

Luke 8:26-33

- 26 Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.
- 27 As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs.
- 28 When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me."
- 29 for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times 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 wilds.)
- 30 Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him.
- 31 They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.
- 32 Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission.
- 33 Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

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- Both before and after this text Jesus brings healing where healing is needed.
 - > In 7:36-50, a woman "who was a sinner," bursts in on the supper as Simon the Pharisee's is hosting Jesus. His healing word to her was, "*Your sins are forgiven... Your faith has saved you; go in peace.*"

- > The story immediately following today's gospel contrasts the double healing of the twelve-year-old girl and the woman suffering twelve years from hemorrhages — a dead, innocent little girl and a ritually unclean woman.

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- 26 *Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.*
- 27 *As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs.*
- Jesus traveled to the south-east side of the lake, which, today, is primarily part of Jordan. In the time of Jesus, there were several peoples here, including the Gerasenes and the Nabateans.
 - Even here, far from Galilee and Jerusalem, Jesus cannot find peace!
- 27 *As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs.*
- Luke uses "demons," but Mark used the term "unclean spirit."
 - The Working Preacher writes: "*If we define 'demons' as those forces which have captured us and prevented us from becoming what God intends us to be, we are as surrounded by — yes, possessed by — as many demons as those whom Jesus encountered. Our demons can be of many kinds: mental illnesses, schizophrenia, paranoia, addictions, obsessions, destructive habits, and so on.*"
 - The tombs were natural caves with pillars and shelves for the bones of the dead. As such, they were ritually unclean.

- Those who were out of control and beyond the scope of primitive approaches to mental, physical, or spiritual conditions were often driven out. In practice, this often generated a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Even when we do have the resources to help others, it is often difficult to summon up the will to do so.

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29 *for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times 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 wilds.)*

- The man inside this tormented body wishes to know Jesus, but the "legion" of dark spirits fears him.
- The phrase, "Son of the most high God" is rooted in the ancient Hebrew name for God, *Elion*, belongs to the earliest stages of patriarchal worship. For example, Melchizedek was the priest of "the Most High God" in [Genesis 14:18](#).
- "I adjure you" is the Greek word *horkizo*, and its closest literal translation is "*I exorcise you.*"
- The demoniac represents we sinners who fluctuate between challenge and rebellion; and between prayer and kneeling.
- The unclean spirits are begging Jesus not to sentence them to the final abyss.
- Isn't it always true that the tormentor is the one who most fears being tormented?
- Is it possible that they are still salvageable and capable of being redeemed?

- Laws and rules are meant to keep our darker natures in check; but there are always those who defy and frustrate the limits and boundaries.
- There can be a certain unnatural strength in sin, darkness, and madness, but without productive or life-affirming purpose.
- It is not uncommon for troubled people to hurt themselves physically as well as relationally. Spirits of darkness have no respect for human life or dignity.

30 *Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him.*

- Jesus asks his name as if to dramatize his power over evil in the presence of his followers. Perhaps also it was a means of calming him, if only temporarily.
- A legion at the time was at least 6,000.

31 *They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.*

32 *Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission.*

33 *Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.*

- Even the animals here are unclean, which demonstrates that, even though this area was under the same administration as the Jews, it was a broad mixture of Jew and Gentile.
- The demons could not enter the swine without the permission of Jesus. If Jesus holds sway over the pigs, how much more is he the Lord of the sheep!
- Why did Jesus give permission?
- Were these wild swine? If not, how would you feel if your herd of swine all died at once before you could take theirs to market?