

1. We are continuing this morning with our series about spiritual battle.
2. The story we are learning about is found in Luke chapter 8. Turn there if you would.
3. In the region of the Gerasenes, or Gaderenes as some translations indicate, Jesus encounters a man that is possessed by probably thousands of demons.
4. The people of the area have tried to solve the problem by binding and chaining the man, but it has never worked.
5. In week one we said that **nothing will cause us as much heartache and pain as when we try and solve a spiritual problem with a physical solution.**
6. And how can we tell whether something is a spiritual matter or a physical matter? The reality is that to God, everything is a spiritual matter.
7. **Philippians 4:6-7** Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
8. If God doesn't want us to be anxious about anything, but instead wants us to bring everything to him in prayer, then that means every situation we will ever find ourselves in is a spiritual situation that requires a spiritual solution first.
9. Now, before we go on, I want to confess to you as your pastor that this week I caught myself not practicing what I preached.
10. On Tuesday this week I began not feeling all that great. Not much energy, a little achy, and I also had a headache.
11. I also found out Tuesday that over the weekend I had been around someone who tested positive for covid.
12. I got home Tuesday evening, ate dinner, and took 2 Tylenol.
13. Then I laid on the couch, and in reality, I thought a lot about how I don't have time to be sick and quarantine because I have too much to do.
14. I also was a little cranky. I'm sorry honey.
15. Then at my normal bedtime I got in bed, and the minute my head hit the pillow the Holy Spirit began to question me about my response to not feeling well.

16. The Holy Spirit asked, exactly when were you going to bring your not feeling well to the Lord?
17. You took 2 Tylenol. You laid there and was agitated about not having time to be sick, but up to this point you have not even asked me to do anything for you.
18. Before I go on, I want to be clear; I am not saying that taking a Tylenol or going to the doctor or whatever else is bad or wrong or sinful. Not at all. What I did by not going to the Lord was not sinful.
19. But it also wasn't the way God wants me to relate to Him and Him to me.
20. You say, **does God really care about my not feeling well, or having a headache, or a cough or a runny nose?**
21. Aren't things like that too small to bother the Lord with?
22. Well, let me tell you what happened next and I'll let you be the judge.
23. I laid there, and I asked God to forgive me for not trusting him first, but instead trusting in medicine first.
24. I asked him to forgive me for worrying about being sick first, rather than bringing it to him first.
25. I also asked the Lord to change me on the inside and help be develop a new way of living where I take everything to him first.
26. And then finally I asked the Lord to heal my body.
27. And not long after I fell asleep. And the next morning I got up and I felt completely fine, and have felt completely fine ever since.
28. I believe the Lord touched my body.
29. So to answer your question. I believe nothing is too small for God.
30. I believe he wants us to involve him and make Him Lord over ever minute area of our lives. Because to not do so is to wallow in our struggle longer than God intends.
31. So every area is a spiritual matter to God.
32. And then last week we identified, that every matter is a spiritual matter to our enemy, Satan.
33. Even though the demons inside this man acknowledged that Jesus was the son of God and that he had the power to torment them, they

resisted and they insulted, and they debated, with Jesus right up until the moment when they were finally cast out.

34. The battle is spiritual to God and the battle is spiritual to our enemy, and to not do battle in the spiritual realm, but instead do battle only in the physical realm, relying on our own strength, is to get beat up and bloodied and bruised like the 7 sons of Sceva in Acts chapter 19, who attempted to cast out a demon in their own power, and paid for it dearly.
35. I don't know about you but I would rather live a victorious life fully trusting in Jesus, rather than barely limping up to the gates of heaven and collapsing on the threshold.
36. So let's move on this morning to the next part of the story.

TEXT: **Luke 8:33-37** 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. 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.

TITLE: **Living for an audience of one.**

INTRO:

1. So, what happens next is very interesting, but not all that uncommon.
2. The demons finally leave the man, Jesus gives them permission to enter into a herd of pigs that were nearby, the pigs rush down a steep bank, into the lake and the drown.
3. When those tending the sheep saw what had happened, they ran to the town and the countryside and reported what had happened.
4. Many of the people in that region go out to see what had happened and when they arrive, they see the man who had previously been filled with demons, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.

5. When you and I, with the help of the Holy Spirit, set our hearts on trusting the Lord first and foremost, in every situation no matter how big or how small, we are opening up the door for the miraculous to take place.
6. When we whole-heartedly trust in Jesus, rather than half-heartedly trusting in Jesus, we step out of the limitations of our physical realm, and we step into the unlimited possibility of the spiritual realm. (pause)
7. But we need to be aware that not everyone will want to take the journey with us.
8. In other words, when we begin living a life of whole-hearted devotion to the Lord, everyone will not be happy about our decision and the new direction of our life.
9. To take it a step further, not everyone will be pleased with us or our decision, including those closest to us.
10. The remainder of this message is geared toward the multitude of us here in person and watching online who fit into the category of being people pleasers.
11. And I must tell you, after years of leading small groups and talking to people one on one, there are a lot of us people pleasers in the world.
12. So here is the message this morning in a nutshell. You and I are not responsible for pleasing everyone, we are only responsible for pleasing the Lord. We are to live before an audience of one.
13. Now, for those of you here this morning or watching online who have somehow mistakenly believed that its everyone else's job to make you happy, you probably won't like the rest of the message. But I'll continue on anyway.
14. The people of the region come out to where the miracle has occurred, and they see the evidence of the miracle with their own eyes, and verse 35 says their response was to be afraid.
15. In fact, they were so afraid, that verse 37 says they asked Jesus to leave.
16. And so my question is, what where they afraid of? To put it simply, they were afraid of more loss.
17. Some of the people who came out of the town and the region were also the owners of the pigs, and the fact that the pigs had all died

represented a financial loss to them.

