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

The Maniac Who Became a Missionary, Part 2
Scripture: Luke 8:30-39
Code: 42-110

Let's open our Bibles to Luke's gospel chapter 8 and this is the second in a two-part series on verses 26 through 39, called "The Maniac Who Became A Missionary...The Maniac Who Became A Missionary." If you weren't with us last week, you might do well to get the tape, it's pretty fascinating, compelling material that we covered in coming to grips with this maniac and having come to some understanding of him last week, we're going to come to the completion of the story and how the Lord Jesus Christ turned him into a missionary.

Just by way of general introduction for a few moments, the apostle John wrote, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil." That's in 1 John 3 verse 8. "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil."

Jesus came into the world not only to save us from sin, but to save us from Satan. He came to eliminate our guilt and to eliminate our enemy. The Bible makes this very clear, starting in Genesis 3:15. Right after the Fall, God said, "There will come one, the seed of a woman who will crush the serpent's head." And while, for the time, Satan has freedom within the parameters of God's design to work his evil intentions in the world, along with all the demons who are equally free to assist him, the day will come when Satan will be crushed, when he will be, along with all the demons, bound for a thousand years during the coming Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and then forever cast into the lake of fire which God has prepared for the devil and his angels. Jesus came then to destroy the works of the devil, the effect, the impact of Satan, the results of his efforts.

The true Messiah then must demonstrate power over Satan, power over demons. The true Messiah, as we learned, must come from the right family, have the right genealogy. The true Messiah must be God and man, therefore He must be born of men and born of God, virgin born. The true Messiah must be the fulfillment of prophecy. The true Messiah must have divine power over the physical world. He must have divine power over the spiritual world. The true Messiah must have the power and authority to forgive sin. The true Messiah must live a perfect and sinless life. And so, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John give us four histories of the life of Jesus that prove Him to be the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of the world by virtue of meeting all these qualifications.

And as we look here at Luke chapter 8, we see another incident in the life of Jesus in which He demonstrates His power over Satan, His ability to crush the serpent's head, His ability to literally disarm the entire force of demons, His ability, if you will, with a simple word to command all the hosts

of darkness to do exactly what He tells them to do...nothing less and nothing more. This tells us that He is God, for only God can control the kingdom of darkness. This tells us that He is the one who can deliver the world from Satan and his hosts, and indeed bind them during the time of His Kingdom. This tells us that He has the power to deliver sinners from the kingdom of darkness, the realm of Satan. This tells us that He has the power to cast Satan and all his hosts into the lake of fire forever and ever. In other words, we're seeing a demonstration of His power over the kingdom of darkness.

And so, the Son of Man appears for the purpose of destroying the works of the devil. Jesus even said in John 12:31, "The ruler of this world will be cast out." In John 16:11 He said, "The ruler of this world has been judged." Romans 16:20 says that "God will crush Satan under Your feet." And Colossians 2:15 says that at the very time Jesus was dying, "He was triumphing over the forces of hell and vanquishing and disarming demons in that triumph." Hebrews 2:14 says, "Through His death he rendered powerless the one who had the power of death and that is the devil." So we expect to see Jesus not just as a good teacher, not just as a gentle and kind healer, we expect to see Him with displays of power over the kingdom of darkness. And so we do because the Lord Jesus came into the world not only to save us from sin, not only to save us from death, not only to save us from judgment and hell, but to save us from Satan.

And so, he shows that He has the power to forgive sin, save us from sin. He has the power to conquer death, save us from death and all the diseases that lead to it. He has the power to deliver us out of a future in hell into the glories of heaven. And He has power to break the hold of Satan. The Bible says the whole human race is in bondage to Satan. First John ends by saying at the end of the fifth chapter, "The whole world lies in the lap of the evil one." Ephesians 2 says that all of us literally are under the control of the prince of the power of the air who rules over us. Jesus has the power to break that rule. His salvation rescues all who believe in Him from spending all eternity in the lake of fire in the presence of the devil and his angels. We will be, by His grace, delivered from Satan in this life and in the eternal life to come. And so, it is necessary for the writers of the New Testament to prove that Jesus has this power and account after account in the New Testament is designed to do just that.

Now as we come to verse 26, I'll just review the reading from last time. "They sailed to the country of the Gerasenes or Gergesenes, or Gadarenes," various ways that is identified, which is opposite Galilee. Remember this is Jesus and His disciples in a group of little boats sailing across the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, about six miles to the east of Capernaum to the eastern shore. They have gone through a storm which Jesus stopped, stopping the wind and the water, and then they continued their journey to the other side. Verse 27, "When He had come out onto the land He was met by a certain man from the city who was possessed with demons, who had not put on any clothing for a long time and was not living in a house but in the tombs. And seeing Jesus he cried out and fell before Him and said in a loud voice, 'What do I have 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 and yet he would not...he would burst his fetters and be driven by the demon into the desert." Stop at that point.

