Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Maniac Who Became a Missionary, Part 1
Scripture: Luke 8:26-29
Code: 42-109

Let's open our Bibles to the eighth chapter of Luke's gospel. We come to a riveting, compelling, fascinating, gripping story, an incident in the life of our Lord which introduces us again to His divine power. Obviously the writer, Luke, is intending to write a history of Jesus Christ that proves that He is the Son of God, the promised Messiah, Savior of the world. And so Luke carefully records as do his compatriots, Matthew, Mark and John, sermons, incidents, occasions out of the life of Christ which demonstrate His deity. Luke is careful to show us that Jesus has power that belongs only to God, power to vanquish Satan himself, we've already seen that...power over the animal world, we've seen Him control the fish in the lake of Galilee...power over the wind and the water which we saw in our last passage in verses 22 to 25 as Jesus stopped a storm...power over disease, power over death and notably, for this morning, power over demons, the underworld, the forces of hell, the fallen angels who operate under the control of Satan in an effort to withstand the purposes of God.

If the Messiah is going to fulfill the prophecies that have been presented concerning Him, if He is going to bring a better world, if He's going to bring a glorious kingdom of righteousness and peace, if He is going to bruise the serpent's head, if He is going to stop history and start it all over again in the glories of a millennial kingdom, if He is going to bind Satan as the writer of Revelation tells us and all of his hosts, then He must demonstrate He who claims to be that Messiah that He can vanquish the forces of hell. And we've seen it in individual situations, but now we're going to see it in a massive way. The text before us from verse 26 to 39 is the greatest of all deliverances that Jesus did, at least those recorded in the gospels. Here is one man who is the focus of the story who is possessed by at least 2,000 demons. I call this story, "The maniac who became a missionary."

Now if you were looking around for missionary candidates, you probably wouldn't pick Charles Manson. But this man demonstrates the same bizarre kind of behavior that Charles Manson demonstrated...deadly. And to get a little more contemporary, if you were looking for a missionary candidate, you probably wouldn't pick Andrea Yates who drowned her five children, nor would you pick John Wayne Gasey who chopped up people. And if you're looking for, you know, the right raw material, a candidate to be a missionary, you don't go to the maniac category unless you're Jesus and have the power to totally transform. And if you want to make a statement about what your power is like, that's the best place to make it. The more obvious the transformation, you would think, the greater the evidence, and certainly that is so.

I don't know about you but these kinds of things, these encounters with Jesus and the spiritual supernatural realm, these launches into what is transcendental to us, these episodes that get us out of our space/time continuum fascinate me. Now you know me well enough to know I like reality, I'm not in to fantasy. And you have to push me very hard to read any kind of novel, even one that's not sort of sci-fi or fantasy oriented. I...I would rather deal with reality. There's too much truth I have yet to learn to muddle my mind with fiction. But obviously, everybody is concerned to know what seems to be just beyond their reach, and so there is among people a fascination with the transcendent, a fascination with the other world. From Rollins books on Harry Potter, series which purport to be white magic, to Stephen King's bizarre macabre frights that go into the dark and deadly black underworld, to Superman and Batman and the latest in the genre, Spiderman, and for some of you back to Twilight Zone, and for some of you back to Alfred Hitchcock, and for none of you, back to Greek legends and Roman fables, for some of you Tolkien and C.S. Lewis. Some of you turn on that silly sci-fi channel and get lost in those bizarre fantasies. People are always drawn to the supernatural, they're always drawn to the power and mystery that is just beyond their comprehension.

But on his own, no matter how clever, and no matter how imaginative, on his own, man even aided by demons will come to a misunderstanding of that realm. In the first place, on his own he can't get outside of time and space and so all he can come up with is fantasy. And if demons get involved, to his fantasy will be added other supernatural deceptions. So man is left then to muddle in his own imagination or to be deceived by demons, unless he goes to the one true source for understanding the supernatural, the Bible. It's the only place. All that can ever be known is what God has chosen to tell us and He told it all in one book. It is written by God to tell us everything that He wanted us to know about the supernatural world, about what is beyond time and space, beyond the confines of our experience and understanding. And the Bible is filled with those kinds of supernatural realities. Creation itself is the one that explodes on the scene in Genesis 1 as in the beginning God creates and the supernatural creates time and space and everything that's in it. And then the rest of the Bible features all kinds of insights into God, His character, His purposes, His work, the holy angels that surround Him, the demons that fell and now under the leadership of Satan do everything they can to thwart His purposes.

