



Jesus Casts Out Demons

Luke's Gospel: Investigating the Man Who Is God - Part 34
Pastor Mark Driscoll | June 27, 2010



Luke 8:26–39

²⁶ Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me." ²⁹ For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) ³⁰ Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. ³¹ And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. ³² Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³ Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

³⁴ When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵ Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. ³⁶ And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. ³⁷ Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸ The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

INTRODUCTION

We're in Luke 8:26–39 today, Mars Hill. And you're going to study with me the work of Jesus Christ in the life of one of the most famous men in all of the Bible, a demon-possessed man. Now, Jesus at this point has been exceedingly busy. He is an itinerant preacher and miracle worker, and he has moved from town to town and village to village. The number of people following him has increased. The number of critics opposing him, in a corollary fashion, has increased. Just previous to his

interaction with the demoniac that we'll examine today, Jesus had dealt with multitudes of people and was absolutely, altogether exhausted.

And we read both here in Luke and in the parallel account in Mark 5 that he got into a boat and that he asked his disciples to, as it were, get him away from the crowd, to give him, I think, a bit of a break. There are those seasons of ministry—I'm in one right now—where you're just exhausted. It feels like war on all fronts. The number of people who need help and the number of things that need attention is just absolutely overwhelming. Jesus was in that kind of season. And so he got into the boat to get away from the crowds, and his disciples, who were many trained fishermen, were rowing.

There was a strong, strong, strong, headwind. They were making no progress. They were exhausted and their lives were in jeopardy. And in the midst of all this, Jesus is so tired that he's asleep in the boat. And you've got to be tired just to sleep in an old fishing boat all by itself. Just that fact indicates how Jesus was fatigued. He was so fatigued, however, that as the men were rowing all night and exhausted and overwhelmed, and likely talking about this, and very frustrated and anxious, he was absolutely asleep, unmoved, exhausted, and done. They finally wake him up and tell him, "Jesus, you need to do something." And so he just commands creation and it obeys him.

A REAL WAR

Now, you would think they would row to the shore, and there would be a spa with someone ready to give Jesus a drink with an umbrella in it, and maybe a day off. Instead, he gets out of the boat and is immediately met by the demon-possessed man. That's Jesus' big day off.

And as we meet the demon-possessed man, you're going to meet a man who, the Bible is very clear, was filled, controlled by unclean spirits. And so I need to do a little work to explain what is going on here. And that is that we have a mind, and so we think thoughts. We have a body, and so we have physical, material being. And we have an immaterial, spiritual soul. And what tends to happen in our day is when people are struggling, or suffering, or manifesting certain behavior, we don't know what to do with the soul, so we'll give principles to the mind and medication to the body, both of which may be necessary and required, but we don't know what to do with the soul.

And in that day, they didn't know what to do with this man. Obviously, they had tried to give him principles for a better life and it didn't work. Physically, they couldn't even restrain him. It's because spiritually he was controlled by an evil spirit. We do believe as Christians, because the Bible teaches it, and Jesus confirms it, that there really is a Satan, a devil, the serpent. And there really are demons, fallen angels, who work with him.

The Bible says that God is creator and everyone, everything else is created by the creator God. And Satan, the leader of the demons, and the demons, the unclean spirits, the fallen cursed angels, they were created by God in a state of perfection and sinlessness. They were created to worship, and serve, and honor, and obey God, but the Bible tells us that they rebelled against God, and they wanted to be God, and

they wanted glory for themselves, and they were filled with pride.

Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 give us an indication that they were led by sort of a ruling angel, a chief angel, more like a colonel, if you were, in the rank of angels. And there was a war in heaven, and Satan was defeated, and those who aligned with him were defeated by God and cast out of heaven. And the battlefield moved to earth, where Satan showed up to tempt our first parents. And one of the greatest lies Satan has ever told, as one film indicates at the end, is convincing the world that he doesn't exist. And so today people are dealing with the mind and the body, but have no idea what to do with the soul, the spirit world, that immaterial part of our being.

HOW SATAN WORKS

And I want you to know a little bit about how Satan works. I've got a whole series of lengthy lectures that I gave to the staff on spiritual warfare. Like the other seven hundred pieces of content, it's all free at marshillchurch.org, and you can look for spiritual warfare and you can learn more, but I'll give you a brief summary of how Satan works.

Second Corinthians 2:11 says that Satan will not outwit us, providing we understand his schemes. You understand that there's a war between God and Satan, and that Satan is a created being. And he's not equal to God. God's all-knowing, all-powerful, all-present, without beginning or end. Satan is created with limited knowledge and power and also limited insight, and so you're not looking at someone who is equal to God, but he's a personal being, an angel. And those demons that are with him are at war against God, and his holy angels, and his servants, Christians. And there really is a battle. There really is a war.

