

## Luke 8:26-39

*“What to me is also to you?”* This is the question voiced by the demon to Jesus in our text. This is the original Greek, but it’s not good English. And so we translate it, *“What have you to do with me?”* Or we could render it, *“Why don’t you just leave me alone!”* And now it makes sense. The demons want to go about their business without any interference from God. *“Do not torment me!”* begged the demon of Jesus. And yet it was engaged in tormenting the poor man it had taken possession of.

If the demons were in complete control of our world, everyone, including us would be possessed by them. And everyone of us would live in utter misery, being tormented day and night. In other words, life here on earth would be hell, without God in the picture, and the demons doing whatever they wanted to do.

But God is always interfering. Interfering from the demon’s perspective; intervening from our perspective. This interference began after man sinned in the Garden of Eden. God would not wash His hands of us and give us over to the devil and his evil angels. So already then Satan was surely muttering under his breath, *“Why don’t you just leave me alone, God! They’re mine now. I got them to fall into sin. So now they and all their children belong to me!”*

And he would be right in saying this. Sin brings death. And so everyone born to Adam and Eve would exist in a living death, separate from God, and under the power and control of the demons. But out of love for you, God intervened. His word to Satan is clear. Jesus would come into our world, into our living death, and reclaim us for God by defeating the devil.

And this is why we see Jesus stepping out of the boat in the country of the Gerasenes to encounter the man possessed by a demon. And not just by one. A legion of demons had entered him. Four thousand to six thousand demons were tormenting this poor man.

Now I know that all of us are dealing with troubles. Some of us can say, *“I have heart problems.”* Others can say, *“I have headaches.”* Still others, *“I have back pain.”* But could any of us say, *“I have demons!”* Worse yet, *“I have a legion of demons!”* Can you even imagine the misery of this poor man? I’m quite certain that his daily plea was, *“Why don’t you demons just leave me alone!”* But they refuse. For he has no authority over them. He is powerless.

But is this not why Jesus comes to him? The people in the city are not powerless. They don’t have demons. They have no need to cry out each day, *“Why don’t you demons just leave us alone!”* And notice that Jesus does not enter the city of the Gerasenes. He comes to set the prisoners free, but the only one in prison is the man who has demons.

And so the demons are a blessing. Because of them... Because of the misery and helplessness they cause this man, Jesus intervenes. And He has authority over the demons. He drives them out of the man. And the man becomes a disciple of Jesus and His missionary in that region of the world.

Now this does not mean that we should invite the demons in so that Jesus comes to drive them out. He already did this for you in your baptism. Jesus cast the devil out and came to live within you.

But here's the thing... and when I say this, I accuse myself along with you. There are times when we say to Jesus, "Why don't you just leave me alone!" We say this when we're planning to do something that is sinful. We say this when it's Sunday morning and the last thing we want to do is go to church. We say this to Jesus more often than we care to admit. And the demons are glad when we do, for they see it as their invitation.

You and I need to repent... And hear this good news: Jesus simply will not leave you alone. You are baptized. You belong to Him even when sin has grabbed hold of you. Look at the people of the city in our text. They come out because of all the commotion, and they say to Jesus, "Why don't you just leave us alone!" They tell Him to leave their country; to get back in the boat and go away. And even though He does leave, He tells the man who had demons to be His missionary there. Through him, Jesus would love the people of this city. He will not leave them alone. He will speak the good news to them through the mouth of this man.

You see Jesus knows what it's like to be left alone. His own beloved Father in heaven did this to Him as He hung on the cross. He wanted nothing to do with Jesus, for He was loaded with the burden of your sin and mine. And He died. But He rose again. And now He has been given all authority in heaven and on earth, and He uses His authority to help you.

So what burden is plaguing you? What sin has grabbed you? What fear is lurking within you? Don't tell me that you're fine; that all is well with you. No burdens, no demons, no sins. For this describes the people of the city in our text. And all such people who are not powerless and helpless tell Jesus to just leave them alone.

Jesus helped the man who had demons. And He has the authority to help you; the authority to calm your fears with His peace; the authority to forgive your sins; to drive the accusations of the devil out of your heart and mind, and quiet your troubled conscience.

I think it's really interesting that everything in the narrative before us becomes reversed. When Jesus first steps out of the boat, the people of the city are living quietly and peacefully. The only one in that region who is troubled and afraid is the man who has demons. But look how the story unfolds. At the end, the only one in that region who is calm, quiet, and at peace is the man who used to have demons. And everyone else is upset, afraid, and filled with anxiety.

Jesus did this for that man. He drove out the demons and He calmed his heart and mind. He gave that man the good news of the peace that surpasses all understanding. And this is what Jesus does for you. Whatever you brought here today... whatever anxiety, whatever troubles, whatever sins you have done... Jesus is here with you. He forgives you, my friend; all your sins He forgives. He takes your anxiety about the future, your guilt about the past, your troubles here in the present, and He sets your heart at peace. Everyone in the city may be upset and afraid, and telling Jesus to leave them alone. But not you. You are that man who had demons. But no more. Now you have Jesus. Amen.