But the main supernatural event in the Bible, the main supernatural event is not the creation as incredible as it is, it's not any of the miracles that dot and punctuate certain points of the Old Testament, the main supernatural event in the Bible is the incarnation. It is that event that we know as the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God in human form, God taking on human life. That's the main event because it is Christ who more than anything else shows us God. He is the express image of God. He is the exact reproduction of God in human form. You want to know what God is like, you look at Him. And around the ministry of Jesus Christ while He is showing us deity, we also begin to get a better understanding than ever before of the work of demons because with the incarnation and the arrival of Jesus Christ to, as it were, validate and ratify the covenant of salvation, the demons crank up their efforts. And furthermore, they are exposed.

It is a curiosity to me that if you go through the Old Testament you're not going to find demon-possessed people with the exception of the very unique situation in the sixth chapter of Genesis where the sons of God and cohabitated with the daughters of men, that unique situation where apparently some fallen angels came upon some women, apart from that and those demons, you remember, according to what Peter said and Jude said were put into everlasting chains for doing that but apart from that you don't have any demon-possessed people in the Old Testament. You have a lying spirit, you have the appearance of a medium in connection with the demon, but you don't have people manifesting that they're full of demons. Interestingly enough that after the four gospels, you only have two occasions, Acts 16 and Acts 19, where you have a demon-possessed situation. And it's never even referred to in the epistles of the New Testament, never referred to. It wasn't an issue in the churches to which the apostle Paul wrote, or John wrote, or Jude wrote, or Peter wrote or James wrote. But in the life of Christ and in the three years of His ministry there is a manifestation of demon possessions that is unlike anything in all of human history, to be exceeded only by the manifestation of demonic power in the time yet to come called the Great Tribulation, just prior to Christ's Second Coming. And God Himself will aide that manifestation by opening up the pit of hell and the place of bound demons called the pit, the bottomless pit, the abussos, the abyss and letting it belch out some demons who have been bound there so that there is a greater force of demons in the time of the Tribulation than ever before and they are allowed to run rampant over the earth in ways prior to which they have been restrained.

So the kind of demon possession that you see in the gospels is unique. You don't see it in the Old Testament, you don't see it except twice in Acts in that transition during the time of the apostles, you don't see it after that in the epistles, you don't see it again until it explodes in the time of the Tribulation just prior to the return of Jesus Christ, at which time He binds Satan and his demons for a thousand years and then reigns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords in millennial glory.

So what you see then in the gospels is a unique phenomena. Now I want to take it a step further so you understand what we're saying. It doesn't mean demons aren't around. It doesn't mean they're not doing what they desire to do. They do. Satan is the prince of the power of the air, there is a wrestling with demons that is going on, a fight with principalities and powers, etc. The forces of hell are active. The evil spirits of fallen angels are moving and plying their trade. They're withstanding the purposes of God, such as we saw in Daniel, you remember, so that God sometimes dispatches angels to deal with them. They are there. But listen to this, they prefer anonymity. They would rather that you would characterize that behavior as postpartum blues. They would far rather that you would define that behavior as the effect of child abuse or a failure to take your medication. They really don't want you to know they're there. They don't want to be exposed. But in the presence of Jesus they had no option. And what happened was Jesus just being there confronted them and they gave up their anonymity unwillingly by the sheer force of His personality. Jesus walks into a synagogue in the fourth chapter of Luke, as we learned. He walks into the synagogue, there is a man

there, Jesus is preaching the gospel that He came to set the prisoners free, to give sight to the blind. He came to give spiritual wealth to the poor. He came to free the oppressed from their burdens. The poor prisoners, blind and oppressed, this is the acceptable favorable year of the Lord and He's preaching the gospel and this demon just blurts out of this guy, "HA, what do we have to do with You?" And in the presence of Jesus Christ, he cannot restrain his fear. He was so terrified at the presence of the Son of God that he exposed himself and that happened again and again and again in the encounters that Jesus had with the demon possessed during the time of His life. They're back in a clandestine fashion today and that's where they prefer to be and they would like us to, as I said, define all these things as psychological issues.