Now we looked at this last time. And I said, and I'm just going to repeat it so you kind of have it in your mind, there's no instruction in the Old Testament regarding exorcism of demons. There's not even a specific encounter with a demon-possessed person in the Old Testament. There are a couple of occasions, 1 Samuel 16, 1 Kings 22, where evil spirits are mentioned and there is that remarkable account in Genesis chapter 6 where fallen angels, demons, called there the sons of God, come down and dwell in men as an evidence of the wretchedness of the pre-Flood society. They were indeed a demon-possessed people, but it's spoken of in a very general and collective way. We don't really have an account in the Old Testament of an individual demon-possessed person or of the way those people behaved, nor of any exorcism in dealing with them. And so that is to say we don't know a lot about demon possession from the Old Testament. They...they do their work under the surface. They prefer to be clandestine. They prefer to be unseen. They prefer to be thought of as angels of...what?... of light and servants of God. And so they masquerade behind religion, and particularly in more sophisticated societies they would prefer to hide. However, in some occultic and environments in some idolatrous cultures in society and some primitive Third World societies where there is a more outrageous kind of exposure of demons, they even become the gods that people worship and they are, I think, a little more open to exposing themselves. They become even identifiable to people in those kinds of environments. But in sophisticated societies, certainly those societies that are connected to Judaism and the Old Testament Christianity, since the New Testament they prefer to do their work behind the scenes.

Demon possession is common, it's just not commonly dealt with in the Bible. The reason I mentioned about the Old Testament is so that you understand what you see happening in the New Testament is really unique. In fact, there is the exposure of demon possession during the time of Jesus Christ and the apostles, and then it just disappears. And you read the epistles of the New Testament, Paul, Peter, John and Jude, with no reference to demon possession whatsoever. And then it comes back again at the end of the age in the book of Revelation when God is doing a very different work in judgment in the world. And so demon possession is a very, very unique thing. I believe that demons are doing their work all the time. I believe they dwell in people all the time. It just never was exposed the way Jesus exposed it. And it wasn't that they were willing to have it exposed. It wasn't that the demons were attacking Jesus. I think people miss this. It wasn't that the demons were attacking Jesus, it was Jesus attacking them. When Jesus showed up, they couldn't constrain themselves out of the sheer terror of His presence.

Now remember, all demons were once holy angels. They were once a part of the angelic hosts dwelling in the presence of God, and they knew God the Father and the Son and the Spirit. That's why immediately they identify Jesus as Son of the Most High God. They know exactly who He is and

they know He is the God Most High, they know He is El Elyon, the sovereign God. They know He is their sovereign. They know He is their judge, their executioner. They know that. And His presence, His holy presence is so traumatizing to their wretched and unmitigated unholiness that they expose themselves unwillingly to Him so that, for example, in chapter 4 of Luke where He's preaching in a synagogue, there's a demon in this man and the demon under the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ screams out of the man. It isn't that they were so much attacking Him as His presence just revealed them because He traumatized and tormented them. They even say here, "Have You come to torment us?"

And so, in this occasion here we find another one of those amazing accounts in which Jesus by His very presence exposes demons and engages them in a way that demonstrates His absolute authority and power over them. Scripture then is very reticent to speak of this phenomena until the time of the ministry of Jesus Christ brought it out of hiding. But during the ministry of our Lord, He confronted the reluctant demons and showed them His absolute power and authority time and time and time again. And in Luke 11:20 He summed up the reason by saying this, "If I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the Kingdom of God has come to you." If I can dominate the kingdom of darkness with my finger, then you know the Kingdom of God has come to you. Jesus came to liberate the poor, prisoners, blind and oppressed as He says in Luke 4:18. Part of that liberation is a liberation from Satan as well as a liberation from sin. And He dealt with the demons with absolute ease. He didn't even need to use the arm of God, as the Old Testament so often refers to it, He used only the finger and that was sufficient to vanquish them all.

Now the encounter that is before us here is the greatest display of the power of Jesus over demons quantitatively...quantitatively. He instantly overwhelms a huge force of fallen spirits. The encounter is one of the really compelling stories of the New Testament. Now as we look at it, I'm going to give you three points. I gave you one last week, we'll do the next two this morning.

