

Luke 8 Sermon Manuscript

TITLE:

Confronted by Christ: A Case of a Stolen Identity

OUTLINE:

1. When Jesus Confronts Chaos: The Disciples' Response (vv. 22–25)
2. When Jesus Confronts Evil: The Demons' Response (vv. 26–33)
3. When Jesus Confronts Comfort: The Townspeople's Response (vv. 34–37)
4. When Jesus Confronts a Changed Life: The Restored Man's Response (vv. 38–39)

TEXT:

Luke 8:22-39

START

My name is Joel and I'm one of your pastors here at City Church. Thank you for worshiping with us this morning. Before we start let's go into a moment of silence to center our hearts to hear from God and his God's.

QUICK PRAYER

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OPENING ILLUSTRATION

When I'm in public, and someone recognizes me and calls out to me—I respond to 2 different names. The name Joel ... and the name Jason. Some of you immediately know what I'm talking about and some of you have no clue—maybe you think that my middle name is Jason— it is not.

Most of you know I've got identical twin girls—Caroline and Ellison. But I've also got an identical twin brother whose name is Jason.

He lives in California now so I don't get this nearly as much anymore, but for my entire life—at school, on sports teams, running errands, I'll stop in my tracks and turn around if I hear the name Jason—a name that has never been my name.

In the last few months I was getting off a plane in Orlando, and someone came charging at me with a smile—gave me a high five and said “Jason! What's up man?” And this happens all the time.

Sometimes, I just go with it, especially if it's a brief interaction and I don't want to make the other person feel bad. And other times I spend a couple minutes trying to prove to the person that Jason actually has a twin. “Hi, my name is Joel. How do you know my brother?”

But even though it's usually lighthearted, to this day it still feels a bit strange when someone doesn't know who I really am. They see my face and think of someone else's name, someone else's story. This has been my life since childhood. My identity a bit blurred.

And most of you don't have a twin, but you know the power of a mistaken identity. You know the power of your name. Maybe you're new here—and you walked into this room this morning filled with people you don't know. Maybe you felt uneasy, unsure of where to sit or what to say. Now imagine suddenly, someone calls your name—everything changes, right? You're seen. You're known. Your name carries your identity, your story, your struggles, your worth.

(ON SCREEN Title Slide: Confronted by Christ: A Story of Stolen Identity)

As we continue our journey through Luke, we're going to see a story of Jesus who encounters a man whose identity has been stolen by demons.

This man—living among the tombs, isolated, rejected by his community and completely broken, his identity swallowed up by the chaos within. But Christ confronts this chaos—this evil within him with a simple yet powerful question: “What is your name?”

The question—"What is your name?"—is significant. Jesus doesn't ask it because He doesn't know. He asks to confront what's consuming him. He asks to cut to the heart of the man's identity.

He doesn't just see a problem to solve; but like me and you He sees a person to restore. He wants him to remember that he is more than his brokenness, more than his sin, more than the demons inside of him.

Sometimes we too feel like our identity is buried beneath a layer of sin and guilt and shame. And sometimes we're even tempted to identify ourselves by our failures, our pain, or our past.

Yet, Jesus asks each of us the same question: "What is your name?" Not because he doesn't know, or because maybe he thinks you have a twin brother. No, he asks because He wants us to remember that we are more than our brokenness. More than our chaos. He steps into your tombs. He calls you by name.

This is the beautiful ... restorative hope we have in Jesus.

Again, we're going to pick up where we left off 2 weeks ago in Luke chapter 8. If you have your Bibles you can follow along there. If you don't own a Bible, we want to give that to you to have and to use. You can find that at the desk right outside of the auditorium. But in the meantime the words will be up on the screen behind me.

(TEXT ON SCREEN) – Luke 8:22-39

Our primary text will be in verses 28-39, but I want to back up just a few verses earlier to build some helpful context. So starting in verse 22, Luke writes,

22 One day he (Jesus) and his disciples got into a boat, and he told them, "Let's cross over to the other side of the lake." So they set out, and as they were sailing he fell asleep. Then a fierce windstorm came down on the lake; they were being swamped and were in danger. They came and woke him up, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to die!"