Look at somebody like Charles Manson. Why do you think he puts a cross on his head and claims to be Jesus Christ? How more could you discredit Jesus Christ than to make Him in the image of Charles Manson. Who do you think wants to do that? Why is it that the most wacky and bizarre of these people have some twisted kind of Christianity? Because that's what hell intends to accomplish, to diminish the glories and the purities of the Christian gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ.

So when Jesus began His ministry, wherever He went and people were possessed of demons, there was the potential for immediate exposure. Here came the power of God, the presence of God. And I will tell you this, all demons are fundamentalists, I think they're even premillennialists. They all have the right theology, as we'll see in the story. It's one more time, as we come to this passage, Jesus confronts a demon-possessed man.

Now remember, there's never been anybody like Jesus because God never came into the world in human form but once. This was so unique that it stopped history in its tracks and history started all over again and everything before Jesus is B.C., and everything after is Anno Domini, the year of our Lord. Oh by the way, once again in the future history will stop again, it will stop again, not at an incarnation but at a glorious return when Christ stops A.D. history, as we know it, destroys all the ungodly and establishes His Kingdom. And then we'll go from B.C. to A.D. to what I like to think of as B.K., Basileia Kurieuo, the Kingdom of our Lord. And when that thousand-years of history ends, then comes the new heaven and the new earth, and there are no calendars. But for the moment, Jesus has invaded the world, God in human flesh, and displaying power over Satan proves that He can bring the Kingdom and bind the enemy and bruise the serpent's head, which was the original promise in Genesis 3. We see it in this story.

Verse 26, "He sailed to the country of the Gerasenes which is opposite Galilee, and when He had come out onto the land He was met by a certain man from the city who was possessed with demons who hadn't put on any clothing for a long time, was not living in a house but in the tombs. Seeing Jesus he cried out and fell before him and said in a loud voice, 'What have I to do with You, Jesus Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me.' For He had been commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man for it had seized him many times and he was bound with chains

and shackles and kept under guard, yet he would burst of his fetters and be driven by the demon into the desert. Jesus asked him, 'What's your name?' And he said, 'Legion,' for many demons had entered him. They were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss. Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons entreated Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission. And the demons came out of the man, entered the swine and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. And when the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported it in the city and out in the country. And the people went out to see what had happened and they came to Jesus and found the man with whom the demons had gone out...from whom the demons had gone out sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind and they became frightened.. Those who had seen it reported to them how the man who was demon-possessed had been made well. And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to depart from them, for they were gripped with great fear and He got into a boat and returned, but the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him but He sent him away saying, 'Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you.' And he went away proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him."

Now that's the maniac who became a missionary. It's an incredible story. I want to show you three displays of power in the story. I want to show you the destructive power of demons, first point...the destructive power of demons. Secondly, the delivering power of Jesus. And thirdly, the damning power of sin. So we're going to look at a display, the power of demons, the power of Jesus, the power of sin.

In Luke 11:20 Jesus said this, "If I cast out demons...I love this...by the finger of God, then the Kingdom of God has come to you." You know, usually in the Old Testament when God talks about His power, He talks about His arm, right? The arm of God. Jesus said, "I can conquer the kingdom of hell with a finger." And if you're...you know, Jewish exorcists had the...made the effort, not successfully, they had their little incantations as exorcists do, have through the years in the Catholic Church and even now in some segments of evangelicalism, accomplishing virtually nothing, since they cannot command demons, they are neither Christ nor the apostles to whom He delegated that power. But they make their little efforts to do that. There were Jewish exorcists, you remember, in the nineteenth chapter of Acts and the demon simply said to them, {"Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are you guys? Are you kidding?" Jesus said, "Look, if I can cast out demons with a finger of God, then you know the Kingdom has come." They made all these efforts to do it unsuccessfully. They had no power over the kingdom of darkness, nor over the souls of those who were held captive by that kingdom. In contrast to that Jesus said, "If my finger can do it then you know the Kingdom has come." First John 3:8, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose to destroy the erga, to destroy the works," the text says, it actually means to destroy the action, the undertaking, the effect and the result of Satan.

