

“Tell Your Story”

06-12-16

Jesus has power over all things; life, death, nature, and even demons. Today's Gospel from Luke tells the story of Jesus saving a man who was possessed by a legion of demons. At the conclusion of the story, Jesus tells the man that he isn't to go with Him, even though he wants to, but to go into the town and tell his story of how Jesus saved him.

As we look at the story, Jesus comes to us and asks us to go where we are, and tell our Jesus story to everyone! Open to Luke 8.

Jesus and His disciples have just gotten off the boat. They had a horrendous ride on rough seas, but through it all, Jesus laid in the back and fell asleep until the disciples pleaded with Him to save them! Jesus stood and calmed the sea until they got to the Gerasenes where today's story takes place.

Verses 26-28, *“Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. 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. 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. 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.)”*

This story was a story of battles! This man with demons gave one of the strongest statements of who Jesus was in Scripture! He boldly and strongly proclaims for all to hear, *“What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?”* Everyone in town not only knew who this man was but what was his problem. The first battle was between the **Man vs. People**. Even though they knew all about him, they were uncomfortable being too close to him! That's why he didn't live with them, but away from them.

Verses 30-33, *“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. 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. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.”* The Second Battle was between the **Legion vs. Jesus**. Jesus shows His power.

Why the pigs? They were property of someone else! Most likely it showed that Jesus is Lord of all, including all creatures, and He's able to do whatever He wants. The fact that this man was now free of demons, not only relieved him but also the neighbors around him!

I don't know if you ever thought of this before, but just like the man was free of demons, you and I who are the baptized are washed clean from sin and Satan as we are washed with the water and the Word, in the name of our Triune God!

Verses 35-36, *“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. And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed.”* The people knew the man and were amazed at what had happened! They were afraid because Jesus had done the impossible! Here we witness the Third Battle, **Possession vs. Peace**. The demonic man had been transformed by Jesus Christ!

Verses 37-39, *“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. 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 how much Jesus had done for him.”* This is quite a reaction from the people after this incredible miracle had occurred! It’s possible that the pigs may have been part of their economy and they didn’t want Jesus destroying anything else!

But the important thing is that Jesus declares to the healed man that He wants him to stay where he is and proclaim to everyone around him what Jesus has done for him. He was the first recorded witness of Jesus in a Gentile area!

Jesus wanted the man to stay behind and convince the people to not be afraid of Jesus’ power but to surrender to it as he had. Jesus wanted this man to help the people to begin to heal, to be delivered from their "demon" of fear and misunderstanding. He wanted the man to help the people to surrender their "whole Life" to Jesus not just one small piece, but everything.

This story is also about what Jesus has done for us! Healing comes to us in various ways. Some experience "a miracle". Some are given the power of courage and strength to endure their situation. Others are released from their personality traits that keep them from truly experiencing the healing power of Jesus!

Just like everyone else, you personally have Battles in Your Life. Sometimes you battle **Fear**. Fear of what’s happened or fear of what’s to come. It’s the unknown that causes fear. Sometimes you battle **Anxiety**. You worry because you don’t know exactly what you’re supposed to do. You want to go the right way, but you don’t know which way that is! Sometimes you battle **Loss**. Many have suffered the loss of a spouse, a job, or financial security.

Even though all these negative battles come, Jesus calls you to **Rejoice!** Listen to these words from Luke 6:22-23, *“Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.”*

Jesus calls you to **Be Transformed!** Romans 12:2, *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”* Just like the demonic from our story was changed, Jesus’ death and resurrection changes you! You’re no longer what and who you were! You’re now different! In the waters of Baptism, He

makes you new and calls you His own! In the Lord's Supper, you receive His body and blood given for you for the forgiveness of sin!

But the most important thing from our Gospel and Jesus' clear message to you is **Share!** He's given you the Great Commission to Go and Tell! You have exactly what the world needs to hear! **Jesus Made the Change in You!**

The young salesman was disappointed about losing a big sale, and as he talked with his sales manager he lamented, "I guess it just proves you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." The manager replied, "Son, take my advice: your job is not to make him drink. Your job is to make him thirsty."

So it is with sharing Jesus! Our lives should be so filled with Jesus Christ that they create a thirst for the Gospel in us and everyone we talk to!. **Tell What Jesus has Done for You!**