

1. This morning we are going to begin a study of a story that is found in the book of Matthew, the book of Mark, and in the gospel of Luke.
2. We will be relying mainly on the book of Luke, so if you want to go to Luke chapter 8 that would be great.
3. It is the story of Jesus' healing of a man who had a demon, or who was demon possessed.
4. For the sake of time I am going to tell the story rather than read the story, and then we will look more closely at just a couple of verses.
5. In Luke chapter 8, beginning in verse 26, Jesus and his disciples have just crossed the sea of Galilee, and they arrive at a small region called the Gerasenes, or some translations say Gadarenes.
6. When Jesus and his disciples get out of the boat, verse 27 says the minute Jesus stepped on dry land he was met by a man from the town who was possessed by demons.
7. This had to have been an absolute sight to behold, because the bible says that for a long time this man had worn no clothes. He was naked, and that he didn't live in a house, but rather lived right outside the town in the tombs.
8. It was customary for people to dig or carve a tomb out of the side of a hill near where they lived, in preparation for their death. A death that may be many years down the road.
9. So, some of the tombs were empty. It was also not out of the ordinary for some of the poorest people in the area to live in the tombs as well.
10. Jesus, upon seeing the man, immediately realizes that he is demon possessed, and begins commanding the demon to come out of the man.
11. In verse 29 we find that this man had been demon possessed for some length of time, and that his situation had caused quite a stir in the town where he was from.
12. He was out of control. So out of control that the people of the town, many different times, had put him under guard, bound him with chains, hand and foot, in an attempt to keep him under control. But it hadn't worked.

13. Each time the man, when overtaken by the demon, would break the chains and run off again, still bound by this demon.
14. In verse 30 Jesus asks the demon what his name is, and the demons says my name is Legion, for we are many.
15. Now in military terms, a legion of soldiers was a group of 1,000 men. So the indication is that this man was possessed not by one demon, but thousands of demons.
16. That would seem to be confirmed by the fact that when Jesus cast the demons out of him, the demons entered a herd of swine or pigs that numbered about 2,000, and as a result of being overtaken by these demons, the pigs run off a cliff, fall into the lake and they drown.
17. The herdsman caring for the pigs ran into town to tell what had happened, and a large number of people go out to where Jesus and the man are, and when they get there, they see the man sitting at the feet of Jesus, very calmly, in his right mind, and wearing clothes.
18. On the one hand they are astonished, but on the other hand they are afraid, and so all the people ask Jesus to leave their region and go somewhere else. And so Jesus does what they ask.
19. Now that I have painted the picture for you. Can you imagine being in that environment, experiencing everything I have just told you about?
20. You may not be able to picture yourself there, but I can picture myself there.
21. For 2 years we lived in Africa, and Africa is called the dark continent, not because of the color of people's skin, but rather because the demonic and the evil of witchcraft are present everywhere.
22. It was common to be driving down the road and see a road sign advertising the services of a witch.
23. The sign would say something like, do you want to put a curse on someone, then come inside and see the witch.
24. The presence of demonic activity was so prevalent, that it was quite ordinary for a person possessed by a demon, to come to a church service, and while being there hearing the truth of the word of God, the demon would begin to manifest itself.

25. I've seen people writhe all over the floor, overtaken by this demon who has control of their body.
26. It was so ordinary for this to happen that they didn't even stop the service. They would have some mature believers gather around the person and pray for them and cast out the demon.
27. I have often wondered why we don't see or recognize the demonic activity that is going on around us here in the US. I don't have an acceptable answer to that question.
28. But what I do believe is that there is NOT an absence of demonic activity going on around us. People in America. People in our area are possessed by demons. And spiritual battle is happening not only all around us, but spiritual battle happens in us each and every day.
29. You will never convince me that each and every one of us isn't dealing with spiritual battle in some way, shape, or form.
30. Now. I won't spend any more time trying to convince you of that, I sure hope you believe it.
31. What I want us to do instead is I want us to follow along with the example of how Jesus dealt with this spiritual battle, as well as recognize some of the truth's about how spiritual battle takes place, and how we can respond appropriately.
32. So let's look closely this morning at a couple of specific verses.

TEXT: **Luke 8:27** 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.

Luke 8:29 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.

TITLE: **Hybrid Christianity.**

INTRO:

1. What we have in verse 27 is a description of the problem. And what we find in verse 29 is the solution that the people around this man tried to implement in order to solve the problem.