So the Messiah comes to undo Satan's work, to deliver men's souls, to...He comes to the poor prisoners, blind and oppressed, to end their poverty, to end their imprisonment, to end their oppression, to end their blindness. And He can do it, as you see here. Now this is not like any other of the accounts of Jesus and the demons because there are so many here. Before we're done you're going to see that there were at least 2,000 demons living in one man. You say, "It must be crowded." They're spirit beings, not material beings. This man is tormented by at least 2,000.

Let's look at the first point, next week we'll finish with the second and third, but for this morning let's look at the first point, the destructive power of demons. Starting in verse 26, they sailed, remember now, the storm was still by Jesus, they finished their little trip across the north section of the lake, the Sea of Galilee, really seeking some rest from the huge crowds that just literally never left Jesus alone. Jesus had gotten in a boat with the apostles and disciples. There were a lot of other boats. There was a little flotilla of followers of Jesus going away for some rest and perhaps some private instruction. Jesus, remember now, from this point on in His ministry in Galilee spoke only in parables and only to His own disciples did He explain their meaning so there was always a public meeting and then a private meeting when the explanation was given. So off they went following Jesus on a clear night only to find that a storm came up. Jesus stilled the storm. It had blown them off course so they have to sort of regroup, head the direction they need to go and they arrive there probably just at daybreak...sailing to the country of the Gerasenes which is opposite Galilee, it's opposite the Galilee which had to do primarily with the western part, the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. So they're across on the eastern shore to the country of the Gerasenes.

I just need to comment on that. Luke and Mark use Gerasenes. Matthew calls them Gadarenes. Some Greek texts use Gergesenes. I don't want to get into a big convoluted explanation of all of that. I think it's relatively simple. There was a town there about six miles due east called Gerasa, or Gergesa, hence the Gerasenes, or the Gergesenes. The modern name is Kersa[?]. There was another town called Gadara which explains why some of the writers refer to it as Gadara. Gadara was further south down the lake and further inland. It wasn't on the edge of the lake and so it doesn't provide the right topography to be the place where the pigs ran down the hill into the lake. Gadara, however, was a larger town and gave the name to the region so that Gerasa or Gergesa was a town in the country of the Gadarenes. So all of these terms essentially describe the same area. The focus is on the town of Gergesa or Gerasa because it suits the incident so perfectly. There are around Kersa, modern Kersa in the hillsides many tombs still to this day to be seen and there is a slope that descends to the lake where the pigs could run, tombs being the place where this man was dwelling.

And so, they come to the land, verse 27, immediately they are met by a certain man from the city who was possessed with demons. It's just daybreak. It's just early dawn. They have been sailing through the night. They have just been delivered from the most incredible thing...storm that could ever be imagined, a furious kind of storm. So bad that they thought they were going to drown, and they were

fishermen used to being on the water and they knew a deadly storm when they were in one and they were in one. They had seen somebody do what nobody can do, not even in modern times can we control the wind and the subsequent action of the water. They had seen this massive miracle, certainly their shock and their joy and their wonder was continuing as they landed on the shore, docked their little boats, walked up the beach near the town of Gerasa.

Immediately they are met, certainly by divine appointment, by this man possessed with demons. In Matthew 8:28 Matthew says there were two men...there were two men. He had a compatriot, perhaps equally demon possessed and equally bizarre, and equally deadly and dangerous. But in all the accounts, the one man becomes the focus, so we really don't know what happened to the second man. Two of them appeared, the focus of the story is on one man. Perhaps he was included in the deliverance, perhaps he was not.

I like to think of this man, I guess the best word I can think of to use is maniac. The definition of maniac is a person exhibiting extreme symptoms of wild behavior. And that's exactly what you have here. This man is so out of control as not to even be defined in human terms. It's just so bizarre, so far beyond. You can understand a human being who gets mad and kills somebody he's mad at, you can understand that. You can understand vengeance. You can understand retaliation. You can understand gangs. You can understand war. But it's almost impossible within the normal sense of humanity to understand how people massacre tens, twenties and thirties, how they chop them up and hack them up and etc., etc., etc. And how they drown their children, and you know what the horror of those things are...those things seem to be something other than human kinds of impulses. And they are...and they are. Here we're going to see the greatest exhibition of power over the forces of hell to this point in Scripture. Jesus vanquishes this mass of demons in this horrific individual.

