

27. Jesus Cast Out Demons in Gadera

In our last topic, we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children how the Lord works in our lives and through our lives. This happens as we take our children with us as we serve the Lord. First, we saw that the Lord works through His Word as it is taught. Second, we saw that the Lord works in our lives as He helps us to understand the new relationship that we have with Him. Third, we saw that the Lord works in our lives as we learn how to respond to the experiences that He allows in our lives. Today, we are going to see that Jesus helped the disciples learn as He worked in the life of a man that had his body possessed by many demons.

After Jesus calmed the water on the Sea of Galilee, the boat with Jesus and the disciples continued to the other side of the lake and came to the area of Gadera where the Gadarenes lived. Luke 8:26-29 says, “Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. 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. 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!’ 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.” The first person that they met when they got to the other side was a man that had been possessed with many demons for a long time.

These demons caused the man to act like he was insane. He wore no clothes. He did not live in a house. Instead, he chose to live in the tombs of those who had died. In fact, Mark 5:5 says, “And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.” Demons are forced to recognize that Jesus is God. As a result, the man who was possessed with demons came and fell down in front of Jesus. Then, a demon began to speak through the man with a loud voice. The demon said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!” Here, we see that the demon knew who Jesus was. He also knew that Jesus had the power to send him to judgment immediately. As a result, the demon begged not to be sent to immediate judgment. The demon said these things because Jesus had commanded the demon to come out of the man.

We also see how the demons were working to destroy the life of the man that was demon-possessed. The word translated “seized” means *to catch and take by force so that the person is no longer in control of himself*. In order to protect themselves from this man when the demons seized him, the people of the city kept him under guard and had bound him with chains and shackles. However, the demons that had seized the man were so strong that they just broke the chains. Then, the demons had driven the man out into the wilderness so that they could try and destroy him in the wilderness. That was why he wore no clothes and lived in the tombs of the dead.

Luke 8:30-34 says, “Jesus asked him, saying, ‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘Legion,’ because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. 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. 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. When those who fed *them* saw what had happened, they fled and told *it* in the city and in the country.” Here, we see that Jesus then asked the demon his name.

Jesus asked the demon his name so that the disciples could gain a better understanding of demon-possession. The demon said that his name was Legion because there were actually many demons in the man. The word translated “Legion” was the name that the Roman government gave to a large group of soldiers of at least six thousand men. At the time of Jesus, a legion usually had sixty-one hundred foot soldiers and seven hundred twenty-six horsemen so that it was a total of six thousand eight hundred and twenty-six men. The name of this man helped the disciples to realize that a person could be possessed by many demons.

Then, the demons began to beg Jesus not to command them to go immediately to the abyss. The word translated “abyss” means *the bottomless pit where the unbelieving dead are sent today* (called “Hades” or “the place of torment” in Luke 16:23). The word is used twice in Revelation 20:1-3 where we read, “Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.” In these verses, we see that Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit for the thousand years that Jesus rules on the earth. We see that the demons begged Jesus not to send them to immediate judgment.

There was a large herd of pigs feeding on the mountain near the lake. The demons begged Jesus to permit them go into the pigs rather than the abyss. Pigs were considered unclean animals by the Jews. Deuteronomy 14:8 says, “Also the swine is unclean for you, because it has cloven hooves, yet *does* not *chew* the cud; you shall not eat their flesh or touch their dead carcasses.” However, some Jews were very willing to herd pigs and sell them to the Romans soldiers and their families or to other Gentiles to make money. Then, Jesus permitted the demons to go into the pigs when they left the man.

The demons then went out of the man and into the pigs. The man immediately saw how destructive the demons that had been in him were. Mark 5:13 says, “And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.” Those demons were so destructive that two thousand pigs committed suicide. The people who were herding the pigs saw what happened and ran for their lives. They told everyone that they met, both in the country and in the city, what had happened to their pigs.

Luke 8:35-39 says, “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. They also who had seen *it* told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. 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. Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, ‘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.” Many people went out to see what had happened.

They came to Jesus and the man that had previously been demon-possessed. He was a different man. We see at least three changes in his life. He was sitting at the feet of Jesus instead of crying and cutting himself. He was now clothed instead of running around naked. Most of all, he was now in his right mind instead of acting like an insane person. Jesus had earlier said in the synagogue in Nazareth, in Luke 4:18-19, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” This man had been a captive of the demons. Jesus set him free from the oppression of the demons and we see that his life was totally changed. When the people saw the changes that had happened to the man, they were filled with fear and asked Jesus and His disciples to leave.

Then, Jesus and His disciples got into the boat and left. However, as they prepared to leave, the man begged to go with Jesus. He just wanted to be with Jesus. Instead of agreeing to take the man with them, Jesus chose instead to tell him to go back to his own home. In fact, Jesus gave him some very specific instructions. Jesus said, “Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.” The people of that region were not ready to listen to Jesus for two reasons. First, we saw that they had been seized with a great fear. Second, they had seen their pig-raising business destroyed. We might say that they were more interested in pigs (and the money that they could make from selling the pigs) than they were in people. That lack of concern was especially shown toward this man who was having his life destroyed by the demons.

The man obeyed Jesus and went and told the whole city about the great things that Jesus had done in his life. This man knew that His life had been changed. Mark 5:19-20 says, “However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, ‘Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.’ And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.” Decapolis was the name they used for the ten cities in that area. Here, we see a key lesson that we want to help our physical and spiritual children apply in their own lives. We want to help our children learn to explain to others how the Lord is able to change and transform lives in any country or city. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to share how Christ transforms lives.