitting calmly at the feet of Jesus!**
- **They are frightened by what they see and ask Jesus to leave**

**This should remind us that while the Gospel is by its very nature and definition Good News, it is NOT very popular with the world!**

**We should not be surprised when Christians are attacked as being narrow-minded, judgmental, and whatever other reactions we may see from those without Christ:**

- **People who are often simply afraid of what this Good News might do in their lives!**

**Were these town-folk afraid of the dramatic healing or stunned by the destruction of the hogs... We are not really told, but their message is clear:**

- **Jesus, please leave!**

**They are on dangerous ground: In the coming months we will see Jesus instruct His disciples to shake the dust off their feet when the cities of Israel reject the Good News: We looked at Proverbs chapter one a few weeks ago where Wisdom can be spurned to a point where she will NOT hear when the sinner cries out! BUT, as Paul tells Timothy, our God is a loving and merciful God “who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.” This is a lesson this restored man, and the Disciples of Jesus are about to learn first-hand:**

- **Jesus honors their request and returns to the boat.**
- **The man who was healed begs to come with Jesus to be His disciple**

**The response that came from Jesus might seem strange:**

- **Haven't we learned that we must leave all and follow Jesus?**
- **Did we not learn that we must be prepared to hate our Father and Mother if necessary for the advancement of the Kingdom?**
- **Didn't Jesus command the rich man to sell all and follow Him?**

**And yet here, Jesus refuses to let the man come with Him...**

**BUT he is refused for a very good reason with Jesus telling him, “Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.”**

**Here is our second lesson:**

- **WE, as the people of God, are to share God's Good News, and we are to do it however the Holy Spirit directs us to!**

- **Some of us may be called to be great evangelists or missionaries: Selling all that we have to follow Jesus**
- **Some may be called to stay home!**
- **We must be willing to let the Spirit direct us as Jesus did here in the Gospels!**

**Let me use the work we support in Russia as a good example of this important principle: First we should consider Blake & Cathy Purcell: Imagine you were Cathy's parents: Your child has been raised in a good Christian home, married a strong Christian man and has begun to raise a solid Christian family: Cathy is now pregnant with their third child:**

- **They announce that God has called them to move to Russia**
- **They will have no job security or much income**
- **They will live in an dilapidated SHARED apartment complex**
- **Neither she nor Blake knows any of the difficult Russian language...**

**And all this at a time when the communists were still in power in Russia!**

- **How would you have reacted as a parent?**
- **How would you advise them?**

**In so many ways they left all to follow Jesus and serve as a great example for others seeking to grow God's Kingdom!**

**However, we must also see that the Spirit of God directs ALL parts of His work. We could easily miss other important aspects of the story about this ministry in Russia that now has established a seminary, published helpful books authors like by Doug Wilson and James Jordon, planted churches and is now even beginning to share the Gospel with the Muslim world!**

- **Consider one other small part:**

**Some years before Blake and Cathy would marry, another couple from the south was beginning their life together: Unlike the Purcell's who had much to give up, Mike and Bettye Forester had VERY humble beginnings: In many ways it would have been much easier for them to have left all behind and become foreign missionaries – But that was NOT God's plan or calling. God took them in a different direction: Establishing**

**businesses, providing many opportunities for accumulating riches and gave them blessings and riches beyond their wildest expectations!**

**The moral of this part of the story is NOT that they too should have left all to serve God in Russia:**

- **God IS greatly using the Foresters for His work in Russia, and He did so by calling Mike to accept the chairmanship of the Slavic Reformation Society which now provides the support for Blake & Cathy and the various ministries in Russia!**
- **God is now using Mike's wealth, business & organizational skills and his many contacts to bring more support to Russia than Blake could have imagined!**

**These stories do not even begin to scratch the surface of how our awesome God works all things together for the good of His Saints there in Russia! [Must remember our lesson from Job last week about thinking that we have ALL of God's wonders figured out!] However, these examples do give us just a glimpse of why we MUST allow God to direct our paths.**

**As I said, our second lesson is:**

- **WE, as the people of God, are to share God's Good News, and we are to do it however the Holy Spirit directs us to!**
- **It IS the very heart of our being commissioned for the Lord's work each week!**