When we were studying chapter 4, you remember, I gave you some material on demon possession. And what I would encourage you to do if you want to sort of fill in the gaps, you weren't here, get the series I did on Luke 4:31 to 37 and it covers in breadth the theology of demon possession. Every time we run into another demon-possessed person I don't want to have to repeat all that but I would encourage you who didn't hear that to get it so that you understand this phenomenon. Essentially it is defined in Scripture under four different words or phrases.

The expressions used to describe this kind of situation are one, having a demon. That's the most common one, used 16 times. It's not a form of mental illness, it is actually a supernatural phenomena in which a living spiritual being, a fallen angel kicked out of heaven because of his rebellion with Satan, who now works for Satan to stop the purposes of God and captivate men's souls and hold them as much as they can against the influences of the gospel, these beings literally take over a person's mind and body. They are personal, rational spirits. They talk, they scream, they create all kinds of thought patterns and behavior patterns that are described in the gospel record. It is not a physical disease, although some physical ailments and physical torments were associated with it. It is

not even that these people were the worse sinners and therefore they got the most demons because sometimes children were demon possessed, and obviously children are not the worse sinners. But you have a number of accounts in the New Testament where children were controlled by demons to the point where the demons were trying to kill them, such as one boy whom the demon kept throwing into a fire.

It is a kind of torment that comes upon people and the question immediately comes up, "Well how do people put themselves in a position to get that?" And the answer to that question is, "I'm not sure." I do know this, that anybody without God, anybody without Jesus Christ is a child of Satan, is a member of the kingdom of darkness. Anybody without Christ then is under the rule of Satan and under the influence of his demons and therefore anybody who is a sinner who is not protected by salvation through Jesus Christ is therefore vulnerable. What the entry points are, I'm not sure I can be explicit about in every case, I can say this, that as you study the Scripture idolatry seems to be a way to throw the door open, tampering in the occult seems to be a way to throw the door open. But that is not so say the most tormented people were necessarily the worse sinners. This is a Gentile man outside of Israel, so he was involved if in any religion at all in some pagan religion. It may have been as most of them were occultic and that may have thrown the door open to him, but he's not any worse. In fact, as the story ends, the people who are the worse people in the story are the townspeople who were sane enough to bind this man up but not willing to believe in the man who delivered him, the God/Man Jesus Christ. So who is really the maniac?

I don't know that there's any way to say except that God allows Satan to do his work and demons have their agenda. And within God's allowance, they pick and choose who they will. It isn't that these people are worse sinners because what happens to them is not just an expression of their evil heart, it is for them a demonic torment. This man wasn't happy about his condition, he was tormented by it.

So you have that phrase "to have a demon." You also have that expression of "being demonized," which is a verb used 13 times, means the same thing. There are two other phrases that are used to describe this condition, "possessing an unclean spirit," and "being afflicted with unclean spirits." All demons are unclean spirits. There's not a clean spirit among the fallen angels. So it simply describes a person under the control of the demon whose own personality has become passive. The demon takes over and the person is afflicted by this...that is tormented, tortured by this, disturbed by it, traumatized by it. It's not a pleasurable experience for them, it's not something that the person would seek. So when you're reading about demon possession, you're talking about a person having demons inside of him, working through his mind and body and voice. And demons have always done it. I don't know that it's always easy for them, you remember, because in Matthew chapter 12 verse 43 to 45 it says the demons seek rest and don't find any. So there may be more of this demon possession that demons want to do and that may be part of the restraining work of the Spirit of God in this age, that when the restrainer is taken away in the Tribulation time, there will be a greater manifestation of this

demon possession then there is even now.

