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Luke 8:26-39

The Certain Gospel: To Hell with the Devil!

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Last summer we went through a series called What We Believe and **Bernie** preached on Satan. I'll admit it. For some reason I was a little jealous. Well today I get to preach on Satan and demons, but now I'm not so sure that's anything to be happy about. See, demons are dark and scary and not fun to study.

One of my very first introductions to the fallen angel Satan and demons was on one of those old church felt boards. **Felt Satan** threw felt fiery darts at felt Jesus, but they wouldn't stick. The idea of demons didn't really scare me until I was about 10 or 11 years old and my best-friend **Jordan** told me he saw a demon. He said he woke up during the night, the room was totally dark, and he looked over his bunkbed railing and saw a demon that was **blacker** than darkness staring at his younger brother on the bunkbed below him. He said it looked up at him and he told it, "In the **name of Jesus**, be gone!" And immediately the demon threw up its hands and disappeared.

That story totally freaked me out. I was convinced for years after that I was going to see a demon during the night and I was so afraid. I made matters worse by reading some of **Frank Peretti's** books on angels and demons, and then attempting to **write** my own. My fear of demons got so bad that my **brother** was afraid to walk by my bed late at night because I would wake up calling him Satan and **casting** him out. That would be **unnerving** for anyone. Sometimes I still think I **see things** at night and it makes it hard to sleep.

Talking and thinking about demons is **chilling**, and can make us feel **afraid** no matter how **old** or **young** we are. This is for a **good reason**. The Bible tells us demons are real, but also that we don't need to be afraid if we know and trust Jesus. I want us to look at the demons and their power first, and then turn to Jesus.

Demons are real and they have real power (Luke 8:26-30).

26 They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. **27** When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. **28** When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" **29** For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

30 Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. (NIV®)

*A **demon** is a fallen angel who works under the ruler of the demons, Satan, to lead people away from a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and to tempt Christians to sin.*

All throughout Jesus' ministry we see him encountering demons. In **Luke 4**, he was tempted by Satan in the **wilderness** for **40 days** and he drove out an impure spirit in **Capernaum** after leaving his home town of Nazareth. In **Luke 6**, people traveled to Jesus to be healed of evil spirits. At the beginning of **Luke 8**, we're introduced to **Mary Magdalene** who Jesus cast **seven demons** out. Now in Luke 8, we come to a man who

All Scriptures are quoted from the New International Version (NIV®) unless otherwise noted.

doesn't have, one, or seven, but has so many demons he calls himself "Legion." A legion is a **battalion** of about 6,000 Roman soldiers. *Demons are real and they have real power.*

Notice what the demons have done to him. They drive him away from his home, family, community, and out into the wilderness to live in tombs. They give him **supernatural strength** to break **chains** on his hands and **shackles** on his feet. Mark's account says the man would "Cry out and cut himself with stones" (Mk 5:1-20). Clearly, here in Luke, he's not in his right mind. He's **naked**, wild, and **crazy**, someone we would **lock** up today. These demons have destroyed this man's life, causing him harm and the ones he **loves**.

Demons are not the **boogey-men** of our imaginations, but a very real presence that can hurt people. As **Christians**, we're taught demons are still **active today**.

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (NIV®)

Do we believe that the **real battle** for the hearts and lives of those in **Westford** is not primarily a **physical** battle, but a **spiritual** one? This is what **spiritual warfare** is. Do we believe that there is a battle between evil spirits and the Holy Spirit, his angels, and the **saints** of God? One of the reasons we've offered Christianity Explored classes and advertised them through the Roudenbush Community Center is because of all the other classes that center has offered in the past: *The Art of Divination, Whispers From Heaven, Introduction to Shamanic Journeying & Healing*. I personally had two women approach me asking me to pray for their **Reiki spa** because they claimed **occult activity** had taken place there.

A couple weeks ago, I sent out a **prayer request** in the prayer network to pray about **spiritual warfare**. Some of us probably never think about it, and some of us are very **sensitive** to it. I'm **grateful** when God reveals spiritual **oppression** in my own life. How can we recognize if something is demonic? When I was feeling discouraged, a **church-member** shared a list of **The Devil's Seven Ds** he uses against us.