**However, in our flesh, we tend to have the wrong priorities most of the time: Often we quench the Spirit:**

**IF it is one of our children, or even a member of our church who is called to leave all, we are SO cautious, asking over & over "are you sure?"**

**We begin to pound them with such encouraging words, like**

- ⇒ **"it is TOO dangerous,"**
- ⇒ **"it is TOO expensive"**
- ⇒ **Or we ask great questions like: "have you considered what that would do to your children?"**

**Sadly, we often do much more quenching than encouraging!**

➤ **We miss obvious opportunities:**

When we hear about something like the story of the Purcells we think, “OH how I wish God would use me like that,” all the while ignoring those who need the Savior right in our own families, work places and neighborhoods!

➤ **Our vision can be very narrow**

- ❖ We all dream about having one of our children be the next Jonathan Edwards or Charles Spurgeon, mighty men used of God.
- ❖ We must ALSO encourage the Mike Foresters who came along side these great men to support their work
- ❖ We want miracles like Peter escaping from prison – NOT martyrdom like James
- ❖ And the most telling in our modern 21<sup>st</sup> Century church:

Why do we NOT have that same excitement and support for the young woman whose passion is to establish the faithful Christian home that will bear, nurture and prepare such great leaders?

Paul did NOT miss this point when he shares his vision for young Timothy; calling to his remembrance “the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.”

Churches for almost two thousand years have used the wisdom Paul shared with young Timothy in those two Epistles to instruct church leaders and guide the Shepherds of God’s sheep...

- But how often do we remember to think about faithful Lois and Eunice who were faithful to God’s covenant knowing that His promises were to them and their children... like Timothy!

I mentioned near the beginning that this man who was healed and the home and family that Jesus is now sending him back too, were most likely Gentiles:

- Jesus is giving His disciples and all of us a glimpse of what the great commission is all about: God’s Kingdom IS going to fill the whole earth!

**We are going to disciple the nations and this account is a beautiful picture of how that is done:**

- **Jesus was not looking for few brands to pluck from the fires of Satan's destruction:**
- **He has come to crush the head of Satan, destroy the old creation and bring in the New Heavens and New Earth**

**Jesus sends this man BACK to his family and friends with very simple instructions: "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." As much as this man wanted to go with Jesus, he faithfully obeyed and Luke tells us that, "he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him."**

- **This is why we must properly understand the Commissioning that is the final part of our divine worship service**
- **It is NOT just something that we tack on as a way to finish the service.**
- **Like the "The End" that comes up when a movie is finished or Bugs Bunny saying "that's all folks" at the end of his cartoons.**

**As we are commissioned, Jesus commands each of US to "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." We read a Scripture like the Great Commission or similar passages to remind us that God's Kingdom is to fill the whole earth and that we are the means that He will use: As Paul tells the Romans:**

**"For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"**

**This time of commissioning applies to each of US:**

- ⇒ **Not the person sitting next to us**
- ⇒ **Not those doing "full-time Christian service,"**



⇒ **Not those with more talent**

⇒ **Not those with more money**

⇒ **Not those with more time**

⇒ **Not with more opportunity...**

➤ **NO God is speaking to and commissioning EACH and everyone one of US!**

**After the commissioning Scripture is read, we then read together and also sing one of the Psalms that reminds us that we are in God's army: Where we are often reminded that God is the victorious General!**

**A good example is Psalm 76 which we will read & sing today, which concludes: "He shall cut off the spirit of princes; He is awesome to the kings of the earth!"**

**Then we receive the benediction, God's blessing placed upon us for this great work!**

**Finally we sing together the simple prayer that Simeon prayed as he held the baby Jesus in his arms: The Messiah that the Holy Spirit had promised he would see before his death.**

**Each and EVERY week as we sing this prayer and come to that line: "a light to lighten the Gentiles," We should remember this man who was told to "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you."**

**Just as Jesus sent this restored man back to his home and family, Jesus send US to be the lights that will lighten the Gentiles:**

**Let us go forth thankfully this week, shining brightly in whatever dark places God might send us:**

➤ **Proclaiming what great things Jesus has done for us!**

**Communion Meditation:**

*Acts 2:42* "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. *43* Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. *44* Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, *45* and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. *46* So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, *47* praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.