Then he got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves. So they ceased, and there was a calm. He said to them, "Where is your faith?"

They were fearful and amazed, asking one another, “Who then is this? He commands even the winds and the waves, and they obey him!”

26 Then they sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. When he got out on land, a demon-possessed man from the town met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes and did not stay in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before him, and said in a loud voice, “What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torment me!” For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was guarded, bound by chains and shackles, he would snap the restraints and be driven by the demon into deserted places.

“What is your name?” Jesus asked him. “Legion,” he said, because many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to banish them to the abyss. A large herd of pigs was there, feeding on the hillside. The demons begged him to permit them to enter the pigs, and he gave them permission. The demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

When the men who tended them saw what had happened, they ran off and reported it in the town and in the countryside. Then people went out to see what had happened. They came to Jesus and found the man the demons had departed from, sitting at Jesus’s feet, dressed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

Meanwhile, the eyewitnesses reported to them how the demon-possessed man was delivered. Then all the people of the Gerasene region asked him to leave them, because they were gripped by great fear. So getting into the boat, he returned.

The man from whom the demons had departed begged him earnestly to be with him. But he sent him away and said, “Go back to your home, and tell all that God has done for you.” And off he went, proclaiming throughout the town how much Jesus had done for him.

INTRO

I’ve got 4 points this morning—each attached to the responses we see from the 4 main characters in this story—the disciples, the legion of demons, the townspeople, and the restored man.

And as we walk through these, I want you to be receptive to see how you respond when you come face-to-face with the power and authority of Jesus.

(ON SCREEN POINT 1 // 1. When Jesus Confronts Chaos: The Disciples' Response (vv. 22–25))

So first let's see what happens when Jesus confronts the chaos of the storm and how the disciples respond.

Super quick point because we covered this text 2 weeks ago. But pretty cool ties to our story this morning.

Do you remember the disciples' panic and fear as their boat began to take on water in the storm? Of course Jesus wakes up and calms the storm, but do you remember their response?

(ON SCREEN Vs 25)

Vs 25 says "they were fearful and amazed".

Of course they were afraid before the storms were calmed. It's what made them go and wake up Jesus.

But it also says their response after seeing the power of Jesus was "fear and awe". They were in complete amazement with what they had just witnessed!

There was something so powerful and shocking in that moment that made the Disciples ask "Who is this man!? Who is this that has authority over the storms?" As we'll see in a minute this is the same awe that brought a legion of demons to the feet of Jesus.

There's a lot of application in these short 4 verses, and I want to encourage you to go back and listen to Trevor's sermon, but here I want to connect it to our main text in one way.

I think what we're seeing by connecting these 2 stories, is that in one sense discipleship, being a follower of Christ, is a call into the storm and away from safety and security. There's risk involved with giving up everything and following him.

But in another sense, like the disciples in the middle of chaos—because of the presence of Christ in our life, Christians are the most safe and secure people in the world.

But this safety isn't based on how easy life is, or how big our paycheck is, or how stable our economy is. We are safe and secure because we are in the hands of the One who holds all power and authority.

(ON SCREEN Vs 25)

And the disciples finally started to grasp this, right?

Can you imagine their jaws dropped as they're just standing there in the boat with the water and wind now calm.

See, after seeing the power of Jesus on display in front of them, a new kind of fear and awe took hold. No longer that restless panic, the fear of chaos and even death by an out of control storm, but a fear brought on—simply by being in the presence of one who has the power to control it—who has authority over it. "Fearful and Amazed"

And this is a perfect set up for the next story Luke tells. Here and in this next section, he's trying to teach us that Jesus isn't just a religious teacher presenting philosophical ideas. He's not just an advice giver that you can use to make your life a little easier. He's not some bottled up source of power that you store away and can use whenever you get in a tough spot.

As the legion of demons will label him, He is Jesus, Son of the most high God.

(ON SCREEN POINT 2 // 2. When Jesus Confronts Evil: The Demons' Response (vv. 26–33))

The next thing Jesus confronts is evil—and there's something fascinating to see here with the response of the demons.