Point number one is the destructive power of demons. We saw that, the destructive power of demons. Point two, the delivering power of Jesus and I changed the third point to the damning power of sin. The destructive power of demons, the delivering power of Jesus, the damning power of sin. And here is a power display.

Now around these three forces, these three elements of power, the story unfolds. Let's go back and review briefly the destructive power of demons. I just read the text to you. This is Gentile country. There is a town there, a modern town, named Kersa, that is the modern location of the ancient Gergesa or Gerasa which indicates the country of the Gerasenes. Also to the south and farther east is a town called Gadara because it was the larger town, the region was known as Gadara and this was a town within that region. Jesus arrives there by divine appointment and there He meets a man possessed with demons...not just one, many demons...many demons. In fact, down in verse 30 it says, "He said his name was 'Legion' for many demons had entered him." This man literally is

infested with evil spirits, demonic spirits. He is in every sense a maniac. He is a madman in the classical definition. He is absolutely out of control. His own personality, whoever he was, has been completely subsumed under the expression of this demonic force. He doesn't think for himself. He doesn't talk for himself. And he doesn't act for himself. He's a madman.

And verse 27 tells us he hadn't put on any clothing for a long time. The first thing we learn about him, he was stark naked. This was not because he was a naturist, or whatever. This was not necessarily his choice at all. This was simply a matter of the torture and the torment that he endured. Being naked is not...is not a reasonable thing to do even from the standpoint of protecting yourself from the sun in that hot part of the world, or the very, very cold winters that come there. That is not something a person would choose to do, and certainly the shame associated with it would be in itself a torture and a torment. It is, of course, a twisted and perverted kind of conduct. It is also an unreasonable kind of conduct by every perspective. But the man was dominated and tormented into this shame and to this self-inflicting suffering of nakedness.

Further, he was living in tombs. He was more at home with the dead than he was with the living. He found his comfort among the dead, close to the underworld of demons. He functioned like a demon would function. And Satan is a murderer from the beginning. Satan is the one who has been given the power of death. Satan and demons are by definition killers. They are comfortable with death. They hate the Lord of life and all that the life He gives stands for. This man was violent, tells us not only did he live in the tombs, but he was screaming and shrieking. So much so, verse 29 says, they had to bind him with chains and shackles and keep him under guard. He would burst the fetters and be driven by demons into the desert. He was out of control. He was a hermit. He would go fleeing into the desert for no apparent reason at all, other than under the horrific torment of demons who intended to accomplish who knows what. He would get up into his tombs and when people would come along the road below, he would come screaming naked down the hill, threatening their lives. He was homicidal, he was suicidal. He had to be restrained the best way people could restrain him.

Now just think about this person. He is start naked. He is without shame. He is a tortured, tormented soul, violent, shrieking, screaming, terrifying people, celebrating death. More at home in the tombs with the dead than the living. That to me is a pretty good description of a modern rock singer. And you chuckle at that, but that's really true. I think of that every time I see some poor witless teenager with a black t-shirt and a scull and crossbones on the front of it. Who in the world identifies with death? Look at these people who get up on stage who are violent, shrieking, naked with elements of death tattooed all over their bodies. Ask yourself, "Where does that come from? What is the source of all of that?" Or those rappers who celebrate death and murder, along with the wretched kind of immorality that goes with that life style, which certainly would be associated with the nakedness of this man as well.

Then it tells us he was strong. He was so strong and so dangerous that he had to be bound. And that must have been an interesting enterprise, to watch people bind him up. Then because the demons somehow accelerated his adrenalin, he was able to shatter the things they used to bind him. He was raging. He was out of control. He was insane. He was Charles Manson. That's who he was.

And when the man saw Jesus, came down the hill with a friend, according to Matthew's gospel there were two of them, they came down the hill...the rest of the story just focuses on the one, they saw Jesus. He surely didn't know Him, but the demons did. And so, verse 28 says, "Seeing Jesus, the spokesman demon screams, falls down...shrieks and screams, falls down..." You see, they can't hide. When Jesus is there, the trauma is so severe that they literally scream out of terror. "What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me." And so comes the voice of the spokesman demon. We saw how that they...they're orthodox...demons are fundamentalists, they understand that Jesus is the Son of the Most High God. A lot of people don't understand that, the demons know that. They acknowledge Him as the eternal Son of El Elyon, the sovereign God. They acknowledge His identity. They also acknowledge His authority. They say, "What business do we have with You now? " In fact, Matthew adds, "Before the time." You see, demons are premillennialists. They know there has to come a kingdom before they will be finally cast into the lake of fire. They understand that. "What are You doing here before the time? Have You come now to torment us, to torture us? Isn't that to be connected to Your Second Coming and not Your first? What are You doing?"