And what Paul says to the Corinthians is if we know how our enemy works, then we can defend ourselves. But if we don't know how he works, he's going to defeat us. And there are many names given for Satan in the Bible, but I'll share nine of them with you because they all refer to a particular aspect of Satan's work.

1. ACCUSER (REVELATION 12:10)

He is called, in Revelation 12:10, "the accuser of the children of God." He accuses them day and night. Some of you will hear: "you are a failure, you are without hope, you are beyond the love of God, you are beyond the grace of God, what you have done can never be forgiven, God does not love you, you should die, you should kill yourself." You will hear that negative self-talk, often "you, you, you." And if there were someone next to you saying those things, you would rightly identify it as accusation from opposition. But because it's from a spirit being who is unseen, you think you have low self-esteem, negative self-image, negative self-talk, but it's accusation. It's accusation.

2. ADVERSARY (1 PETER 5:8)

He also works as our adversary. 1 Peter 5:8 says that he is our adversary and he is always seeking ways to destroy us. You need to know this about Satan. He's your adversary. He's opposed to you. He will, in every way, try to convince you otherwise, but if you're involved in habitual, unrepentant sin, false religion, vague spirituality, it's all darkness and demonism. It's all alliance with your adversary. Satan isn't a little good and a little bad. He's not a little yin and a little yang. He's not, as

Easternism would tell us, or Pantheism or Panatheism would tell us, he's not both good and evil. God is good and Satan is evil. And he's our adversary.

3. APOLLYON (REVELATION 9:11)

Additionally, he is called Apollyon, or "the destroyer," in Revelation 9:11. He comes to destroy. Jesus says elsewhere he comes to kill, rob, destroy. That's what he does. He doesn't—he doesn't bring order. He brings disorder. He doesn't bring harmony. He brings conflict. He destroys marriages. He destroys relationships. He destroys legacies of generations. He destroys churches. That's what he does. See, God is the creator, and Satan is the destroyer.

4. DECEIVER (REVELATION 12:9)

He is also, number four, the deceiver. That he will seek to convince you. Some of you have insight, spiritually. You see auras, you have supernatural insight, you get all kinds of interesting dreams, and you think you're very powerful or connected to God, but it might be demonic deception. Satan trying to get you to be in tune with unclean, unholy spirits and darkness. That's why, friends, at Mars Hill we're not positive towards spirituality, because spirituality can include demonism. Not all spirits work for God. Not all spirits honor God. Not all spirits love and obey God. It's why 1 John says to test the spirits, to see whether they're holy or unholy, whether they are serving God or Satan. And in deceptions, some people will tell you that spirituality is sufficient, or that a religion, apart from the Jesus of the Bible, is saving. And it's not. It's deceiving. And some of you, even when you suffer or hard times come, Satan would come and deceive you, and he would tell you, "You know what? God did that. God is evil. Don't trust him." And so not only would he abuse you, then he would deceive you into thinking it was God who was evil.

5. FATHER OF LIES (JOHN 8:44)

That's because, number five, he's the father of lies. Jesus says in John 8:44, he says, "Your father is the devil. Lying is his native language. He's the father of lies. He's only a liar. He's been lying since the beginning." Satan lies. That's why the Bible says, "Thou shalt not lie." Lying is speaking a demonic language. It's not just promulgating error. It is, but it's more than that. It's speaking a demonic language. If you lie, you're doing something that is evil. If you believe lies, they will destroy you. Something need not be true to be deadly. It simply need be believed. And if you don't believe that this is God's Word, if you don't believe that Jesus is God's son, if you don't believe that repentance of sin is required, and faith in Jesus is necessary, then you will believe lies. And some of you, your lives are filled with lies regarding your identity, your purpose, where you come from, why you're here, where you're going, and if you build your life on the lie or the lies, you will be destroyed. You will be destroyed. The Holy Spirit brings to mind one counseling appointment I had recently. This woman was absolutely convinced that her husband didn't love her. And he does! He adores her. He's faithful to her. She had rejected him, and jettisoned him, and was bitter against him, and she had no cause. And finally, we got to the root of it. She believed a lie. She believed a lie. Now, it wasn't true, but her faith in it empowered it to destroy her.

6. TEMPTER (1 THESSALONIANS 3:5)

Number six: Satan is also called the tempter. To be sure, there is flesh within us, a seed of rebellion from our first father, Adam, that wants to disregard, dishonor,

disobey God, but then Satan comes along and he will provide for us tempting opportunity. He wants to tempt us. You need to know, when you're tempted to sin, there's a demonic battle that's raging in your life. And Satan is saying, "Sin against God. Join the darkness. Align yourself with my team." And he will give you some pleasure or reward for succumbing to his seducing, but it's all tempting. What are you tempted by? What are you tempted to? What battles have you lost? What battles are raging in the arena of temptation, at present, on this day?