First, let's unpack this story a bit. Honestly I don't think you could make this story up if you tried. If you wanted to make up a religion, you probably wouldn't want to include this part, right? It's just too weird. But not only is it told here, but also in Matthew and Mark's gospel.

So up to this point in Jesus' ministry he's been in the Jewish synagogues—teaching and debating about Jewish customs and laws—performing miracles from one town to the next, primarily in the area around Capernaum which is the northern point of the Sea of Galilee.

And one day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." Seems like a very simple thing to say, but it's actually pretty significant.

See, going to the other side of the lake meant entering Gentile territory. It was the region of the Gerasenes. These people were pig farmers—and pigs were considered unclean to the Jews. This is a brand new and scary part of the country to these disciples—disciples that just came out of a storm they thought they were going to die in.

But I love this detail because it's probably one of the coolest parts of this story. See it's telling us that Jesus doesn't neglect these places. He's gone through the trouble of crossing the sea, taking on a storm, and going into hostile territory—all for one very troubled man.

In a very real way he's done that for all of us—leaving the comfort of heaven—on a rescue mission for you and for me.

And so they reach this likely steep and rocky shoreline and are greeted by a crazy, naked, bloodied, homeless man. When we look at Luke and all the other gospel accounts together, it's pretty scary to see the state this man was in.

This is how Mark describes the man who goes into a little more detail. He says,

(ON SCREEN Mark 5:3-5)

“He lived in the tombs, and no one was able to restrain him anymore—not even with a chain—because he often had been bound with shackles and chains, but had torn the chains apart and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains, he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.”

This is a picture of chaos. More than that—a picture of evil. This man spent his nights howling at the sky and using sharp rocks to cut himself, possibly trying to kill himself.

And this isn't even the worst of it. We see in verse 30 that he was possessed by a legion of demons. A legion is a Roman military term for 3 to 6,000 men. So it's possible that as many as 6,000 demons were tormenting this man's mind, body, and soul. And this starts to make a little more sense because the image we get is not really human at all.

This is what the demons have done to him. They've stolen his identity. They've robbed him of any sense of meaning or belonging. They've isolated him away from his friends and family. And now he lives among the tombs of the dead.

If there's an image of what extreme human brokenness looks like—and what it means when Scripture says that Satan comes to steal, to kill and to destroy—we see it in this man.

But like the fear and amazement the disciples just experienced in the boat. This man was about to meet Jesus.

(ON SCREEN Vs 28)

Vs 28 says that “When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before him, and said in a loud voice, “What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torment me!”

It's pretty crazy how this demon possessed man approaches Jesus. If Hollywood came up with the script it would have been this epic struggle between the demonic forces and Jesus.

But that’s not what happens here. There's no wrestling for power between good vs evil. There's no real spiritual battle at all, is there?

The man runs and falls at Jesus' feet, and immediately the demons begin to beg and plead with Jesus not to be destroyed by him. They recognize his deity, that he’s the “Son of the Most High God”. They know their fate ... don’t they?

In C.S. Lewis’ book Mere Christianity he talks about two common mistakes that Christians make when thinking about the demonic realm. The first is denying the existence of demonic influence. And the second is viewing the devil as an equal to God in some cosmic battle between good and evil.

And our passage today is speaking directly to both of these two mistakes. One, there are very real demons—thousands of them— that have taken over this man’s body, but two, it’s not a fair fight and there’s never a question about who’s going to win.

And this 2nd part sounds great, but even if we can say with our words that on the Cross and in the resurrection that Jesus secured our future—that the battle has already been won ... doesn’t it feel like the battle still rages, that the storms have yet to be silenced in our lives?

It's hard not to feel this or see this all around us. Drive around in the hard parts of this city. Turn on the news. Satan still works all of his powers in this age towards the destruction of all things. And like the demon-possessed man, his aim is to isolate us, dehumanize us, break us.

(ON SCREEN Romans 8:22-24)

In Romans Paul recognizes that this brokenness and evil still exists. He says that all creation seems to be groaning in anguish.