They're literally terrified of Jesus, these demons, terrified of Him. He's the only one who has authority over them. Remember in the book of Acts when those sons of Sceva were trying to cast out demons? And finally the demon said, "Look, who are you? Jesus we know and Paul we know, but who are you?" They didn't have any reason to the demon? That's what's so silly about people running around today talking to demons and telling them to do things. That's idiotic. They don't have any power over demons, you don't have any power over them. Only Christ had power over them and the disciples to whom He delegated it, who were the apostles, and the 70 that He sent out. They know who their Lord is, and so they don't want Him to torture them.

And what is it they don't want? Well, they didn't want Him to send them, verse 31, to the abyss, to the abussos, the bottomless pit. It's called the bottomless pit in the book of Revelation, you read about it in chapter 9, chapter 11, chapter 17. "Don't send us into the abyss." That is the present place of demon incarceration. As many demons as there are in the world, thankfully by the goodness of God, His providential common grace, not all the demons that exist are running loose in the world. In fact, 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 and 7, both those places tell us that the demons that possess the people described in Genesis 6 were at that time put in everlasting chains and sent to that bottomless pit from which they will never be released. So there are eternally, or permanently bound demons, ultimately in the end they will all go to the final incarceration in the lake of fire. But there are today bound

demons who are bound permanently. Also in this abussos, this bottomless pit there are some demons bound temporarily because in the ninth chapter of Revelation we find in the time of the Great Tribulation to come, God's going to open up that bit and belching out of that pit are going to come forth some demons to add to the demon force that runs amuck on the earth during the time of the Great Tribulation when Satan has his final heyday under Antichrist. But there is a place where many of the demons are currently incarcerated so that their power is in some way limited in the world. These demons say, "We don't want to go there before the time. Don't send us there yet, we want our freedom. Please don't send us there."

They...they...they can't restrain themselves from screaming out what is their real desire. They do not want to be sent to the pit of torment. "It's not the time. What do You have to do with us? Why are You here? Why are You confronting us? This isn't the time." Demons live in sheer terror of the power of Jesus and nobody else. There aren't any apostles and there aren't any of the 70 to whom this power was delegated in the time of Christ. That's why it disappears in the book of Acts and you don't even hear about people talking to demons, casting out demons, exorcizing in any of the epistles of the New Testament.

These demons are doing their work today. They didn't want to go into the pit, so they screamed for Jesus to explain to them what was going on and please not send them there. And so we saw the terrible, terrible, dominating, destructive power of demons in this one man. And it's going on in people all over the world. It has from Genesis on. It's not always surfaced. In some, as I said, more occultic, primitive, idolatrous cultures it's more manifest than it is in sophisticated religious places, particularly those where Judaism or Christianity predominate. Satan wants to disguise himself. He wants to wear the mask of religion and respectability. They couldn't restrain themselves in the presence of Jesus.

We move then to the delivering power of Jesus, and I'm going to try to cover a lot as fast as I can...the delivering power of Jesus. In a typically understated report of the astounding power of Jesus over the forces of hell, Luke makes it very simple. He just makes the statement in verse 29, "He had been commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man." Mark, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit." It was just a command. And He was talking to one spirit but the one spirit was a spokesman representative of all the demons that infested this man.

Now you and I can do that with absolutely no effect. And I can tell you from personal experience, I've tried it. And there's absolutely nothing about me that frightens a demon, nor do I exercise any authority over them ever. It's absolute folly for me to tell demons what to do, or Satan. But then again, I'm not afraid of what they might do to me because I am indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God and greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world. And I know they would like to grind my life to a halt and they would like to destroy me and anybody who preaches the gospel and they would like to destroy the work of God, but they cannot. No Christian is ever indwelt by demons. There's no such thing in

the Bible. All those possessed of demons were outside the Kingdom of God and inside the kingdom of darkness.

Now for Jesus to command the spirit to go away, to say "Be gone, come out," and the spirit to respond is an amazing expression of power. You have to understand just a little bit of angelology. These are angels. And angels possess superior intelligence clearly. They're not like human beings. They're not confined to the limitations of the human brain. They have far superior intelligence to us, vastly superior intelligence. They have superior might. Second Kings 19, one angel killed 185 thousand Assyrians. They have superior scope. In Daniel chapter 9 they have influence and responsibility over massive areas of territory. They are so powerful and influential that even the fallen angels can...can withstand the coming of holy angels. And in Daniel 9, God had to dispatch the mightiest of angels, Michael, to get them out of the way. They...they have superior experience. They were created at the time of creation of everything else and they don't die and they don't reproduce, so they're very old so they're very, very experienced. They've lived through every era of time and they will live forever. Once created they never die, they never grow old. They have a superior nature. They're not confined by space and they're not confined by time. They're not omnipresent but they're fast and they move the way spirit beings move, not the way physical beings move. And they are a vast and powerful group and the fallen angels, which we call demons, are subject only to one who is more powerful than they are, and that is the Lord Himself. Jesus demonstrates clearly that He is God as a numerous...in numerous other accounts in the New Testament of His power over demons, but none is as quantitatively great as this one.

