

From Storm to Shore

Description

A look at Luke 8:22-39

Before we start I want to just make reference to verses *Luke 8:22-25*. These verses set the scene as we approach verses *Luke 8:26-33*. Jesus and His disciples are in a boat on lake Galilee. Jesus says "Let us go over to the other side". This was a purposeful request, Jesus was very aware that on the other side was a man in need of salvation, a salvation that would set him free to worship. You would think this request "to go over" was quite straight forward, BUT, crossing the lake to the other side means possibly encountering storms and heading into a hostile place.

The place of the Gadarene was a different culture, a different country and a different religion. It was a place that was hostile to the gospel and was also heavily reinforced by the Romans. What we can also note about this passage is that crossing the lake in a vessel designed for fishing rather than crossing a potentially volatile, tempestuous lake was probably not the best idea. These boats were shallow bottomed with low sides, ideal for fishing and hauling nets of fish over the sides of the boat onto the base of the boat in shallower water, but in deeper stormy water they were less than ideal. Remember also who Jesus is asking to come with Him across the lake, his disciples, of whom at least four, were experienced fishermen. These men would have probably considered the danger by using their professional knowledge as experienced fishermen.

So the journey started in great faith and with great expectation as they followed Jesus' purposeful request "Let us go over to the other side" but faith soon turned to panic as the storm approached and took hold, not unusual on this inland lake due to the colder air from the mountains that surround it colliding with the warm air rising from the water's surface causing violent storms prompting the now frightened disciples to wake a slumbering Jesus who, as recorded, calmed the storm causing much questioning among the now bewildered disciples. Jesus asked them "where is your faith?" implying "I said let's go to the other side, we are not there yet, so where is your faith?". Although the disciples initially set aside their professional expertise while conditions were calm, the sudden violent storm caused them to lose their resolve; falling back on their experience as seasoned fishermen, they tried to take control rather than trusting in Jesus. I wonder sometimes if this is like us, we start off on our Christian journey in good faith but as soon as the storms come we lose heart and our intellectual security and professional expertise and experience kicks in and we panic. We must always remember at this point in our journey Jesus is still in the boat with us and that we have not yet reached the other side. Remember Jesus does nothing in our lives that has not already been planned for us and so if we trust in Him and His plan all will be well.

When reading this passage I found myself asking the question "why did Jesus want to go to the

other side of the lakeâ?•, surely there was enough for Him to do where he was without entering hostile territory. What we read in the next few verses may just answer that question. *Luke 8:26-33*

What does this passage tell us about Jesusâ?? authority to set us free? From the outset of creation, even through the â??fall of manâ?? as recorded in Genesis, God has always been at work to redeem and restore us to a place where we are free to worship Him. *Exodus 3:7-9* tells us that God tells Moses â??I have seen the affliction of my peopleâ??, â??I have heard their cryâ?•, â??I am come down to deliver themâ?•, â??in order to bring them upâ?•. God is in the business of restoration.

So before we start we need to recognise our fallen human state and our ultimate need of a Saviour. The fallen state of mankind is ultimately separation from God because of Sin. Salvation is not about being bought into a physical place of freedom, it is about being in a place where we are set free to worship Jesus.

In our passage, the demon possessed man was in a state where it says â??he had devils for a long time, wore no clothes, didnâ??t live in a house but lived in the tombs, he lived with the dead. He had no freedom, he was bound with chains and powerless in his ability to worship God.

I want you to notice that it is the possessed man, or more precisely the spirits, that identify Jesus as the â??Son of the most high what have we got to do with youâ?•. In reality we all have to acknowledge our spiritual state and there has to be this spiritual cry within all of us that says â??Jesus, Son of the most high, what have I got to do with youâ??. We all need to encounter the Spiritual, we all need to have a Spiritual awakening that recognises that we need a Saviour.

In verse 30 we have the real question â??What is your name?â?•. All of us need to answer this honestly. This man answered honestly, â??Legionâ?• he said, because we are many. This recognition is true for this man spiritually but also true as a reference to the hostile Roman environment of the Decapolis (*a quick internet search will give more context and detail on the Decapolis*). A Roman legion was between 3000 and 6000 men, representing a formidable force and resistance to anyone wanting to break free of Roman control. Spiritually this is the same as us with Sin, a formidable force and resistance for any of us wanting to break free. Jesus went straight to the heart of the matter, â??what is your name?â?• What is it that is holding us back? Just because Jesus broke the power of Sin on the cross doesnâ??t mean that everything changes the moment we meet Jesus. Just like the possessed man here in this account we have to entreat or determine to want to be free. The Legion (we are many) entreated Jesus to allow them to enter the pigs, just as they engaged with Jesus so we have to engage with Jesus if we want to be free. The reality is that we are free because of what Christ did on the cross but we have to walk daily in His presence in order to live in that freedom.

What happened next was that the herdsmen looking after the pigs were astonished and very afraid and they fled into the city and the country telling everyone what they had seen. The inhabitants of the Gadarene went to find out for themselves and what they saw made them so frightened and uneasy that they asked Jesus to leave (**Rejection leads to Separation**). This was a very unstable place, a place that appears to be hostile to the gospel and certainly hostile to Jesus. Jesus left as requested, there doesnâ??t appear to be any confrontation or resistance. This needs to be a lesson for all of us, the

gospel is best â??caught not foughtâ??. We need to know when it is time to leave. Jesus knew the right time as he knew that he had accomplished His mission, a demon possessed man had been set free to worship. What happens next is amazing. The delivered man requests to go with Jesus, well who wouldnâ??t? Surprisingly Jesus says no you go back to your people. â??What those same people that have just shown that they are hostile and have asked you to leave?â?., â??yes exactly, you go back and you tell them all of the great things that God has done for you.â?• **(Surrender leads to Restoration)**

Jesus knows that if men and women are to hear the good news of salvation and restoration then the best people to spread that good news are those people that know they have been set free to worship. This man had a story to tell and who best to tell it too but the people that knew him best.

Letâ??s continue reading, *Luke 8:40* When Jesus returned, those who had previously rejected Him and asked Him to leave, were waiting. This begs the question how did they know Jesus? I would like to suggest that a certain demon possessed man was so changed by an encounter with the Son of God that he had to tell somebody his story. When Jesus does a work in us we will be compelled to share it and when we do people will be challenged to change and challenged to bring their friends and relatives. This is the power of personal testimony.

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