Now the person is not necessarily more evil and that gives entrance to the demon, but once the demons come in then evil becomes accelerated. Evil becomes manifest in some cases beyond what can even be discussed or described or understood humanly. They can become so infested by demons, so literally dominated by forces of unclean spirits as to conduct themselves in ways, that we've been pointing out, that are absolutely beyond description humanly. And that's this man. Let's look at some of the characteristics of his conduct.

First of all, it says he hadn't put on any clothing for a long time. You say, "Well that's really strange, what's that about?" Well it's about perversion. It's about shamelessness. You remember in the nineteenth chapter of Acts, I think it's about verse 16, the evil spirit there pounces on these people and strips off their clothes? From the time that Adam and Eve sinned there has been a shame associated with human nakedness because from the time of their sin on they had lustful and perverted thoughts. And they knew that. Immediately the first thing they did was make coverings. But theirs was only temporarily made out of leaves, God came, killed an animal which is a picture of His Son who had become the final covering, and He covered them with a more permanent garment. And from then on uncovering someone's nakedness was tantamount to sexual evil. That little phrase "uncovering someone's nakedness," you find it in the Pentateuch, it's tantamount to sexual perversion and evil. The Bible is very clear about clothing and about modesty and about covering. Nakedness is a sign of shamelessness. It is a sign of sexual perversion. I'm talking all the way from the naturalists at the nudist colony to the pornographers at the other end and everything in between. It's aberrant. But not only was it aberrant, it was also a torment for the man. It gets cold and it gets hot and there are extremes of weather in that part of the world. This was a kind of torment for him as the demons had dominated him and turned him into a shameless, perverted, evil person.

Revelation 3:18 speaks of the shame of nakedness. And the poor man had lived long, it says right here, he hadn't put clothes on for a long time. Furthermore, he was suicidal. He was a danger to himself. Mark 5:5 says, "Night and day he was gashing and hacking at his naked body with sharp stones." He was mutilating himself because Satan is a murderer, is he not? He is a killer. He is an abaddon, he is a destroyer. And his demons are the same. Here is a man literally taking sharp rocks and gashing his body. Mark 5:3 and 4 says, "Nobody could control him, the demon power was too great. He was violent and he was not only harmful to himself but he frankly was absolutely deadly to other people because he had murderous intent." In the account in Matthew it says he along with his friend, the two of them, were so exceedingly violent that no one could pass by the road. You couldn't even walk along the road below where they were because they were so violent they would come screaming down the hill. It says they would scream, they would shriek, run down the hill nakedness with the intention of doing harm, taking life. They are really the most manifest bearers of the mark of satanic personality. They would then stay up in their tombs, as we'll see, and when people came on the road screaming and shrieking in nakedness, they would run down the hill with the intent to attack,

to maim and to kill. This is what Satan wants to do.

Now it says he was not living in a house but he was living in tombs. Obviously you couldn't have somebody like this in a house. What would we do with him today? What would we do with somebody like him? We'd put him in prison, right? We'd put him in prison and then you have to isolate him so they can't get near anybody, or put him in a padded cell. I remember some years back when people who behaved like this were put in straight-jackets, remember that? I've seen people in those things in mental institutions. Now today what is done with people who have this kind of potentiality is they put them on drugs and when they slaughter a bunch of people, such as the Andrea Yates thing, we say the problem was, "She didn't take her medication." Demons can't be medicated but since the human body can be medicated, it becomes less useful to them when it's medicated. But in those days they couldn't control them with medication. They didn't have a mental institution to put them in, they didn't have a padded cell to put them in.

So what did they do? Well it tells us what they did. They did the only thing they knew to do, drop down to verse 29. "The unclean spirit," and there was certainly more than one, that's sort of collectively speaking, "seized him many times," second sentence in the verse, "and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard." That was the only thing they knew to do, to chain him, tie him up. This is a man who frightens everybody. This is the man whose got to be removed from society. There isn't a prison, there isn't a mental institution. There aren't any drugs to give him. And so the only thing they know to do is to tie him up, to put him in chains because this evil spirit, it's an imperfect tense verb, seized him many times again and again and again and again. And I guess there were these paroxysms of rage the people would see from time to time and then he would go back into the tombs. He was guarded because they had to keep him from getting near the public...extremely dangerous. Everybody understands that people like that have to be restrained, but look at this man. It says, "Yet...at the end of verse 29...he would burst his fetters and be driven by the demon into the desert."