Now in seeing the delivering power of Jesus, let's look at the conversation that He had when He commanded them to leave. Verse 30, "Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?'" Speaking to the man but knowing he would be answered by the dominant personalities, the dominant force in the man. Long ago I said earlier, the man's own personality, ability to speak, think, talk, act had been suppressed. Jesus says, "What is your name/" I don't know what his parents named him, his name is never given. But the voice that dominated him, the voice that was the spokesman for the demons said, "Legion."

Why did he say "legion?" "For many demons had entered him." Legion is not a name, legion describes a group of Roman soldiers, a legion numbered as much as six thousand men. But what was the point of saying, "Our name is legion?" To make the point that there were many. This isn't like Mary Magdalene who was possessed of seven demons. This is thousands of demons. We are legion. This poor benighted, tormented soul literally was the home of thousands of demons. In fact, in Mark 5:13 it tells us that the herd of pigs into which the demons went numbered two thousand pigs and the demons filled up two thousand pigs who had once filled up one man, at least two thousand demons, maybe six thousand demons. Massive demon possession, thousands of them living in this one tormented and tormenting soul. Two thousand supernatural, suicidal, homicidal, maniacal, demonic terrorists living in this maniac. And Jesus says "Be gone," and they're out. And with His

finger, metaphorically, He overpowers the kingdom of hell.

They were begging Him in verse 31, imploring Him, entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss. Whatever He commanded them to do, they did. They didn't have a choice. "Don't send us into that pit, that bottomless pit. The time is not now," "Don't send us into the dungeon. Don't send us into the lake of fire." They acknowledged there is a divinely determined time, but it's not now. Their eschatology as well as their theology and Christology is accurate. And James puts it this way, James 2:19. "The devils believe and tremble, or shudder." They weren't ready to give up their operation yet.

Well you say, "Wait a minute, why would they not want to give up the operation? They know they can't win. They know how it's going to end. They know God is sovereign." But in their perverted minds they still hope that maybe there can be an overthrow, twisted as they are. And still, as long as they're doing anything, they're going to be doing evil because that's all they can do. And they certainly prefer the ability to ply their wretched wickedness than being eternally incarcerated so they say, "Don't send us, it's not the time...it's not the time. Please, not the time."

Now verse 32 says, "There was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain." Remember, this is Gentile area, couldn't be Jewish area because that would have been against the Mosaic Law. Pigs had a cloven foot and therefore they were an unclean animal not to be eaten. And so, this is Gentile area. They were raising pigs. And the demons entreated Him to permit them to enter the swine. That's really kind of bizarre, isn't it? Clayton said, "This is where deviled ham started." Well maybe it did come from that, you know, I don't know.

The diabolical desire, and I can't say more than this, the diabolical desire of demons is to work in the physical world. You understand that? They want to work in the physical world. They prefer to work in the physical world through persons, through people. But if they can't work through people, then they would work through animals. It reminds of the one in Matthew where it says, the passage in Matthew where it talks about... I think it's the twelfth chapter where it talks about the demon who was cast out and wandered and wandered and wandered, wanting to enter and have another home. In order to work their work in the world, they need to somehow impact the physical realm, the realm of sight and sound. And so, they'll work through people, of course, wherever they can, but here they are in the presence of Jesus and they're sent out, they don't want to go to the pit so they make the suggestion, although it's certainly not necessarily where they'd want to go, put us in the pigs and maybe we can figure out a way to use pigs to do what we want to do.

And Jesus, it says end of verse 32, gave them permission. Okay, you may go... Isn't that interesting? They couldn't do anything if He didn't command them or give them permission. Totally under His control. He gave them permission. Why would He do that? Why would He give them permission to go into the pigs? Because it was going to be vivid proof that the demons had left the

man, right? It was going to be proof then of His divine power. It was also going to show the deadly intention of demons that what they want to do is kill. I'm not surprised that a rock group is called Mega Death. That's what they want to do, they want to kill. And it's only God who prevents that. And when it's pigs and God's not involved in pigs' lives, they can do it. It also gives the opportunity to get a preview of the judgment that is going to come on evil beings.