1. He causes us to **Doubt** God's goodness (Gen 3).
2. He **Deceives** (Gen 3).
3. He **Distorts** the truth (Gen 3, Matt 4).
4. He **Discourages** (Matt 4).
5. He **Distracts** (Matt 4).
6. He **Divides** (1 Cor 11).
7. He **Devours** (1 Pet 5:8).

I bet you can **pick out** 1-2 of these Ds that Satan loves to use against you. This **doesn't mean** every time you feel discouraged it's a demon, but we shouldn't **discount** his power either. This is why it's so important to **pray**. Demons are real and they have real power. But should we be **afraid** of them? Is there someone who has more power and authority than demons? Yes. *Jesus is bigger than our demons.*

Jesus has divine power and authority over demons (Luke 8:31-33)

31 And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

32 A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission. **33** When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. (NIV®)

I want to get one thing **absolutely clear**. Demons have **no** power against Jesus. In verse **28**, The demons call Jesus the “**Son of the Most High God**.” The gospel of John tells us Jesus was there at the **beginning**, and everything was created “**through**” him (John 1:1-3). Jesus is **divine**. He is the Son of God who created the angels that rebelled against God and became fallen angels, demons (Isa 14:12-15; Rev 12:4). Which do you think has more power? The **creator** or the **created thing**? The creator! Jesus has **complete control**.

We see their **submission** to Jesus **three ways**: 1) by how the demon-possessed man **positioned** himself, “he cried out and fell at his **feet**” (v. 28); 2) by how the demons beg him not to “**torture**” them by sending them into the “**abyss**,” (v. 28, 31); and 3) by how Jesus gives the demons “**permission**” to enter into the pigs (v. 32). There’s **no contest** here. The demons **beg** Jesus for **leniency** and **need** his permission to act.

I was listening to a sermon by Pastor Skip Heitzig on this text, and he pointed out that demons never anyone harm except with **Christ’s permission**. When you feel **doubt** or **discouragement** from demonic activity, it’s because Jesus loves you and will use it for good (Rom 8:28). It’s when the devil makes us feel overwhelmed with **doubt** and **discouragement** and all the other Ds, that’s when we can look to Jesus for **faith** and **joy**. When I am weak, he is strong (2 Cor 9:9-10). When we as a **church body** are threatened with **Satanic division** and **ministry distractions**, it’s because Jesus **allows** it so that we can find our **unity** and **set** our **focus** on him. Jesus calls us to **fall** at his **feet** just like this man, asking for **deliverance**.

There is a **limit** to how much demonic activity God will **allow** in our lives. Evil spirits may at times discourage us, confuse us, and even physically harm us (with Christ’s permission), but they can never **possess** us. Christians can **be oppressed** by demons, but **never possessed**. When God saves us, he sends the **Holy Spirit** to **dwell** in us. Every real Christian has the Holy Spirit living inside of them.

1 Corinthians 6:19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; (NIV®)

Do you think the Holy Spirit is willing to be **roommates** with the devil? No! The Holy Spirit won’t share his bunkbed with the evil one. If you’re a Christian, you can’t be possessed. But if you’re **not a Christian**, I can’t extend this same promise to you. Satan does have more authority over your life, but not if you **repent** of your sin and **believe** in Jesus to **deliver** you. Then the Holy Spirit will **dwell** in you and you’ll be safe.

At **first glance**, it may look like Jesus **bargains** with the demons. He spares them from the “abyss” by letting them go into these **pigs**, which drown in the **lake**. What is the abyss? Abyss means “a deep hole” and is a special place where demons are **locked away** till the final judgment (2 Pet 2:4). I’m **not** sure if it’s the **same place** as **hades**, where non-Christians are locked away till final judgment, but I think the idea is the same. The abyss is actually where **Satan** is locked away right now.

Revelation 20:1-3 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. (NIV®)

I believe Jesus **bound** Satan and threw him into the abyss at the **cross**. In the gospels, Jesus explains how he has **bound** the **strong man** and plunders him (Matt 12:29; Mark 3:27; Luke 11:21-22). I believe every time someone comes to Christ, that’s a sign Satan is bound and Jesus is plundering. These demons don’t want to

join Satan in the abyss. But by sending them to the **lake**, Jesus actually reminds them that they are headed to a worse fate than the abyss. They're headed to **gehenna**, which is **hell**. What is hell? It's the **lake of fire!**

Revelation 20:10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (NIV®)

The demons don't want to be thrown into the abyss, so Jesus **symbolically** sends them to the lake of fire. *Jesus has divine power and authority over demons. Jesus is bigger than our demons!*

This is such **great news** I thought we should stop the sermon and **sing a praise song**. This song is by a little praise band from the 80s called Stryper. Please play the actual music (0:37-1:32).