2. The problem is that this man is possessed, not by one demon but by thousands.
3. And these demons have so overtaken his life that he is not in his right mind. He runs around naked all the time. He's not living in a home, which is significant because someone in that town probably loved him enough that he could have lived in home if he wanted to.
4. Instead, he is living out in the graveyard, in a tomb that is waiting to be occupied by a dead person.
5. This man has become so out of control, and I would assume dangerous to himself and to others, that they have tried to put him under locked guard.
6. They have chained and bound him every way they know how, trying to keep him under control, and it hasn't worked.
7. The demon would still overtake the man, he would break the chains, and verse 29 says the demon would drive him back out into solitary, isolated, and lonely places. The tombs.
8. The fact that they have tried something to help the man is an indication to me that they cared about him.
9. He was probably the son of parents in that town. More than likely he had grown up there.
10. By this point everybody knew he was, and they truly wanted to help him.
11. But nothing they had done had worked. Not only had their attempts not worked, but the man was worse off than when they started, and he was growing deeper into bondage as time went along.
12. Now, I am going to share this story under the assumption that these were good, honest, respectable people.
13. These are people that Jesus would have loved to spent time with.
14. Not only are they good people, but it is not their fault that they are dealing with this situation.
15. It is not their fault the man is possessed by thousands of demons. The man himself has repeatedly made the choice to let the demons live in him.

16. And yet, here they are neck deep with this horrendous situation facing them each and every day.
17. So while it is not their fault that they are in this situation, what I do see here is an error in the way they tried to handle the situation. And as a result of that error, they are about to pull their hair out.
18. Today's message is all about this one error. And the error was this.
19. **They attempted to solve a spiritual problem, with a physical solution.**
(repeat)
20. What was going on inside this man, and as a result was wreaking havoc on their town was a spiritual issue, he was demon possessed.
21. But they tried to solve the issue with physical means. With guards, chains, and physical control.
22. And the result of their trying to solve a spiritual problem with physical means was continued chaos.
23. **Almost nothing will cause more heartache, headache, heart break and pain as when we try and solve a spiritual problem with a physical solution.**
24. I know that last statement to be the truth, because I have seen that happen in my own life.
25. Over and over again I have found myself in the middle of troubles and trials and tribulations, and rather than whole heartedly seeking the Lord and spiritual solutions to my problems, I have attempted to take care of it myself with physical solutions.
26. I have relied on human wisdom rather than spiritual wisdom. And the results are always the same. More heartache, headache, and heart break than what I started with.
27. And since 1 Corinthians 10:13 reminds us that no temptation has overtaken us, except what is common to all mankind, that means this has to be a common problem among all of us.
28. And the problem can be summed up this way. We all face struggles and battles. Not only from outside of us but from inside us.
29. And the temptation is to try and work the thing out on our own, until we are so exhausted and worn out, that finally, hopefully, maybe, we seek the Lord's help, and we search for spiritual solutions.

30. And when we finally get around to genuinely seeking after God and putting him first in that situation, we find the hope and the help that we need, but not before we have paid a heavy spiritual, emotional, physical, financial, or relational price.
31. And all the while, our loving, heavenly father's heart is breaking because this is not the kind of life he intended for us to live. He has always wanted something better.
32. So if the temptation is to try and solve a spiritual problem with a physical solution, it would seem to me that the beginning place would be to help us identify when something is spiritual or physical.
33. To identify whether our starting place should be in the spiritual realm, aka seeking the Lord and his divine intervention, or in the physical realm by taking care of it ourselves.
34. Fortunately, I can show you with one simple statement, notice I did not say easy, what we are talking about is not easy, but it is simple.
35. I can show you with one simple statement how to tell the difference between a spiritual problem and a physical problem.
36. This is so simple that I don't want you to miss it.

ALL problems, have at their root spiritual issues.

1. In other words. Every single problem, challenge, heartache, difficulty, misunderstanding, whatever else you want to call it, no matter what the thing is that you are facing, that thing is rooted in the spiritual realm, so therefore must be solved spiritually before it can ever be solved physically.
2. I don't have time to camp out here so though I could give you hundreds of scriptures that would prove that to be the truth, I am only going to give you one.
3. **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.
4. Anxiety can be a sign of an emotional struggle. It is the opposite of peace. Anxiety is a problem.
5. But we are commanded to not be anxious about anything. (say anything)