The reason I say all that is because of what happened in verse 33. "The demons came out from the man and they entered the swine. And the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned." What an amazing reaction. They just ran down that hill and did a swine dive. You think I'm getting carried away? Actually they committed sueycide. You have to recover from this now.

Well what is the point of this? Two thousand pigs careening down a hill, drowning? By the way, from what I've read, pigs can swim. But the point was, the demons slaughtered them all. Why? Well, first of all, to show that the man had been delivered, visual, physical proof. Secondly, to reveal the deadly intent of demons to kill. Also, as I said, to reveal the power of Jesus over the kingdom of darkness. That was a tremendous and dramatic illustration that this man had been delivered because the pigs acted in the kind of frenzy and self-destruction that characterized the man. They became maniac pigs. The testimony is convincing. This man definitely had demons. They're gone because the pigs are behaving like the man did.

And that's what people concluded. Verse 34, "When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported in the city and out in the country." They were eyewitnesses. Whoever was working for the owner of the pigs, these men who were taking care of 2,000 pigs, they saw what happened, they reported it in the city and out in the country. The bottom line is it's another way to say they couldn't stop talking about it. Everywhere they went they...I mean, they had never seen anything like this in their entire lives, they were probably experienced with pigs and pigs don't just uniformly all at once dive off a cliff and kill themselves. The most powerful, startling, amazing event of their lives by far and they spread it everywhere. They can't stop talking about it, everywhere they went they said, "It...it's inexplicable." They heard the conversation between Jesus and the man, at least they saw the conversation going on because it says the pigs were nearby. They knew about this man, if they herded pigs in that area they knew about that man, they knew about the maniacal character of that man. And all of a sudden this thing takes place and it's just the most amazing thing ever. And so they become heralds, as it were, telling everybody about it.

The result is in verse 35. "The people..." Matthew tells us the same story, Matthew adds, "The whole city came out." It just says in Luke, "And they went out," but Matthew says, "The whole city went out." I mean, sure, they knew about two thousand pigs, everybody would know there were two thousand pigs out there that belonged to somebody and that they had all gone down the slope and drowned in the lake. Everybody went out to see what happened and they came to Jesus. They went to see what happened, they came to Jesus. Their interest was specifically in Jesus because the herdsmen would

have told them this man came and this man cast these demons out, into the pigs they went, down...and so they wanted to see what kind of man does this. The specific interest was to meet Jesus.

I want to note for a minute that many commentators and many preachers through the years have said that the people were upset at the loss of the pigs. They thought it was, you know, it was...it was like a crime, you know, to kill somebody's pigs. So how dare Jesus do this. And they came somehow to indict Jesus for executing the pigs. Well, the account in Matthew, the account in Mark, the account in Luke never mentions the owners of the pigs at all, ever. Never makes an issue out of this, there's no indication they were upset by the loss of the pigs. There are whole sermons that have been preached on preferring pigs over people, or being materialistic over being spiritualistic and whatever other things they could read into this. There is nothing in this account at all that says they focused on the pig, nothing that says they...pigs...they focused on the man, nothing that says they focused on the demons. They focused on Jesus. It was Jesus they came to see because they were so stunned by what they had heard about His power. "And when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind." All the marks of sanity, sophroneo, he was thinking wisely, literally in the Greek. He...he was sensible who had been completely out of his mind. The transformation was so total and so dramatic as to literally be opposite of their past experience. Instead of being naked, the man was clothed. Instead of wandering aimlessly, the man was sitting at the feet of Jesus. Instead of being in the tombs, the realm of the dead, he was sitting among the living, Jesus and His disciples. Instead of shrinking and screaming, the man was quiet. Instead of deadly and threatening, he was peaceful. Instead of tormented, he was comforted. Instead of insanity, there was sanity. Instead of chaos, there was tranquility. This is a magnificent picture of salvation transformation.

I believe there was a discussion between Jesus and the man not recorded in which Jesus dealt with the sins of the man, in which forgiveness occurred. And the man was told the wonderful news that Jesus came for the poor, the prisoner, the blind and the oppressed to give them riches and freedom and sight and deliverance. So they saw this man transformed. Not just delivered from demons, but now falling before Jesus and wanting to be led by Him.