7. MURDERER (JOHN 8:44)

He is also called a murderer. This is his final goal. He hates life. God is the living God. God is the author of life. And Satan is the one who loves death. He wants marriages to die, families to die, friendships to die, cultures to die. He wants churches to die. He wants the unborn to die. He wants you to die through reckless behavior, severe depression, suicidal thoughts. His work is always, ultimately, toward death. Toward death.

8. EVIL ONE (MATT. 13:19, 38)

Additionally, he is called the evil one, number eight, by Jesus in Matthew 13:19 and 38. He is evil. When you look at the world and its history, and all of the devastation and destruction, all of the sin and the suffering; when you look at all the wars that have been waged, and all the dollars that have been spent, and all the elections that have been held, and all the organizations that have been launched, evil has not come to an end. Suffering, injustice, tyranny has not come to an end. Might I say that the days of believing that we're all good people and things will get better in time is just naive mythology. It's a lie and a deception. That's because behind the world system is the evil one, the personification of evil. He is evil. With him are demons who are evil. And serving under them are sinners who are complicit as captives in war, participating as his soldiers.

9. ENEMY (MATT. 13:28, 39)

And lastly, Jesus says rightly as well in Matthew 13 that he is our enemy. Friends, that if you belong to Jesus, you are in a war. And you and I, we have an enemy. He has nothing good intended for us. He has nothing truthful to tell us. He has nothing liberating to offer us.

And the truth is that Satan is real but we are still responsible. And when it comes to teaching on Satan and demons, sometimes people overemphasize the power of Satan, and they blame him for everything. Others, in an effort not to do that, or having seen the teaching of Satan and demons abused to just frighten people, they tend not to believe in Satan and demons as real, personal beings at work. And the truth is this. Satan is real, but we are responsible. He will lie, but we believe the lies. He will deceive us, but we will accept his deception. He will tempt us, but we will sin, so he is real and we are responsible for our complicit participation.

And the result is when we participate with him, we are taken as captives in this war. That's why Jesus says in Luke 4:18, a bit earlier in the book, "He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, to set at liberty those who are oppressed." That as we join the darkness and the work of our enemy Jesus comes to liberate we who are taken captive in this cosmic battle. And today you'll see this play out in the life of one man, the demon-possessed man.

JESUS IS A MISSIONARY

Again, Jesus is exhausted. Jesus has been working long, hard, difficult hours. His diet is not great. He's not sleeping in a bed. He's fallen asleep in a boat. He's gone from one side of this large lake, where God's people tended to live, and there were synagogues dedicated to the reading, studying, and obeying of the Old Testament Scriptures. And he has sailed across this enormous lake into what would be called the pagan, Gentile, unbelieving, spiritual part of town.

This is where those who don't worship the God of the Bible live. They are very spiritual people, but they've succumbed to demonic religion, general, vague spirituality. All of this is typified, as you will see, by pigs. These were animals that were declared unclean in the Old Testament during that covenantal era that was fulfilled in Jesus. The fact that they're making their living off of sin, and rebellion, and false worship indicates that God's people are not there. There is not a synagogue there. There is not Old Testament Scripture there. There are not God's people there. And Jesus is coming to this town.

We read the story beginning in Luke 8:26. "Then they sailed to the country of Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee," near the Sea of Galilee. Jesus here is a missionary, going into a very dark, very pagan, very secular, very spiritual town. Previously, Simeon had prophesied of Jesus in Luke 2:32, that he would be, "A light for revelation to the Gentiles." Jesus doesn't love just one nation or one race. Jesus loves all nations and all peoples. And here he is going as a cross-cultural missionary to the Gentiles.

A DEMONIZED MAN

"When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs." Jesus gets out of the boat. He's absolutely exhausted. And the first thing he sees is a demonized man approaching him. This is what it is like in certain seasons of ministry. It is war on every front. There is no break. As a church, your leaders feel fatigued. It is one of those seasons for us. And Jesus steps out of the boat and here comes the demonized man.

This man was legendary in that region. Legendary. All the kids knew, "Don't go near the grave site. Don't go to where the tombs are. Crazy, naked, demonized man running around." People had totally given up on this guy. There's no hope for him. They tried to just shackle him. He broke the shackles. So they just let him run wild, and the goal was avoid him.

Jesus gets off the boat. Here he comes. Jesus is a strong, tough man who endures a lot. He's the God-man. But he's a strong, tough man who endures a lot. When Jesus stepped out on land, there he met this man from the city who had demons. Multiple demons.