No matter what they tied him up with, he broke the chains. What is that? I suppose that's the frenzy of the man, the chaos of the man, the adrenalin that flowed in that tormented man that gave to him the kind of strength that you read about when people escape from very difficult circumstances and manifest the kind of strength that's not normal. This is chaos at its worse. This is irrationality at its most vivid. This is a horrible, horrible condition for this man.

In the fifth chapter of Mark again, and you can read those two comparative passages and fill in other elements of the story, it says, "No one was able to bind him even with a chain because he had often been bound with shackles and chains and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces and no one was strong enough to subdue him." And then the next verse says, we noted, "Constantly night and day among the tombs and in the mountains crying out and gashing himself with stones." Here's the maniac. This is the last candidate that you would choose to be a

missionary, but the best one to demonstrate the transforming power of Jesus Christ, right?

Verse 28, he and his friend see somebody down below the tombs. It's Jesus and the disciples who have come across in their little group of boats. And in their normal fashion, the demons energize them and in their crazed maniacal way, down the hill they come screaming and shrieking until they see who it is. Verse 28, "And seeing Jesus..." Now let me tell you something. That man, whoever he was, he doesn't have a name, didn't know Jesus and Jesus by His physicality was indistinguishable from anybody else. In spite of what you've seen, He did not have a halo, there wasn't a glow somewhere over His head. The man didn't know Jesus but who did? The demons did. And seeing Jesus the man's vocal cords had long ago been commandeered by the evil spirits, out of this man there is a spokesman demon who speaks on behalf of the rest, who cried out. There's a shriek here. "Whoa!" And he knows exactly who it is and so do all the other demons. And then it says, "Not only does this voice scream out but the man under the influence of these demons falls before Him."

Unfortunately in Mark 5:6 it says, "When he saw Jesus from afar he ran and worshiped Him." I hate that translation. He didn't worship Him, proskuneo means to fall down, that's the verb. It means to bow at someone's feet, it is an admission of respect, submission to one greater. It's not true worship, demons don't worship, can't worship, wouldn't worship. They know the truth and they hate it. They know who Christ is and they hate Him. They know who God is and they hate Him. They know who the Holy Spirit is and they hate Him. But at the same time they know that Christ is their sovereign, and their Lord, and so the eternally damned spirits scream when they see Jesus, the last one they want to see, the one who holds their eternal destiny in His powerful hands. And then they fall down knowing that He has the power and authority to sentence them, to execute them, to eternally incarcerate them in the lake of fire that's been prepared for the devil and his angels, as Jesus put it in Matthew 25. They know He has the power to do that and they know the plan is that He will do that. And so it's just like James 2:19, "The devils believe and...what?...shudder, tremble." They collapse and the man goes down when they go down.

And the demonic representative of the group says in a loud voice because panic has set in, just like in chapter 4, panic...the demon is panicked because he's in the presence of his sovereign, he's in the presence of his executioner and he's in panic. "What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?" I'm telling you, the demons' theology is orthodox, they know who Jesus is. There were disciples there who weren't sure. The demons know. It is a strange and bizarre testimony to the reality of who Jesus Christ is. "What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?" It's very much like that other demon in the fourth chapter who said essentially the same thing. In chapter 4 the demon said, "What do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth, I know who You are, the Holy One of God." And here in an amazing way God gives testimony to the identity of His Son through demons. Amazing.

By the way, they are timeless, they are ageless. They were created at one time, they do not reproduce. They are as old as creation. They have vast knowledge. They were originally holy angels. They have vast knowledge of the personality of God and the Godhead, and they knew exactly who Jesus was.