Paul is acknowledging that we live in a moment when things are not yet transformed, but with anticipation and hope we know that one day all things will be transformed and renewed.

And we get a little taste of that here with this demon possessed man.

It's also worth imagining how this man got to the point where he's in the tombs, crying out, cutting himself. Maybe this man is a victim of a broken city – a broken system. Possibly friends and family that have abandoned him because they grew tired of his demonic antics.

But there must have been something at some point that attracted this man to whatever darkness he was being offered.

Here's my point. Sin's control in your life will always be incremental, right? You'll always be able to talk yourself into the small temptations. You'll always be able to sort of rationalize it. And the real temptation is to believe that you're in control of it all. That you can stop whenever you want to stop.

I bet this guy at the beginning of HIS story, never thought he'd be naked in the tombs and howling at the moon. But you would never get to that point, right?

You would for sure stop before you lose your job and your family and your community. You can stop before you no longer resemble your former self. I wonder if this man thought the same thing.

(ON SCREEN James 1:14-15)

James says that “Each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desire. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death.”

“I would never cheat on my wife ... but that friend at work who's fun to talk to—is it flirting? Is it not? There's a connection there. There's chemistry. But nothing's going to happen.”

Temptation enticing you to an evil desire—leading to incremental sin—one after another—which will always lead you on a path towards death.

Trevor preached through this story several years ago but out of the Gospel of Mark.

I went back and listened to it and he pointed out that in Mark's account when it talks about the man being chained up and restrained, the specific language Mark uses is that “no one could restrain him anymore”.

Meaning it didn't start off like this. This was gradual. At one time he could be restrained. At one time people could talk him back into his right mind, but gradually, incrementally, the demonic took over. And what he thought he could control at first, that first evil desire became fully grown—it had fully taken over.

See, the devil doesn't come at us trying to get us to sell our souls in one all or nothing deal. He just needs you to keep chasing after one small temptation at a time. Chasing after every small savior that's not Jesus.

And slowly and gradually you become more and more obsessed with some thing or some person or some power or some amount of money that you think will save you. And before you know it, the devil has you exactly where he wants you ... and you have no clue how you got there.

And that's where this man is at in our passage. He's completely out of control – until of course he meets the Son of the most high God.

No one could restrain him, but with a single question Christ confronts the evil inside of him and unlocks him, frees him, changes him.

(ON SCREEN vs 30)

Vs 30 Jesus asks, “What is your name?” “Legion!”

The man’s identity had been swallowed up by darkness—by evil.

How long do you think it had been since a person tried to have a conversation with him? The last time someone asked him his name? The last time someone talked to him like a human?

But Jesus didn’t shy away. He was unafraid of what kind of threat this man was. He was unbothered by his demonic actions and how he got to this point. And with extreme compassion he looked at him and simply said, “What’s your name?”

(ON SCREEN vs 31-33)

By that time Jesus had already commanded the demons to come out of the man. They begged Jesus to enter into a large herd of pigs that were nearby, and oddly enough Jesus granted their request.

So the demons entered the pigs—the pigs ran off the cliff—and the pigs drowned. So nothing to see here. Let’s move on.

I’m just joking ... We’re going to talk about the pigs.

(ON SCREEN POINT 3 // 3. When Jesus Confronts Comfort: The Townspeople’s Response (vv. 34–37))

But in doing so we’re going to see the 3rd thing Christ Confronts in this passage—our comfort. Let’s look at the townspeople’s response.

First, think about the herdsmen that were watching over these pigs. They’re standing there taking care of the pigs, Mark’s gospel says about 2 thousand pigs, and suddenly these men see the possessed guy who has for years been untamable now completely tame. And then the herd of pigs run off the cliff to their death. Probably freaked these guys out, right?

And so they run down into the town and have to break the news that the big BBQ they were all looking forward to has to be canceled.

But the townspeople had to be thinking these herdsmen were lying ... or maybe they were just confused. So they go and investigate for themselves. And what do they see?