"For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house, but among the tombs." The tombs were considered a cursed area by God's people. You wouldn't go there. This means he's living out of town, as well. The city has absolutely given up on him. They don't know what to do with him. They've tried to give principles to his

mind, and maybe tried to deal with his body, at least through shackles and restraints. None of it worked or helped. Some of you know people like this. They're not in their right mind. Everyone's done everything they can and they're not okay. And it may be that the spiritual aspect of their being is where they're really getting attacked.

And that he had demons. We read that he had demons. And this is possible. For the non-Christian, they can open themselves up through habitual, unrepentant sin, drug and alcohol abuse, which enables a person to not be self-controlled and alert like the Bible says, through false religions, spirituality in general, occultic behavior; there are various ways to open yourself up as an unbeliever to demonic control, to where your thoughts, and your deeds, and your identity more and more become dominated by an alternate personality, by another being.

See, in our day we just call this a clinical diagnosis of something like a multiple personality disorder. We don't know what to do, we don't know what to say, we don't know how to diagnose these, so what we say is they have multiple people. We don't know what to do with it, and so we just diagnose it. I'm not saying that every person that has MPD is demonized. But I'm saying that in our world that doesn't believe in the spiritual, doesn't believe in Satan and demons, we don't know how to diagnose, love, and treat people, help people who really have been taken captive in war. And they're not just crazy, hearing voices. They're hearing voices. They're not just manifesting another personality that they invented from trauma to cope with suffering, which is what some people do, but maybe they have opened themselves up through lies, and temptations, and accusations, and spiritism, and demonism, and occultism, and addiction to the point where they actually have demons, unclean spirits at work in them and through them to destroy them. That's this man's story.

Now, for the believer you cannot be owned or possessed by Satan, but you can open yourself up to external influences. Even though you belong to God, you can participate with Satan, as Peter does on one occasion when he speaks a lie. He rebukes Jesus when he ought not, and Jesus looks at him and says, "Get behind me, Satan." Satan at that moment, because Peter was a believer, he didn't fill and control Peter, but Peter was listening to him, speaking for him, working for him. And so Jesus rebuked Satan and ultimately Peter's work with him. For the unbeliever, you can end up like the demonized man, totally controlled. For the believer, you can end up like Peter, participating in the enemy's work even though you belong to Jesus. It's very serious business.

And I say this not to frighten, or terrify, or scare you, but to open your eyes to reality. And as a pastor who loves, loves you and loves this church—along with the other leaders here—loves our people, we can't just operate in a worldly way, saying everything can be fixed through information and medication. Because sometimes the problem is demonization. Information does help. Medication, for some who have a physical condition, can help. But for those who have spiritual attack and demonization, they need Jesus. And they need repentance and truth, and the indwelling presence and power of God the Holy Spirit, so they'll be controlled by the power of God, not the power of the enemy.

And that's this man's story. He is demonized. "When he saw Jesus," verse 28, "he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice—" this is reverential

honoring, not in a worshipful way, but in an acknowledging way of who Jesus is. “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?” Jesus, Son of the Most High God.

The demon or demons in this man have thoroughly taken over his personality. It is possible. I have seen this, multiple occasions as a pastor. It's not a part of my ministry, our ministry, that we talk about a lot because it freaks people out. And they tend to think one of two things. Everybody has a demon or I do because I'm talking about it. And so, either way they kind of freak out. But what can happen is, and I've seen it, that someone can be so overtaken by an unclean spirit, they can yield so much of themselves that the unclean spirit now dominates and dictates their personality. And that's what happens here. The spirit, this demon, is speaking through this man. Okay, I've seen this. I've seen people who have completely different voices, personalities, interests. This man has completely yielded himself to that which is unclean. He's not filled with the Holy Spirit. He's filled with unclean spirits.

DEMONS KNOW WHO JESUS IS AND THEY ARE GOING TO HELL

What's curious is that these demons know who Jesus is. They actually have accurate, high Christology, theology of Jesus. Jesus, they call him “Son of the Most High God.” The Most High God is the God who's above all the angels, and all the demons, and all the spirits, and all the teachers, and all the rabbis, and all the pastors, and all the religions. There are people, human and spirit, that are high in spiritual authority, and the God of the Bible, he's the Most High God. There's no God equal to him. There's no spirit alongside of him. There is no one with authority that is comparable to his. He's the Most High God.

