

Jesus Showed His Power over Nature and Demons

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand what it means to be a disciple. We saw that Jesus wants disciples who learn to walk by faith and not by sight. In this topic, we are going to see that Jesus showed His power over both the forces of nature and over demons.

Jesus and His disciples had left the crowds and were sailing across the Sea of Galilee. Matthew 8:23-27 says, “Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to *Him* and awoke Him, saying, ‘Lord, save us! We are perishing!’ But He said to them, ‘Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?’ Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. So the men marveled, saying, ‘Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?’”

Jesus and the disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee by boat. Suddenly, a great storm arose on the sea. The Sea of Galilee is in a very unique location. It is nearly seven hundred feet below sea level. It is south of Mount Hermon which is about nine thousand two hundred feet high. There are several narrow canyons that lead into the valley where the Sea of Galilee is located. In addition, very strong winds can blow through those canyons from May to October. As a result, those winds can cause sudden storms and very large waves on the Sea of Galilee. However, this storm must have been much worse than a normal storm because several of the disciples of Jesus had been fishermen who were used to such storms. We see that the storm was so severe that waves were going over the top of the boat. Meanwhile, the storm was not affecting Jesus. Mark 4:38 says, “But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, ‘Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?’” Here, we see that Jesus was in the back of the boat sound asleep.

The disciples were very fearful and woke up Jesus. They said to Him, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” Here, we see that those former fishermen and the others in the boat thought that they were going to die. Then, Jesus explained to the disciples why both they, and we, experience fear in our lives. Jesus just said, “Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?” When we are driven by events or people, our lives will be controlled by fear. When we are led by the love of Christ, because of our faith in Him, we will experience peace, even in the middle of a great storm.

Jesus then stood up in the boat. Mark 4:39-40 says, “Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still!’ And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, ‘Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?’” Here, we see that Jesus just spoke to the sea. Immediately, the wind was gone. The waves were gone. The sea had become so calm that it looked like there had never been even a breeze blowing on the water. Suddenly, the disciples were amazed. They had seen the power of Jesus over sickness and disease. They had seen His power over demons. Now, they had seen His power over the forces of nature. We see that Jesus used this event to help the faith of the disciples grow as they realized the greatness of His power.

Matthew 8:28-32 goes on to say, “When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed *men*, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, ‘What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?’ Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine

feeding. So the demons begged Him, saying, ‘If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine.’ And He said to them, ‘Go.’ So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.” The area of Gergesa was across the Sea of Galilee from the city of Tiberius.

We see that when Jesus and the disciples reached the other side of the Sea of Galilee, they were met by two demon-possessed men. Mark 5:2-5 adds some additional things about these men, “And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.” We see the effect that these demons had on these men. They were living in the tombs of the dead. They were exceedingly fierce. They would not let anyone pass close to them. They could not be bound with chains. They had often broken shackles and chains. They could not be tamed. They spent day and night in the mountains crying out. They cut themselves on the stones. These verses give us a picture of the destructive effects that demons can have in the life of a person.

The demons wanted nothing to do with Jesus because they realized that Jesus had the power to send them to immediate judgment. That was why they started crying out when they saw Jesus. We see that in their crying they were forced to recognize that Jesus is the Son of God. That is the reason why James 2:19 tells us, “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!” There were good reasons why the demons trembled. Some demons have already been sent to eternal judgment. Jude 6 says, “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.” The demons knew that they will one day experience eternal judgment but they did not want that judgment to begin immediately.

As a result, the demons asked for permission to go out of the men and into a nearby herd of swine (pigs). Jesus allowed them to go into the pigs, instead of going immediately to eternal judgment. We see that having the demons enter into them caused the pigs to act like they were insane. They immediately began to run quickly. They were close to a place where the Sea of Galilee had a steep bank down to the Sea. They ran down that steep place into the water and were drowned in the Sea of Galilee. This is a reminder that the goal of Satan and his demons is always the same. John 10:10 says, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.” The demons had tried to destroy the men and now they destroyed the pigs instead. Mark 5:13 says there were about two thousand pigs.

We see the reaction of the men who were taking care of the pigs. Matthew 8:33-34 says, “Then those who kept *them* fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what *had happened* to the demon-possessed *men*. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged *Him* to depart from their region.” The men herding the pigs were so filled with fear that they immediately ran into the city. They told the people what had happened to the pigs. Then, they told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed men. Mark 5:15 says, “Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.”

The people could see a dramatic change in the men who had been demon-possessed. They saw that the men were now sitting and talking with Jesus. They saw that the men were now wearing clothing. Most of all, they saw that these men were now in their right mind. Here, we see the transformation that Jesus is able to make in

the lives of those who are demon-possessed. Jesus is the One who has all authority. He is the One who is able to cast out the demons of those who are possessed. He is able to set them free from their bondage to Satan. John 8:36 says, ““Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”” Jesus is also able to restore people to their right mind.

The whole city heard about what had happened and they all came out to see the way that Jesus had changed and transformed the lives of these two men. However, they were not happy to see the lives of these men transformed. Pigs were considered an unclean animal by the Jews. Leviticus 11:7 says, “““And the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, *is* unclean to you.””” As a result, the Jews did not eat the meat of pigs. However, there was a Roman military base in that area. The Jews would not eat the pigs because they were unclean, but they would raise them and sell them to the Romans as a way to make money. Their pigs had been destroyed and they had lost the profits that they would have made by selling those pigs to the Romans. That was probably why they wanted Jesus to leave the area. Their profits from the sale of the pigs were more important to them than the lives of the men who had been transformed.

Those people were an example of many people today. However, Mark 8:36-37 warns, ““For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”” Today, many people are more concerned about their money or their other things than they are about the needs of people. In contrast, it should be our desire to see the lives of people transformed. Romans 12:2 says, ““And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”” First, we want to see the Lord transform our lives. Then, we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how Christ can transform their lives, so that together, we can share that same good news with others. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children develop a real desire to see the lives of people transformed by Christ.