(ON SCREEN vs 35)

Vs 35, they see the man who once lived among the dead, naked, screaming, inflicting pain on himself and others—now “sitting at Jesus’s feet, dressed, and in his right mind.”

And what was their response? What does it say? “Thank you for healing our friend, strange man! What a miracle!” ...no. At the end of vs 35 it says “they were afraid.” And the way this passage reads it seems likely that this fear was related to the miracle that had taken place and the power and authority Jesus must have had.

We saw this fear earlier with the disciples, right? After Jesus calmed the storms they were in complete shock. It said that the disciples were fearful and amazed. And that fear may have been very similar to what these townspeople experienced. But instead of pressing in and following Christ like the disciples, they made a different choice.

(ON SCREEN vs 36-37)

And we see that in the next couple of verses. After the eyewitnesses went into more detail with the townspeople about the demons and the pigs and them running off the cliff—I think another fear set in. It almost emphasizes this fear more than the first. This time Luke says, “They were gripped by a great fear”.

If this guy we’ve been trying to control for years with no luck, was subdued easily by this random man in a boat, perhaps maybe we should be more afraid of him.

“I mean, he did destroy our pigs—our livelihood”—Because these weren’t just pets to them. “If he has the power to do all of that, then what would he do next? And how else will it cost us? What demands might He make of us? What control will we lose?”

See, even though the townspeople couldn’t keep chains on this man, he must have been a comfort to them in some way. They must have felt some degree of control over the situation.

At the very least he was the town’s scapegoat, right? “At least we’re not like that guy. At least my brokenness and problems don’t look like his.”

But this whole story is insane. Jesus comes into this Gentile town. Manhandles several thousand demons. Sets an enslaved man free. Presents himself as a great deliverer.

But when Jesus confronts their comfort— in a shocking turn of events, they beg Jesus —the life-giver, the devil-defeater, and hope-giver to leave.

“Jesus, you've cost us our control, you've cost us financially, and honestly, we don't even care that you rescued one of our own. The money means more to us. The security means more to us. The control means more to us.”

Isn't everything in this story backwards from what you would expect.

- In the boat the disciples were afraid because they didn't believe.
- The demons recognized Jesus' power and believed.
- The madman is the one who ends up sitting still at Jesus' feet.
- And this respectable town hates it and pleads with Jesus to leave—the man who has just done the thing they couldn't do.

I'll tell you what's going on here. The townspeople, even though they're not the ones cutting themselves and wandering around among the tombs, they're the ones that are oppressed.

They've convinced themselves that it's the pigs that give them power. It's the pigs that give them a sense of hope and salvation. And if Jesus is going to challenge them at the expense of losing their pigs ... well he can do that somewhere else.

This story isn't as shocking though when we stop to think of how we've done this in our own lives.

City church, how have you responded when Jesus confronts your comfort? Your money. Your own sense of salvation or power—whatever that may be? How is God calling you out of your comfort and into the storm with Jesus? How tightly are you holding onto your money which you think is going to protect you?

In what ways are you chasing after brokenness instead of the restorative power of Christ in your life?

Jesus will always call us to let go of these things. Things that promise comfort, power, and salvation—but never deliver.

(ON SCREEN POINT 4 // 4. When Jesus Confronts a Changed Life: The Restored Man's Response (vv. 38–39))

Last thing we see Jesus confront is a genuinely changed life. Let's see the response of this now restored man.

(ON SCREEN vs 38-39)

Verse 38 says,

"The man from whom the demons had departed begged (Jesus) earnestly to be with him. But (Jesus) sent him away and said, "Go back to your home, and tell all that God has done for you." And off he went, proclaiming throughout the town how much Jesus had done for him."

I'd hope that a lot of us would do the same thing. Jesus completely restores you ... you're chasing after him. Stay here Jesus—I'm with you. Go back across the sea—I'm there. I don't care what it costs me. Everything I have is now yours.

He goes from begging Jesus to leave him alone to begging him not to leave him alone.

And you'd think that Jesus is so fired up about this guy—I mean, compared to the disciples he's leaps and bounds more mature and amped up about Jesus' mission.