They say, “Jesus, you're the Son of the Most High God. That means you're the same stuff as he. Same position, same authority as he. Like father like son. And you have come into human history, and you are the God-man among us. You are Jesus, the Most High God.” Demons know who Jesus is, and like some people, they just don't love him. It is not enough to know who Jesus is. He is to be loved as God. And the demons know who he is, but they do not love him as God. I pray, friend, that would not be your heart today. That your heart would not be, “I know who Jesus is, he's the Most High God” and then you would leave here without really examining whether or not you love him.

The demons know who Jesus is, and they don't love him. They hate him. They despise him. They oppose him. And they make this request, “I beg you, do not torment me.” Demons have authority over the man, and Jesus has authority over the demons. So they're asking him permission to withhold, or delay, their punishment. Actually, the word they use here is “torment.” They know that they're going to hell.

Demons know they're going to hell. Hell is a conscious, literal, eternal place of just punishment and torment. Hell is real. Unlike some people, demons actually acknowledge that they're going there. Jesus talks about hell more than anyone else in the Bible. And the demons know that's where they're going, and I assure you of this, and I say this with concern, if you don't know Jesus and love him as God, the Most High God, you are headed to hell and torment as well.

Some of you would say, "That's naive. That's old-fashioned. I don't believe that." And I would say, "You have believed a lie; the enemy has already won a great victory in your life, to convince you that you are not an immaterial soul, or spirit, that there is not one Most High God, that there is no war and enemy, and that there is no sentence in eternity." It's all deception. It's all a lie. It's all a tactic and a trick. Because your enemy knows he is going to hell. He knows that his fate is sealed. He knows that there is no possibility of salvation for him. And his goal is to take as many of you with him as he possibly can.

Have you seen someone who is desperate? Have you seen someone who knows that they are going to lose or die? The police have come in, the military has come in. They are outnumbered, they are outdone, they are surrounded. They know that their days are coming to an end. And what do they seek to do? Cause as many people as possible to suffer. That's your enemy. We're like hostages taken in war, and Jesus comes to liberate. And Satan's goal is to take as many of us with him as he possibly can.

And so they come to Jesus and they say, "We know we're going to be tormented by you, the Son of the Most High God. Do no torment us now, we beg you. Don't send us to hell." Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, writes later in one of his epistles that there is only salvation made available for people, not for spirits, demons, angels.

See, you and me, Jesus went to the cross to suffer and die in our place for our sins. So there is, given to you and me, this great invitation of salvation from Jesus. That the sin which binds us to Satan and the kingdom of darkness, and his war against God, that presence, and power, and penalty of sin was broken on the cross of Jesus, who suffered and died in our place for our sins.

That's why Colossians 2:13-15 says that he triumphed over our enemy. He took the written code of our sin. It was nailed to his cross, that he has defeated Satan. That he has made an open, public spectacle of him triumphing over him through the cross. That's the great victorious gift that Jesus gives to the children of God through his death on the cross.

We would invite you to Jesus today to have your sin forgiven, your allegiance to your enemy nullified, so that you might be liberated to no longer live in darkness, and deception, and deceit, and destruction, and death. That you would live a new life as a new person, not filled with lies, and darkness, and death, but filled with the presence and power of God.

And for the angels who sinned against God, this offer, invitation of salvation, is not given. All demons go to hell. There is no exception. That is justice. For those who are here, and will hear, the invitation of Jesus is given. It is not too late. There is opportunity for you. Salvation is made possible for those who turn from sin and trust in Jesus as the Most High God. And so they come to Jesus and what they don't say is, "Save me. Forgive me." All they can ask is, "Please don't torment me now. I know it is coming later but don't send me to hell at this moment."

LEGION

“For he had commanded the unclean spirit,” verse 29, “to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.)” Demonization, spiritual uncleanness, it affects the mind. This man was not in his right mind. It affects the body. This man’s body was devastated. We do not evolve from animals. The Bible says we were created with a loving care by the metaphorical hand of God. But what can happen is, as we open ourselves to Satan, and demons, and lies, and death, we start to act more animalistic. This man was acting, behaving, conducting himself like an animal. He’s naked. He’s violent. He’s got massive super-human, demonically enabled strength. He could break chains. They can’t even hold him down. He’s not shaved. He’s not bathed. He’s not eating with his hands. He’s like an animal.

And this is what happens for those who yield themselves to Satan. More and more, they look like animals. That’s where I think for some people, evolution becomes plausible. Because some people, with sex, and food, and drink, and violence, and selfishness, and cruelty, they behave like animals. It’s not that they are animals, but they behave like them. That was this man’s fate.

And he had been this way, the Bible says, for “a long time.” Maybe years. This guy had a mother and father. He maybe had brothers and sisters. He wasn’t like this his whole life. Somehow, someday, on some day, he began opening himself up to Satan, and demons, and lies, and uncleanness, and darkness. And it got a little worse every day until who this man was disappeared. And this new person started to emerge, this spirit being, and this team of spirit beings through him, destroying him.