Speak of the devil
He's no friend of mine
To turn from him is what we have in mind
Just a liar and a thief

The word tells us so
We like to let him know
Where he can go

To hell with the devil
To hell with the devil

Stryper is the first Christian heavy metal band and I love this song. Jesus is sending the devil and his demons to hell, and we can take **satisfaction** and **comfort** in knowing that. When you're tempted, or feel down or overcome, just sing "To hell with the devil!" *Jesus is bigger than our demons!* Now a **question...**

Do you want Jesus to drive out your demons? (Luke 8:34-39)

34 When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, **35** and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. **36** Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. **37** Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left.

38 The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, **39** "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him. (NIV®)

In our last section we see two different responses to Jesus' miracle. The **first response** is the **pig herders** and the **townsfolk**. They were likely **Gentiles** (non-Jews) because pigs were **unclean** according to the law. When they see the miracle, they're afraid, and more **concerned** with their **economic loss** than the healed **man**.

Do we **really** want Jesus to drive out the demonic presences in our lives? It will **cost** us something. **Financial greed** is demonic. Do you want Jesus to **drive it out** or do you like it? **Pornography** and the **lust of the flesh** is demonic. Do you want to Jesus drive it out or do you like it? Our overpowering need for **peer approval** instead of **God's approval** is demonic. Do you want Jesus to drive it out or do you like it? What demonic power do you want to **hold onto** in your life? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal this to you.

The **second response** to Jesus is the demon-possessed man himself. He is **absolutely submissive** to Jesus and **completely changed**. He is sitting at **Jesus' feet** and **clothed**. He's in his **right mind** and he just wants to **be with Jesus**. He wants to go with him but Jesus won't let him. Instead, Jesus tells this man to go back to his home and tell how much God has done for him. Notice how **verse 39** says "tell how much God has done for you" and then **Luke** writes "So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him." This man knew **Jesus is divine** and he told everyone.

If Jesus has driven demons and sin out of our lives, and filled us with his Holy Spirit, shouldn't we tell others about him? I don't think Jesus has driven all demons out of **Westford** but he has driven Satan out of Westford. Satan is in the abyss awaiting release for a short time. I think the way Jesus continues to drive out the **power of Satan** from our town is through **prayer** [and **fasting**], which is what Jesus says it takes to drive out some evil spirits (Mark 9:29; Matt 17:21*), and by **us sharing** the gospel.

You **don't** have to **look far** to find the **gospel**. It's really **quite beautiful** in our passage. In order to **heal** people broken by sin and demonic powers, Jesus enters into this brokenness himself. This man was **tormented naked**, and **so was Jesus** (Luke 23:34). This man was **cast out** of his **hometown**, and so was Jesus out of **Nazareth** (Luke 4:14-30). This man was **harassed** by demons. Jesus was **tempted** by the devil (Luke 4:1-13). This man was **chained** and **shackled**. Jesus was **bound** and led to the **cross** (Mark 15:1). This man lived in **tombs**. Jesus was **crucified** and laid in a **tomb** (Luke 23:53). Jesus entered into this man's **dirt** and **filth** and **ours too** so that we could all, just like this man and Jesus himself, **rise again**. Jesus **takes** on our **demonic sin**, pays the ultimate price, and gives us his **pure holiness**. To receive this **gift** you just need to repent and believe in him. Then you too, like this man, will be **set free** from sin and death.

Jesus is bigger than our demons. To hell with the devil!

As you go home and go to **sleep** tonight, you don't need to be afraid. Jesus has won. He has divine power and authority over demons, and he only lets them into our lives to refine us and draw us closer to himself. We can **rest easy** knowing that one day soon Satan and all his demons will be consigned to hell, to the lake of fire. That's **worth celebrating**. *Jesus is bigger than our demons. To hell with the devil!*

Pastor Jonathan Romig wrote and preached this message for the people of Cornerstone Congregational Church. [Click here to listen to more sermons](#) or [click here to read our story](#).