And he's got a story to tell ... and a pretty good one at that. And he's like, "I'm ready to tell my story. Let me come and help you. Jesus, you do some ministry—I'll carry your bags. And whenever you need me for testimony time, I got you." Right?

And what did Jesus say?

First, let's review the tape—Jesus has a track record in this story of saying yes. He grants the disciples' request to calm the storm, He grants the demons' request to go into the pigs. He grants the townspeople request to leave their town. But to this man ... he said no.

Who would have expected that? Plot twist! But Jesus says no. He says, go back home and tell everyone what God has done. And that's exactly what he did.

The one who had no name, who had lost his identity to a legion of Satan's pawns, becomes the first missionary to the Gentile world.

Before the disciples would go out on their missionary journeys, before Paul would take the gospel message around the world. This man spread the good news among his friends and neighbors, among people who were far from God. ... wow!

And how ironic is it that the people in his town are now stuck with the same man they used to shackle and guard, who now won't stop talking about Jesus ... the man they just asked to leave.

But don't you love the ending of this story? In a complete reversal ...

- The naked man—now clothed
- Aimlessly roaming in the tombs—now sent into the town with a purpose
- Isolated from everyone—now in the presence of community
- Wanting nothing to do with Jesus—now obedient to this new calling on his life.

It's a beautiful and intriguing scene, isn't it? Because on one hand, this guy wants nothing more than to be with Jesus. To be close to his power. But Jesus calls him to share all that happened to him.

And just as Jesus sent this delivered man into the city to declare the good News of the gospel. So he sends us out—he sends you out. Why? Because this is how we push back the forces of darkness in our world.

And the beauty of the gospel is that we don't, like this man, have to choose between staying with Jesus, or going back into our city.

Because Jesus resurrected and gave us his Spirit...now...as we go make disciples...as we eagerly obey the commands of this incredible God who saved our lives...he isn't just sending us...he is with us. We have exactly what the man in this story begged for—Jesus' presence.

And like this man, we don't need loads of experience. We just need one experience. Just one story of what Christ has done in our lives.

CLOSING

I want to close by making a connection to a theme that's woven throughout this entire text, and I've hinted at it already.

It's the theme of fear. But what's interesting is how differently it's experienced and responded to by each character in the story.

(ON SCREEN—Put each verse up as a build)

They were fearful and amazed, asking one another, “Who then is this? He commands even the winds and the waves, and they obey him!” Luke 8:25

The disciples feared for their lives in the storm, but their more profound fear came after Jesus calmed the waves when they asked “Who is this man?”. In that moment their fear shifted from the natural to the supernatural.

They weren’t just in the boat with a teacher—they were in the presence of God. Their fear exposed their need for faith, and Jesus was leading them there, not just to safety, but to Himself.

(ON SCREEN—Put each verse up as a build)

They were fearful and amazed, asking one another, “Who then is this? He commands even the winds and the waves, and they obey him!” Luke 8:25

“What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torment me!”... And they begged him not to banish them to the abyss. Luke 8:28 & 31

The demons were also afraid, but only because they knew exactly who Jesus was, “the Son of the most high God”. They begged him not to torment them. They trembled at his authority, knowing their time was running out. Their fear was rooted in eternal judgment, and they knew that Jesus had no tolerance for evil.

I think sometimes we picture Jesus in a white flowing robe—neatly ironed —straight from the dry-cleaners, you know, carrying a baby lamb maybe.

But when God took on flesh, he came with a mission. A mission to face the storm—to push back the darkness. To hold the devil and his demons accountable. He came to step into our chaos and reclaim order.

And Jesus doesn’t just confront evil—He rescues people from it. The gospel is not just good news for the broken, it’s a declaration of war against all that holds them captive.

(ON SCREEN—Put each verse up as a build)

They were fearful and amazed, asking one another, “Who then is this? He commands even the winds and the waves, and they obey him!” Luke 8:25

“What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torment me!”... And they begged him not to banish them to the abyss. Luke 8:28 & 31

Then people went out to see what had happened. ... And they were afraid. ... Then all the people of the Gerasene region asked him to leave them, because they were gripped by great fear. Luke 8:35 & 37

The townspeople also feared, but their fear led them to reject Jesus. Instead of welcoming Jesus, they asked Him to leave.