People are suffering. The enemy is real. To be sure there are some who have mental problems, there are some who have physical problems, but there are some that the lion’s share of their troubles is spiritual. They don’t know that the enemy has taken them captive in war. These kinds of people are given up on as this man was. And Jesus came and he commanded with his authority the unclean spirits out of this man. That’s what Jesus does. He’s the Most High God.

The story continues in verse 30, “Jesus then asked him, ‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘Legion,’ for many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss.” This is where the man has so manifested demonic control that he’s taken on a new name and a new identity. I’ve dealt with demonized people. And this will happen, a different name, a different personality, different disposition, different interest, different hobbies, habits. The whole person changes. I’ve met with people who are married to someone and they will manifest a totally different personality, even a different name.

And sometimes, to be honest, they underwent a traumatic event and they created sort of an alternate personality. And it’s something called disassociation, where they would try and not pay attention to the abuse that was upon them, and try and live in a parallel reality as a means of escape. And it’s a psychological mechanism. I’m a pastor, I love people, I see this. This is part of our ministry. But sometimes it’s demonic. Sometimes they’re not just hearing voices, they’re actually hearing voices. Sometimes they’re not just role-playing, or having a psychological issue, they’re manifesting a demon. Someone else has taken over, a spirit being, has taken over

their physical body.

And here, Jesus asks, “The name? He says, ‘Legion.’” Legion is a term for a military fighting unit in the Roman Empire of about six thousand soldiers. Now, some of the commentators, nearly all of them, would say, “We probably shouldn’t take that number literally.” They’ll give lots of reasons. It is possible this man had opened himself up to six thousand demons, and that would account for his super-human strength.

And when I first started pastoring Mars Hill, bizarre spiritual things started happening. Lots of demonic opposition. It tends to come in waves. And I didn’t know what to do. I’m in my twenties. New Christian. I go to meet with an older pastor who’s very godly. Did his doctoral dissertation on spiritual warfare, loves Jesus and the Bible. He’s really humble, simple guy, tends not to exaggerate or overstate. So I went to meet with him. Like, “What do we do with this?” And he told me that on one of his first counseling appointments with someone who was demonized, he’s a big guy, pushing maybe three hundred pounds. Big guy. He said a small woman picked him up and threw him. See, there’s no way to account for that. Other than, there has to be a variable in here that is unaccounted for. That kind of strength. This guy has been chained up with multiple chains and shackles. Maybe his name was Jack, I don’t know. Now, this other personality, this demon in him, is named Legion, and comes with super-human strength.

I don’t know whether or not it was six thousand demons. I’ll tell you this, demons lie. And they boast and brag and they’re motivated by pride. And as I’ve dealt with demonized people, and as even non-Christians are overcome by demons to where who they are fades into the background, and this other personality comes to the foreground, I find that demons tend to lie. So you can’t believe everything they say. Again, they work for the father of lies. Whatever the case is, this man had many demons, whatever that number was.

A HERD OF PIGS

So, “Now,” verse 32, “a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.” They’re by the graves. It would have been ceremonially an unclean area. They’re part of an unclean people. They’re pagans who don’t worship the God of the Bible. There is an unclean man who is filled with unclean spirits, and Jesus casts them into unclean animals. In the Old Covenant, the pigs, in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, were considered unclean animals. This indicates that they were pagans. Jews wouldn’t have been raising pigs like this.

Mark’s Gospel, I think it’s in chapter five, is the same account and it says that, in fact, there were two thousand pigs, so this is a large herd. This is a lot of money. This is someone or a group of people losing a very lucrative business. It’s like Jesus showing up at the dealership and sending the demons into two thousand cars and they all go drive off a cliff. It’s a big financial loss on that day.

Some of the commentators, those that are more modern and educated beyond their intelligence, at this point they will infer that Jesus sinned because he killed the

animals. And you could see that people would come to that conclusion if this happened, say, at a dog park and all the dogs had demons cast into them and they went and drowned themselves in the Puget Sound. You could imagine that at that moment, those who live in Seattle would not say, "Praise God, our savior is here."

And what Jesus is doing here, I think he is condemning their paganism because they, like some of you, have found a profitable way to get lucrative through sin. To get lucrative through sin. That's what they've done. Pigs were unclean animals and they had many of them, and it was part of their paganism, it was part of their overt, public rebellion against the God of the Bible. And so God is destroying their pagan way of life, he is judging their false gods, and here's the truth: Jesus conquers demons and false religion. He doesn't compromise or syncretize with it, he demonstrates his authority and power over it to crush it and invite people to come to him because they've been taken captives in war.

