

Session 5

TRANSFORMED FOR MISSION

Luke 8:26-39

Memory Verse

The man from whom the demons had departed begged him earnestly to be with him. But he sent him away and said,³⁹ “Go back to your home, and tell all that God has done for you.”

– LUKE 8:38-39A, CSB



Transformed for Mission

THEOLOGICAL THEME: Jesus, the God-man, is more powerful than any natural or spiritual force. The wind and waves obey Him. Even demons bow before Him and flee from His presence.

 What does it mean to plunder? What comes to mind when you hear this word?

 Why do you think it is common for a conquering army to plunder their defeated foes?

Plundering is when a person or group steals goods from a place or person, usually by force and in a time of war or civil disorder. Plunder serves as motivation for soldiers to enter into battles. It also further cripples a defeated enemy, making recovery more difficult. Imagine if this happened in competitive sports. What if the winners of a little league baseball team ran into the losing team's dugout after the game and grabbed all of the equipment? It would probably make baseball games a bit more interesting. Also, it would make a losing team much weaker for the next go around. In fact, they might stop playing games altogether.

In today's passage, Jesus went into the enemy camp, exerted His power over the enemy, and righteously carried out plunder as a victorious warrior.

Session Summary

This event recorded by Luke is a shocking scene. As Jesus and His disciples descended from the boat, a demon-possessed man, naked, living among tombs saw Jesus, fell to his knees and cried out, “What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torment me!”

What happened next was nothing short of amazing. Jesus commanded the demons to leave the man. They obeyed and entered a nearby herd of pigs that immediately went thrashing into the lake and drowned. Meanwhile the man, now completely healed, begged Jesus that he might accompany Him. Jesus, however, had other plans for him.

1. The Demoniac Delivered (Luke 8:26-33)

Our passage today is a part of a series of three stories that all relate to each other. It would be helpful to understand the big picture of what Luke intended by considering those briefly as well. As Jesus and His disciples sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, a fierce windstorm descended upon them. The wind and the waves battered the boat to the point that the disciples thought they might drown. Jesus was sleeping, of all things, so the disciples awakened Him and asked Him to do something. Amazingly, Jesus rebuked the storm and then there was calm (Luke 8:22-25). After Jesus healed the demoniac in today’s passage, Luke recorded the account of Jesus healing the woman with an issue of blood and raising Jairus’ daughter from the dead (Luke 8:40-56).

 What is the overarching theme of these three episodes?

These three accounts taken together give the reader an undeniable apologetic of the unique power and authority of Christ. Jesus demonstrated His power over nature when He commanded the waves to cease. He proved His authority over evil spirits when He cast Legion out of the afflicted man. He showed His power over sickness when the woman with the issue of blood was healed simply by touching the hem of His garment. And He asserted His authority over death when He raised Jairus’ daughter.

So, what is the reader to conclude? The only possible conclusion is that the author was inventing fairy tales or that Jesus Christ really is the Son of God, the Messiah. And since four written accounts and multiple eyewitnesses verify these events, then we can only conclude that Christ is God in flesh. Furthermore, we should respond in the manner of Peter when he “fell at Jesus’ knees and said, ‘Go away from me, because I’m a sinful man, Lord!’” (Luke 5:8).



What can the healing of the demoniac teach us today? Are there any principles or applications that we should make for our context?

The four Gospels are an invaluable gift to the world. They testify of the person and work of Christ to an unbelieving world. They comfort Christians as they read about the work of the Savior on their behalf. This specific episode does both of those things. A person who is an unbeliever is confronted with a compelling example of the power and authority of this person who claimed to be the Messiah and the solution for the problem of sin. When Christians read this account, their faith is bolstered and their joy is increased because they are reminded of the power and ability of the one they look to for salvation.