And their reaction? Well the reaction at the end of verse 35, "They became frightened," from the word phobeo from which we get phobia. They were terrified is basically what it was. Here again we see the same thing. We see it all the way through the gospel of Luke, people who realize they're in the presence of the power of God are scared, frightened, traumatized, terrified. And it is so throughout particularly this chapter, back in verse 25 when Jesus stilled the storm, stopped the wind and the waves. It says they were fearful, they were frightened there, they were panicked there. We see it throughout the rest of the chapter as we will note later that people are literally terrified every time Jesus does a miracle, whether it's a healing or the raising of a dead person, it creates a certain amount of terror in people because they know they're in the presence of the power of God and that is

a holy presence and they are sinful people.

That leads us then to the third power demonstrated here, the damning power of sin...the damning power of sin. The demons exert a power, the Lord Jesus brings His great delivering power, but we also see the terrible damning power of sin. It is the nature of sin to blind. It is the nature of sin to hate the truth. It is the nature of sin to reject proof. It is the nature of sin to resist righteousness. It is the nature of sin to cling tightly to the love of iniquity. Here you have irrefutable evidence that Jesus is the power of God. Here you have a miracle that is so massive that demonstrates not His power over the physical realm, but His power over the supernatural realm, His power over the spiritual world, His power over the forces of evil, to deliver men from evil. You see this without any argument, without any debate. They don't discuss it. They don't debate it. They know what has happened. It terrifies them.

But instead of saying "thank you," and "how do we get delivered?" you notice verse 36, "Those who had seen it reported to them how the man who was demon possessed had been made well." This is an interesting verse. They want to know what happened...what happened...give us the details...how did this happen? They're terrified of Jesus, what's going on here? And so those who had seen it told them the full story of how the man who was demon possessed had been made well, esothe(?), from sozo, had been saved...sozo-to be saved. How the man had been delivered. And they gave them the full story, details of which aren't given to us. I'm sure they said, "Well, you won't believe how it happened. The guy came down the hill and..." And they, they must have been, as I said earlier, close enough to see the engagement and the encounter and to even hear what went on. The man had been delivered, not just from Satan, but I believe he'd been delivered from sin, or at least he was, when those people heard the discussion, beginning to awaken to the forgiveness and the salvation that Jesus had offered which I believe became completed, and I'll show you why in a moment.

You know, you think sinners would really be convinced if you just had a powerful enough miracle. No, no, you don't understand the power of sin. You know, if you could just figure a clever enough way to pronounce the gospel, if you could just figure an attractive enough way to present Jesus Christ, if you could just get a powerful enough exhibit of the life of Jesus Christ and His miracle might, boy, people would really be convinced. No...no, the damning power of sin just obliterates reality. The idea that sinners will be convinced by a powerful miracle...a powerful miracle isn't true.

Well what did the Jews do? They saw miracle after miracle after miracle after miracle after miracle for three years. And at the end of that time what did they do? They wanted Him dead. The Gentiles weren't any different. I can't imagine a more powerful, clear example of the saving power of Jesus Christ than this. I can't imagine a more dramatic event than sending thousands of demons out of a man with a word. And the proof of it in the drowning of this herd of pigs. I...rationally you've got to fall down and say, "This is the power of God." But the truth of the matter is, this is hard soil back from Jesus' story in the eighth chapter verses 5 and 12, hard soil, the seed of the truth falls just like falling

on concrete, it doesn't penetrate.

What was their reaction? Verse 37, "All the people," apparently without exception, "All the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district, everybody." Apparently you've got a big crowd out there. "All of them asked Him to depart from them. Go away."

Why? "For they were gripped with phobe, you know, fear megala, great fear, massive fear. What were they terrified of? After all, hadn't He brought safety where there was danger? Hadn't He brought peace where there was chaos? What was to be afraid of? What was to be afraid of was they knew they were in the presence of God. They knew they were seeing the great power of God and they knew it was a holy power, a purging, purifying, cleansing power that dispensed with evil and they therefore knew that they were exposed to sinners. And loving their evil so much they wanted to get rid of the intimidation. Even Peter had that reaction when Jesus commanded the fish to come to his boat and he said in Luke 5:8, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a...what?...sinful man." It's the intimidation of holiness in the presence of sin that causes them to want Jesus to go away. Instead of saying, "Thank You, thank You for delivering us, could You go up and get his friend up there, that other guy and do to him what You've done to this man? And could You tell us how we can be delivered from whatever satanic influences exist in our lives? And could You tell us how we can be forgiven of our sin? And could You tell us how this holy power could come upon us?"