"What do I have to do with You, Jesus? What's this all about?" As if to say, "Why are You here? What's this about? I beg You, do not torment me." He calls Him "the Son of the Most High God." We've discussed that term because it was used in chapter 1 when the angel came to announce the birth of the Messiah, he said, "He would be the Son of the Most High God and God would give to Him His Kingdom." It's a New Testament term taken from the Old Testament, the Most High God is El Elyon, it means "God, the sovereign one, God the sovereign Lord." And so what they're saying is, "Son of the sovereign Lord." Often in the Old Testament the Most High God is followed by the statement, "Possessor of heaven and earth." They know this is the Lord of heaven and earth. This is the creator God in human form. This is God the Son, the One who is Most High. The demons knew Him well. Even Satan knew Him well. Remember back in chapter 4 when Satan confronted Him, he said, "Since You are the Son of God, do this...do this. Since You are the Son of God do this...do this." The devils know exactly who He is. The Mormons might not, the Jehovah's might...Witnesses might not, even the Jewish people might not know who He is but the devils know who He is. And the demons know who He is. They know their judge. They know their sovereign Lord. They know their executioner. They know their freedom is temporary. They know their power is confined and delegated. They know they are headed for eternal torment in a lake of fire. They know that that lake of fire has been prepared for them. The book of Revelation hadn't been written yet when this happened, but that demon knew enough to know that Christ was to be his executioner.

"What do You want with us?" they say. Why do they ask that if they know all that? Because Matthew tells us they added this little phrase, "Before the time." In other words, aren't You a little early? I'm telling you, they have an accurate eschatology. They really do. They say, "Jesus, You're early. We've got more time. What are You doing here? You're supposed to be over there in Israel dying. And we're going to work on a way to keep You there when you get dead. What are You doing here? What are You doing confronting us?" This is before the time. What time? The time of their judgment. There is a lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and in Revelation...you read Revelation chapter 20 and even the end of chapter 19 and you'll see about that lake of fire and how ultimately the beast and the false prophet as well as Satan and all his angels are going to be cast in to that lake of fire. They know that judgment is coming. But that comes at the Second Coming, not at the first coming. This is before the time. This isn't the time of final sentence to hell. "Don't we have more time?" they're saying, "What are You doing here?"

I think they could even rightly interpret Isaiah 53, they knew that he would be led as a sheep to slaughter, they knew that. They knew how that was going to happen, that He would be killed, that He

would die. They knew that He would be the fulfillment of all the sacrificial system. They knew...they knew that He came to die and this was the time for Him to come to die, to be humiliated. This is the one who would be rejected and despised.

"What are You doing here? This isn't the time. We have more time. Don't we have more time?" And then they cry to Him, "I beg You, do not torment me," basanizo, don't torture us, it can't be now, we need more time." Even though they know the end of the story, it doesn't mean they give in to it, and they're so wicked they can't help but still fight against what they know to be true. "This can't be the time, this can't be now." And so they beg Him. Mark 5:7 says, "They beg Him, " with these words, "I implore You by God, don't torment me." That's another way of saying, "Swear to God You won't torture us now." Do you think Jesus is going to make an oath to demons?

In verse 31, what they were afraid of is stated. They were either begging Him or entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss. Not to send them to the bottomless pit, abussos. Revelation calls it the bottomless pit. You just keep falling forever, no bottom, a place of demon incarceration.

And so we see the tremendous power of demons, to literally take over a soul and to capture that soul in an effort to hold it against the influences of the gospel. But it's not just a story about a man, it's a story about Jesus, most of all, and how it doesn't matter how determined the demons are, it doesn't matter how reluctant and unwilling they are, it doesn't matter how many of them there are, they can be in the thousands. Some day He'll bind them and they will be in the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands numbers, and He will instantly bind them.

Can Jesus deliver the world from Satan? Yes. Can He deliver the world from the forces of hell? Yes. Can He deliver you from the power of Satan? Absolutely yes. We will see next time how the power of demons is weakness when compared with the delivering power of Jesus. Let's pray.

Father, as we are confronted with the destructive power of demons, the real evil in the world, the captor of the souls of sinners, we realize this is no cartoon, this is not fantasy, this is reality. How we thank You, blessed God, that through Jesus Christ the power of sin and Satan can be broken. To all those who come to Christ, confessing sin and embracing Him as Lord that deliverance comes. We here in this congregation are living testimony to Your power to deliver us from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Your beloved Son. We bless His holy name. And may You do that mighty delivering work for sinners even now to Your eternal glory and our eternal joy. In Christ's name. Amen.

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