A common misapplication that Christians make when they encounter a story like this is to conclude that they should seek to replicate the works of Christ. The four Gospels of Jesus Christ weren’t written to be manuals for Christian ministry. Those works were composed so that weary souls would see the person and work of Christ and cry, “I believe!” and so that weakened believers would be assured of the certainty of their Savior and His work on their behalf (John 20:31; Luke 1:4). Don’t look to Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John primarily for instruction for Christian living and ministry. Instead, we should read these accounts and see the surpassing glory of Jesus.



Application: How does this story and others like it in the Gospels bolster your faith in your Savior, Christ? Where might you have grown cold toward the glory and power of His earthly ministry?

2. The Strong Man Plundered (Luke 8:34-37)

Let's consider more carefully the miracle that Jesus realized in the life of the demoniac. We know nothing about him other than the fact that he lived a completely ruined and miserable life because he was indwelt by a number of evil spirits. We don't know anything about his past or how he came to be taken over by demons. We don't even know his name.

We do know, however, that he had a spiritual problem that he could not himself fix. We also know that his life was void of any peace, joy, or purpose. Only God Himself could do anything for the man.

 If you are honest, with which of the characters in this story do you most closely associate? Why?

When Christians read this account, they have three vantage points that they may choose from. They may see themselves as one of the disciples. They may see themselves as Jesus. Or they can choose to associate most closely with the demoniac. A person who sees the Gospels as a template for Christian ministry may be tempted to place themselves in the role of Christ. They might see this story as a call to go and seek to cast devils out of tormented souls.

Whether readers are comfortable admitting it or not, they can all closely associate with the demoniac. The purpose of this testimony of Christ is to bolster the faith of Christians by showing them afresh the power and authority of Jesus Christ. Readers will also see close parallels between what Christ did for them and what Christ did for the demoniac. Jesus' deliverance of the demoniac is an illustration of Jesus' deliverance of the sin-dead unbeliever.

After all, what Christ did for the demoniac is a parable for what Christ does for all those who are born again. In fact, Jesus told a parable that tied His work of casting out demons to His work of saving sin-dead souls. In Matthew 12:29, Jesus said, "How can someone enter a strong man's house and steal his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house."

? What does this parable mean? Who is the strong man? Who ties him up? What is our part?

Sadly, this verse has been taken out of context and misinterpreted to mean that Christians must tie up or “bind” Satan. That’s not at all what Jesus meant. In this parable Jesus sought to explain both His authority and His mission. There are three primary elements in the parable, and each one corresponds to the work of Christ in the world. There was a strong man, plunder, and someone who ties up the strong man.

The strong man is Satan, and Jesus is the one who binds him. Jesus is the only one who has that authority and role. It is a misapplication of this passage when Christians put themselves in the place of Christ and “bind” Satan. There is no need to bind Satan because Christ accomplished that at the cross (Col. 2:15). Christians do, however, make an appearance in this illustration. We are the plunder that Jesus carries out. Jesus bound Satan and rescued us from his domain! Every person on earth is either a captive of the strong man or has been plundered by Jesus. There are no neutral people.

The strong man (Satan) had the man in our text captive. He was a slave in the house of the strong man and he had no ability to rescue himself. Jesus, however, arrived on the scene and bound Satan. Jesus was the stronger man. Christ carried the demoniac out of the domain of Satan as plunder. Christians today were like that demoniac. They were held captive to sin and Satan and did not have the strength to free themselves. Then, Christ arrived and bound up the strong man and carried out the plunder. If you are in Christ today, know and remember that you were once held captive without hope.

? Application: Do you remember what it was like to be possessed by the enemy? When did Christ rescue you from the domain of darkness? How did your life change?

3. The Healed Man Sent (Luke 8:38-39)

The text says, “The man from whom the demons had departed begged him earnestly to be with him.” Of course he did! Here was a man who had absolutely nothing. He was barely human, and Jesus restored him. Any one of us would have had the same response. We can be sure that the man was brimming with thanksgiving and joy. He wanted to stay with the one who had given him his life back.