18. So they asked Jesus to leave as a way of avoiding further loss.
19. Rather than celebrate the miracle. Rather than imagining the possibility of a future of peace and hope, they went into preservation mode.
20. Just as a reminder, we have already established that part of the reason there was such a huge loss is because the people of the region had tried to solve the spiritual problem of the demon possessed man with a physical solution.
21. If they had just trusted in the Lord earlier, the loss wouldn't have been nearly as great. But because of the fear of greater loss, they chose to ask Jesus to leave. They rejected him and his miracle.
22. The same can also happen in our lives when we allow the Holy Spirit to make a shift in us and change us into whole-hearted followers of Jesus.
23. Because of the fear of loss, those closest to us may not be too excited about this new walk with the Lord, and they may reject us, or even try and prevent us from moving forward in this new life of faith.
24. How many have ever heard the saying, "Misery Loves Company?"
25. When you and I are living lives of partial devotion to the Lord. When we trust partially in the Lord and partially in ourselves or others or things, then chances are many of the people we surround ourselves with are going to be people who live in a similar way.
26. And as long as you and those around you are living basically the same way, it creates a comfort zone in which everyone is encouraged to stay the same. Even if staying the same is miserable or painful.
27. We all have comfort zones. Comfort zones make us comfortable. Comfort zones aren't necessarily bad, as long as we don't become chained to that comfort zone to the point that the Lord can't move us forward and mold us and shape us into what he wants us to be.
28. So if you and those around you are living in the same comfort zone, when the Lord starts to draw you toward greater faith in Jesus, not only are you leaving your comfort zone, but you are also leaving the comfort zone of those around you. And that equals loss.
29. And because none of us like loss, those closest to you may reject

you, or they may even attempt to stand in your way and prevent you from following where the Lord is leading you.

30. How many are still with me this morning.
31. Fortunately, we are not left to navigate this dynamic alone. Jesus is the perfect example of how to handle people not being pleased with our journey in the Lord.
32. How did Jesus respond to the people of this region.

Jesus still cared about them.

1. How do we know Jesus still cared about them? We know that he did because he still went to the cross and he still gave his life so that they would one day have the opportunity to be saved.
2. Jesus didn't handle rejection with more rejection. He handled the rejection with love.
3. Maybe I'm the only one, but I don't like rejection. And when I feel rejected, my first reaction is to want to reject right back.
4. But that is rarely the right response.
5. Even though they asked Him to leave, he still cared.
6. But Jesus also did something else.

Jesus honored their desire to separate.

1. Luke 8:37 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.
2. Jesus just got in the boat and left.
3. He didn't defend himself. He didn't try and convince them to let him stay. He didn't enter into a debate or discussion. He just left.
4. I know I would be wrong. But if it had been me, I would have set out to remind them that I had just delivered and set free and fixed the elephant size problem that they had been dealing with for years.
5. Man, I just did in a few moments what all of you couldn't do combined.
6. But not Jesus. He cared. He loved. And he left. He left them in their rejection.
7. He refused to make it his goal or mission to convince them to like him,

be happy with him, or to be pleased with what he had done.

8. Not only did Jesus practice this kind of relating to others, but he also directed his disciples to relate to others in this way.
9. **Matthew 10:11-14** Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave. 12 As you enter the home, give it your greeting. 13 If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. 14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet.
10. Again, notice the progression. Go to that town or village and attempt to tell them about me. To get them to follow me just like you are following me.
11. The only reason for doing that was because of love for those in that house or town who are lost.
12. And if you find people willing to listen, then bless them.
13. But if anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave, and shake the dust off your feet.
14. The shaking of the dust off the feet was a sign that I tried, but because you rejected the message, I am no longer responsible for your salvation. You are.
15. When you set your heart to fully trust in the Lord, there will be some who are excited and spur you on.
16. But, there will be others who are not pleased with you or your decision. It will happen.
17. Out of love, do your best to share with them the reason for your love and devotion to Jesus.
18. But if they will not receive it, the Lord says to you, you are not responsible for what they think of you or how they respond to you.
19. You are not responsible for their actions or their pleasure or displeasure. They are.

Conclusion:

1. You are only responsible for pleasing one, and his name is Jesus.
2. You are not living your life so as to make everyone happy with you, you are commanded to live your life so that the Lord is pleased with you.
3. We will touch more on this next week. But the Lord is pleased with

you.

4. The apostle Paul, in writing to the churches in Galatia had this to say.
5. Galatians 1:10 Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.
6. There are so many messages being communicated by that one verse, but what stands out to me is that it is impossible to live a life of pleasing God and pleasing people at the same time.
7. The two simply can't exist together.
8. This is not a call to be mean and angry and cantankerous and selfish. Not in the least.
9. Our calling is to love others as much as we love ourselves. But at the end of the day we only have one master, and that master is not the opinion of others, that master is the opinion of the one who loved us so much that he gave his very life for us.
10. Because I have talked to so many people about this subject, I know before I ask this next question that it will touch many of us.
11. Have you somewhere along the way believed the lie that is your responsibility to make everyone else happy?
12. I ask that question not to condemn you, but instead to offer you an opportunity to be set free of the bondage of people pleasing.
13. You see, chances are high that you didn't plant the message in your mind that it is your responsibility to be a people pleaser. I'm betting someone, somewhere did that for you.
14. But that falsehood doesn't have to remain in you. You can do something about it. You can bring it to the Lord.
15. Prayer.
16. Call people to the front for prayer.
17. Lord Jesus. Help me to be a God pleaser rather than a people pleaser.