6. The word anything covers everything. But just to drive the point home Paul goes on.
7. But in EVERY situation. (say every) Every means all. No exceptions.
8. What are we supposed to do with every problem that is causing us anxiety?
9. With prayers, petitions, and thanksgiving go to God about that thing.
10. So in other words, anything that we struggle with is a spiritual issue at its root, because the Lord wants us to bring everything to him first.
11. The problem is a spiritual problem. So therefore the solution is a spiritual solution. And what is the solution?
12. And the peace of God. Of who? Of God. Which transcends all understanding. That word transcend means above and beyond the limits of, in this case the limits of our own understanding.
13. That peace, which is higher than our understanding, will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
14. So again I say, according to the word of God every situation is a spiritual situation.
15. Say this with me. **Every situation I will ever face is a spiritual situation. So therefore I need a spiritual solution.**
16. So if every situation is a spiritual situation, why are we tempted to tackle the problem in the physical before the spiritual.
17. Because often times...

We only see the problem in the physical, long after the spiritual battle has begun.

1. In Luke 8:30 we discover that the name of the demon is Legion, which is a military group of a thousand men.
2. In verse 33, we said, because the demons went into two thousand pigs, there were probably that many or more demons present in the man.
3. But here is the thing. I don't believe all two thousand demons entered the man at one time. I believe the demons entered the man one at a time.
4. The man opens the door to one demon, then another demon, and then another demon, and before long the man is filled with demons.

5. And I also believe the man was demon possessed long before anyone in the town knew he was demon possessed.
6. Long before he ripped his clothes off and ran around naked.
7. Long before he became uncontrollable.
8. Long before he was so violent that they found it necessary to chain the man up, the spiritual issues were present. (Pause)
9. And like the people of that town, long before that thing, that problem, that difficulty, or that trial in your life manifests itself in the physical, there was battle and struggle taking place in the spiritual.
10. The physical manifestation of our struggle is not the starting point of the battle. The physical manifestation of our struggle is simply when we became aware of what was already going on in the spiritual.
11. Is that making sense to anyone?
12. We know that this is one of the ways God works because of **2 Timothy 1:9-10** He has saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, **10** but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior,
13. The spiritual is always happening long before we see it in the physical. Jesus Christ was, long before anyone physically laid eyes on him. And his provision and his grace were made available to us even before the world began.
14. And in the same way, Satan our enemy, is always doing battle in the spiritual realm long before we become aware of it in the physical realm.
15. So therefore, when we become aware of the battle in the physical realm, our first response needs to always be to run to Jesus and seek a spiritual solution. Because...

Failure to seek spiritual solutions to spiritual problems leads to much greater loss.

Conclusion: (look at Teresa)

1. Verse 33 says that when the demons came out of the man they went into the pigs, and those two thousand pigs ran off a cliff and drown.
2. And the people who owned the pigs, even though they could see the man healed and set free, asked Jesus to leave, partially because they

were afraid, but also because they lost a great deal financially when the pigs died.

3. And they lost a great deal financially because the problem had grown so big that solving it made a big mess.
4. Seeking spiritual solutions to spiritual problems limits the loss. It doesn't eliminate the loss. But it does limit the loss.
5. I have found that things work out much more cleanly when I go the Lord first, rather than going to the Lord last.
6. If I don't view every situation as a spiritual situation, and if I don't take it to the Lord for a spiritual solution the moment I become aware of the problem, then what happens is I live what I will call a **Hybrid Christianity**.
7. A hybrid car is a vehicle that runs partially on gas, and partially on electricity stored in batteries. It is a vehicle that is operating with two power sources.
8. Technology has made this work pretty efficiently for vehicles. But let me tell you, the same cannot be said about our spiritual lives.
9. If we don't see every problem as a spiritual problem and as a result seek a spiritual solution, from an extraordinary God, then we are Christians trying to live with two power sources.
10. Part of the time we depend on God, and part of the time we depend on ourselves, or someone else, or something else as our source of hope.
11. And the result of trying to live a life with two power sources is that we compartmentalize our lives, and we say, well God, you can be God over this part of my life, but I'll be in control over this part over here.
12. And we all know that doesn't work. It may work for a while. But it won't work for long.
13. **We can't live the victorious life God intends us to have on part-time power;** we need full-time power that only comes through Him.
14. Pray.
15. Have you been trying to survive by living a hybrid Christianity? It's time to give it up and surrender completely to Jesus.

16. Are you dealing with something that you have been hanging onto yourself, and trying to solve partially or fully on your own. It's time to go to the Lord.
17. Have people pray for one another that we will develop new patterns of trusting in the Lord.