What did Jesus tell this man to do instead? Why?

Luke reported that Jesus told him, “Go back to your home, and tell all that God has done for you.” Jesus sent the man to give testimony of the power and authority of Christ to those in his home and community. Can you imagine the looks on the faces of the people who knew this man before he lived among the tombs possessed by demons? They must have been incredulous, then stunned.

The reason that Jesus sent the man to be a witness was because Jesus knew that it was the Father’s will that more people from that region come to Him, not only for physical healing but for spiritual healing. Jesus had more plunder to carry out.

Not only does the demoniac’s deliverance mirror the work that Christ does in the life of a lost person, but His command to the man to go and testify also mirrors the commission that all Christians have.



How are all Christians sent similarly to the way the man was sent in this account?

Just as Christ sent the demoniac after He saved him, so He sends those whom He saves today. All Christians are called to share the good news of Jesus Christ to a lost and desperate world. It is important that Christians keep clear in their minds what the mission actually is. Throughout church history up until today Christians, have shown themselves more than able to twist the mission of God and create a mission of their own design.

The fact is, however, God’s mission for His disciples is simple and straightforward. Jesus said, “Go and make disciples of all nations.” This, of course, may leave some questions unanswered, so let’s allow the Scriptures to interpret the Scriptures. The following passages prove helpful:

He also said to them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead the third day, and repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:46-47)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

It’s clear that the mission of Christians is to make disciples by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. They must be careful not to assume that “proclaiming the gospel” necessarily refers to being behind a pulpit or standing on a street corner. Those certainly are proclamations of the gospel, but there are many other contexts in which the gospel may be proclaimed. A proclamation of the gospel may take place when a Christian shares the gospel with their seatmate on an airplane. The gospel is proclaimed when a believer reads a gospel tract with their neighbor.

? **Application: Have you been faithful to fulfill the mission that Jesus sent you on after saving you? With whom can you share the gospel this week?**

Conclusion

The healing of the demoniac serves as a template for the story of every Christian. The demoniac was captive to the enemy and unable to help himself. Christians were also once enslaved to their sins and Satan and did not have the power to free themselves. Christ arrived and overpowered Satan and carried out the demoniac as plunder, whole and healed. Christians are only free now because Christ arrived and bound up Satan and carried them out as plunder, cleansed and justified. Christ sent the healed man out to testify of the wonderful things that God had done for him. Likewise, Christians are sent out by Christ to share the good news of the gospel with the world.

? What can you do to keep your heart humbled before the power and authority of your Savior?

? How does it make you feel to consider that you have been plundered from the house of the strong man (Satan)? How should this knowledge affect your life and perspective?

? Are you known as a person who loves Jesus and talks about Him with others? When was the last time you shared Christ with someone? Is there someone close to you that needs the gospel? When can you share it with them?

CHRIST CONNECTION: No one could help the demon-possessed man, except God Himself. Jesus Christ arrived on the scene and set things right in the life of a broken man. Christ still works miracles in the souls of sin-dead people today.

MISSIONAL APPLICATION: All souls who are set free from captivity by Christ are sent out to call others to come and seek life from Him.



FOR NEXT WEEK

The Parable of the Sower

Main Passages

- Luke 8:4-8

Session Outline

1. The Word (Luke 8:4-5a)
2. The World (Luke 8:5b-8,11-15)
3. The Heart (Luke 8:5b-8)

Memorize

The man from whom the demons had departed begged him earnestly to be with him. But he sent him away and said,³⁹ “Go back to your home, and tell all that God has done for you.”

- Luke 8:38-39a, CSB

Daily Readings

- Monday - Luke 8:16-18
- Tuesday - Luke 8:19-21
- Wednesday - Luke 8:22-25
- Thursday - Luke 8:26-39
- Friday - Luke 8:40-48
- Saturday - Luke 8:49-56