They don't say that. There's not a word of thanks for the deliverance from the danger of the man. They see Jesus as a greater danger than that man. They would rather have a maniac than the Son of God. They would rather be terrified by Satan than terrified by God. They would rather endure the presence of demonic danger than the presence of divine deliverance. They preferred the unholy to the holy. They preferred a tomb dweller over the Lord of life. Just like Israel. They were not asking Jesus to go away because He messed with their economy, killing their pigs. They weren't asking Him to go away because they were materialists and not spiritualists and they were mad at Him for what He had done. The whole town and the whole region wanted Him to go away because they were terrified of His holiness. You know, the world is really comfortable with pigs and maniacs, but it's not comfortable with Jesus Christ, is it? Not the Son of God. David Gooding writes, "What a sad comment on man's fallen and unregenerate state it is that man should feel more at home with demons than with the Christ who has the power to cast them out. Who would try to help a criminal or a drunkard, or if they should prove incorrigible would want the one imprisoned and the other put into a hospital find it embarrassing and somewhat frightening if that criminal or drunkard is saved by Christ and turned into a wholesome regenerate disciple." That's really true...it's really true. They would rather have a maniac than a Christian. They would rather have the presence of Satan than the presence of Christ. This is the blindness and the damning darkness and ignorance of sin.

And so, sad note, it says verse 37, "He got into a boat and returned." He never came back, by the way. One time...one day...one occasion...they said, "Get out." He got into a boat and went back to

Capernaum. Was it an insult? Yes. It was more, it was a damning rejection and Jesus never ever came back.

Now what about you as a sinner? What about you? What would you have done if you had been there that day? Would you have cherished and loved and clung to your sin and asked Jesus to go away? Or would you plead with Jesus to forgive your sin and deliver you the way He delivered that man? Look around you today. Here are the delivered right here. Hundreds of them. We...we have been forgiven from sin and delivered from Satan. We are living testimony to the power of Jesus Christ to transform. Are you interested in that? Do you want to be delivered and rescued from sin and Satan and death and hell? Or do you cherish your sin and you cannot wait to get out of here? Would you rather be in the grip of Satan than God? Would you rather continue to live with what is unholy than what is holy?

The Lord Jesus is either loved or hated when the truth is presented. And you can't have it any other way. If you can figure out a way to present the gospel without causing people to love or hate, you've compromised the message.

The story ends with a true and wonderful completion. The maniac becomes a missionary. "The man," according to verse 38, "from whom the demons had gone out was begging Jesus that he might accompany Him." Obviously there's no Christians in his area, he's just been forgiven and transformed by this incredible miracle and he very naturally says, "I want to go with You, You're my Lord, You're my Master, You're my Savior, You're my Deliverer, I want to go with You. Can I join this group and go back with You?" And he is asking what anybody would ask. He now, all of a sudden, has a cleansed conscience, he has new longings in his heart. He...he's clothed, he's rational, he's free and he would never want to leave his eternal benefactor's side. He wanted to become a disciple and a learner and to follow his Master and his Savior.

"And Jesus says to him," in verse 38, "basically no." Sent him away...no, can't go with Me. Does that surprise you? Well not everybody is supposed to go to seminary. Not everybody is supposed to get all the formal training. But you say, "Wait a minute, you just can't leave him here, he's just a baby Christian." I'll say it again, I've said it often, if you know enough of the gospel to be saved, you know enough of the gospel to be a missionary, right? And Jesus sent him away. You don't need further training at this point, that's not a priority. Further training is good, but you don't need further training, you are the one lone witness in this region. And here is the wonderful grace of God. They had wholesale rejected Him, but He had not wholesale rejected them, He left them a witness.

So in verse 39 He said, "Return to your house." I wonder how long it had been since he was there. "Go back to your family and describe what great things God has done for you." He's the first Gentile missionary...the maniac who became a missionary. And as I said, if he knew enough to be saved, he knew enough to tell somebody else. And if that man had left with Jesus, there would have been no

witness in that place. Here was grace in the face of rejection. Jesus sent him back to his own people and He said to him, "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." How interesting. You tell them what God has done, he told them what Jesus had done because Jesus is God. He became a witness. When I get to heaven I want to ask him how successful he was, how fruitful. He went proclaiming throughout the whole city, kerusso, preaching throughout the whole city. This is personal evangelism, the story of what the Lord had done. Mark 5:20 says, "Everyone was amazed...amazed."

Well that's what Jesus does. He turns maniacs into missionaries. It shows us the power of the demons, the power of the delivering Lord, and the damning power of sin. What a story. If you have been delivered, you too are a missionary, amen? Tell the story.

Lord, thank You for the time this morning, for Your grace to us, for the truth of Your Word. Seal it to our hearts. We'll thank You in the Savior's name. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2014 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).