Why? Because the gospel disrupts our lives. It demands surrender. The cost of having Jesus—losing control, comfort, even possessions—was too big of an ask. They feared what Jesus might take, not realizing what He came to give.

And this is honestly so sad—they feared losing the world more than losing Christ. But the gospel calls us to a better fear—one that leads to reverence and repentance, not retreat.

(ON SCREEN—Put each verse up as a build)

They were fearful and amazed, asking one another, “Who then is this? He commands even the winds and the waves, and they obey him!” Luke 8:25

“What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torment me!”... And they begged him not to banish them to the abyss. Luke 8:28 & 31

Then people went out to see what had happened. ... And they were afraid. ... Then all the people of the Gerasene region asked him to leave them, because they were gripped by great fear. Luke 8:35 & 37

“Go back to your home, and tell all that God has done for you.” And off he went, proclaiming throughout the town how much Jesus had done for him. Luke 8:39

Which is how the restored man responded—showing us what gospel-shaped fear looks like. He had been delivered, restored, and made new. His first instinct was to stay close to Jesus. And when Jesus sent him to tell his story, he obeyed.

His fear was not terror—it was reverence. He tasted grace and couldn’t keep quiet. This is what the gospel does: it turns fear into worship, and then worship into witness.

Jesus doesn’t just calm storms or cast out demons—He changes lives. And those who have truly encountered His grace can’t help but to go and declare, “See what God has done for me.”

Some of you this morning have a story where you've said yes to Jesus, and he's given you a new identity. But storms and distractions have come into your life and maybe sometimes you feel like the troubled man roaming in the tombs.

And the same cycles of fear and sin that some of the characters in our story have experienced—consume your life too.

Just like I have to remind people sometimes, “Actually, I’m not who you think I am. My name is not Jason,” Jesus wants to remind you that your true identity isn’t defined by your demons. It’s not defined by what you’ve done or what’s been done to you—but in what Christ has done for you.

Is he calling you to respond in some way to him this morning? Is there a “storm” Jesus is using to show you who He is? Are there areas where you’re resisting His authority?

Has he challenged you to think differently about your money or the comfort that you so desperately protect? Are you going to respond in obedience to tell those in your city, and maybe around the world, of what God has done in your life?

Others in here may not have experienced the transformational power of Jesus in your life. Maybe like the townspeople, you’ve heard of his power, but you’ve turned Jesus away because you’re afraid of what you’ll end up losing.

Or maybe like the demon possessed man—you think you’re too far gone. There’s no hope of Jesus breaking the chains of sin and pain and suffering that torment you.

If that’s you—you need to know something that happens at the end of the Gospel of Luke, we’re going to see Jesus and this troubled man—a man you may resonate with—exchanging places.

At the end of the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is naked, stripped of his clothes—isolated and mocked. Jesus is crying out and bleeding.

Jesus is driven into the tombs.

Jesus is treated like a crazy man—so that we, the truly guilty ones, could be clothed in righteousness and brought back to life.

See, even if the world may write people off. Jesus doesn’t. On the cross Jesus absorbed all of our chaos, all of our evil, all of our sin.

And he doesn't just clean us up—He restores our identity and gives us a new name. We are no longer known for our demons, but by our identification with Christ.

And when He sets you free, He doesn't just send you away—He sends you out, to tell the world what He has done.

Like each of the characters in our story this morning had an opportunity to respond to Jesus, I want to give you one here as well. If you feel bound by sin—bound by the demons in your life. Maybe you've seen the power of Jesus in someone else and want to talk to someone about what that might look like for you.

It could be that you just feel isolated or rejected in some way and you want someone to know your name and pray for you. We're going to give you the opportunity to do that. As we pray and continue in worship we will have counselors with lanyards in the back of the auditorium that would love to talk and pray with you. If this is you, please don't miss this opportunity to respond to Jesus.

Let's pray.

PRAYER

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