Also, that town loved their pigs more than this man. Just like in our own day, there are people who will go exceedingly and abundantly beyond the call of duty for a pet and not a person. And God wants us to love people and animals, but if his image bearers are suffering, then healing, and hope, and help to them is a priority.

JESUS CHANGES PEOPLE

"When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled," verse 34, "and told it in the city and in the country." This is what is leading the nightly news. "Then people went out to see what had happened." There's a great buzz. The shops are shutting down. The schools are closing. Everybody's walking around trying to figure out what's happening and who this man Jesus is.

"And they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone." And here's what he looks like now. "Sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind." This guy's sitting there, shaved, clean, bathed, dressed, notebook, pen, taking notes. What happened to this guy? He met Jesus. Jesus changes people. That's just what he does.

See, no one's beyond the grace of God. That's why we don't lose hope in anyone. Not "in anyone," let me state it correctly. We don't lose hope for anyone. We don't have hope in anyone. But we have hope for everyone because the hope is not in them. The hope is in Jesus. And it doesn't matter where someone is. As long as they're alive, there's hope because Jesus could change them. He just does. Jesus changes, sometimes in an instant, the most unbelievable people who are seemingly beyond any hope.

Earlier today I got a text from a friend of mine. He grew up in an abusive home, and drugs, and alcohol, and violence, and gambling, and he's a guy who was very racist in Texas and California, and was a gang leader, and hated Hispanics and African-Americans, and got arrested repeatedly for dealing drugs. And anytime someone would steal drugs from him, he would put them in a hotel and he would duct tape them to a chair and electrocute them repeatedly to get them to confess. He got arrested multiple times, finally ended up in prison, was serving basically a life sentence. He started a gang in prison and he led all the white racists to declare war on the Mexicans and incited the biggest prison riot in the history of the state of California.

To summarize, he's a bad guy. And then Jesus showed up in his jail cell and he got saved, and he got out on a technicality, and he planted a church, and now he's got a wife and a beautiful little girl, and he texted me today to wish me a happy Father's Day. Changed life. Changed life. That's what Jesus does. He's a friend of mine. And it's been a lot of years now, so it's actually stuck.

This is what Jesus does. He just changes—some of you, that's your story. Like, "I was a drug addict. Boop. Done." You say, "Well, what happened?" "I don't know. Done. I don't know. I met Jesus. I'm different. I can't tell you what happened. Jesus is great." Some of you, that's your story. The occult, demonism, false religion, insanity, reckless behavior, addiction, complete self-absorbed narcissist. Jesus shows up. Boop. Different. That's this guy.

So everybody comes out. "Where's the demonized guy?" "Right there." "Well, it's not that guy. Last time I saw him he was naked and he has a ZZ Top beard and he's running around scaring kids. What's he doing now?" "Oh, he's in Bible college. He's sitting there taking notes." See, this is our hope for people. This is our hope for our city. This is our hope for our world. If people meet Jesus, anything can happen.

"And they were afraid." All the pagans were concerned. Never seen this. "And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of Gerasenes asked him to depart from them for they were seized with great fear." They were scared of Jesus.

Some people hear, "Hey, Mars Hill campus is coming to your neighborhood." They're scared. Right? Some people hear that you're a Christian. They're scared. Some people hear that you're inviting them to community group. They're scared. Their first reaction is, "I don't know who Jesus is. I don't know where this is leading. I don't know what's going to happen. This is all new and unfamiliar. I'm scared. I'm freaked out. This is concerning." And the first response is rejection of Jesus. Fear. Not fear in a reverential, worship way, but in a more terrified way. They're not even scared of the demonized guy anymore, but they're scared of Jesus.

So they ask him, "Jesus, could you please leave? You've got a lot of power that we don't have and you have a lot of authority that we don't enjoy and we don't know who you are, and we're scared. Could you please leave?" Is there any hope for these people? Is there only going to be one convert in town? Is that it?

GO INTO THE CITY AND TELL THE STORY

"So he got into the boat and returned," verse 37. "The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.' And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city," he's a preacher now, "how much Jesus had done for him."

The guy comes to Jesus. "Jesus, look. I want to go with you. You got a boat, twelve disciples; I nominate myself to be the thirteenth. I'll find a place in that boat. I'm ready to roll. I don't want to stay here, Jesus. These people all know who I am. They know the worst of me. They know the horrible things that I've done. They know the ways I've gotten myself into trouble. They know what kind of man I am. So, Jesus, can

I go with you? Can I just hang out with you? Can I just be with all the Christians, all the believers here? Can I just have this never-ending Bible study with you and the guys? Can I go to another town where nobody knows me, and I walk in in my redeemed, cleaned up condition? And we don't have to talk about my past because it's really embarrassing and shameful?"

Jesus says, "No. You stay here and tell everybody who you were, who you are, and what I've done." "Serious, Jesus?" "Yes." Because, see, they're scared of Jesus, but this guy's got a powerful testimony, Amen? This guy's quite a story.

And here's the point, the takeaway point for us. Mars Hill, we're in war. I don't know if you know this. We're in war. We're in war. And it's not against non-Christians, and it's not against the cities in which we have campuses, and it's not against the economy. Ephesians 6, our war is not against flesh and blood, but powers, principalities, and spirits. We're at war against a great enemy, that our God is at war. And we are with him.

And when we sin, we're complicit with the enemy. And in this war, people have been taken captive. They're being seduced, and lied to, and destroyed by our enemy. Some are settling for demonic, false religion, and spiritual power, and supernatural ability. It's all just deception. They're captives. I need you to see the world as captives taken in war.

This man was obvious, but everyone else in town was in the same condition, spiritually, though they weren't manifesting it as overtly, externally. They didn't look as bad as him, but they were on that same trajectory toward that same ultimate destiny of justice and hell. We're in war.

And I'll be honest. Me and your leaders, we feel like Jesus getting out of the boat. We could sleep anywhere. Exhausted. It's like war on every front. Hurting people, needy people, suffering people everywhere. More people than we've ever had. More needs than we've ever had. Layoffs, we just fired 10 percent of the staff. It's like war on every front. And I came here today full of myself, and discouraged, and frustrated, and ready to read Lamentations and pour myself a drink. And I read this and I feel the Holy Spirit putting life back in me and steel in my spine.

You know what? It's a great day when there's a city in need, and it's a great day when God does a work in your life. And it's a great invitation to just be honest. "Here's who I am. Here's what I've done. Here's what I believe. Here's who I would be were it not for Jesus." And to be honest with your family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, your redemption group, your community group, "here is who I am. Here's what's been done to me. Here's what I've done to others. Here's the darkness. Here's the devastation. Here's the destruction. Here's the deception. It's shameful. I'm embarrassed to tell you, but guess what? Jesus saved me. He has come to liberate me from captivity to my enemy." And then that allows you to have credibility with other people. The more honest you are, the more believable you are.

Jesus invites us today and he commissions us today as he did this man. Don't just huddle up with the believers. There are still a lot of people that are held captive in war. "Go into the city and tell the story of what I've done for you." What a great

invitation that is. Mars Hill, we rejoice in Jesus' work in this man's life. We rejoice that he obeyed Jesus and stayed to preach. As I showed you, and it was a great honor to go to the archaeological site, a church was planted there that grew so large that they had to take another building down the hill and go multi-site. Fantastic. This man was the first convert, and many came after him because of God's work in him.

We want this. We're not done. It's gonna be war until we see Jesus upon his return. We will get tired. Right now, we're tired. We will have war on many fronts. Right now, we have war on many fronts. We will lack supplies, and right now most of you aren't giving. We will be, like Jesus, just absolutely done. When crisis and need, because of suffering people, show up providentially in front of us, and by the grace of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we'll follow in the example of Jesus for the glory of Jesus.

We'll share the love of Jesus with anyone and everyone until the city is changed. Because the darkness cannot win. Mars Hill, the darkness cannot win. People are suffering, people are dying. And if all you do is watch television, listen to your headphones, surf the Internet, and close your eyes to the suffering and damage of the people that surround us, you will lack the kind of passion that a soldier requires for a long battle.

Father God, I pray against the enemy, his servants, their works and effects. Satan, in the name of Jesus, I rebuke you. We ask, Holy Spirit, that you would surround us, north, south, east, and west, individually and corporately, that you'd watch over our homes, and our lives, and our families, and our church, and its campuses, and our community groups. We pray a hedge of protection against the enemy, his servants, their works and effects. Lord Jesus, we thank you that a day of judgment, and justice, and torment is coming, when Satan and demons will be no more, and your kingdom will be forevermore. God, we ask for the grace through the Holy Spirit to acknowledge and confess our sin, where we have been complicit with the tactics and tricks of our enemy. God, I pray for our church. It's one of those battle seasons where, like Jesus, we're tired but there's still work to do. God, I pray that you would allow us to have a heart for our city and that you would allow us to have a boldness in our testimony to talk about the difference you make in a life. And God, we want to see, as this man saw, many be redeemed, set free, liberated from darkness to light, from sin to holiness, from idolatry to worship, from their enemy to their savior, in whose name we pray. Amen.

[End of Audio]

Note: This sermon transcript has been edited for readability.