Jamison’s Sermon dated 6/19/2022

Gospel Text

**Luke 8:26-39** 26{Jesus and his disciples} sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. 28When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.” 29For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time 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 desert.) 30Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. 31And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. 32Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. 33Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned. 34When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. 35Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. 36And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. 37Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. 38The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39“Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

Sermon

In Matthew chapter 8 verses 28-34 and Mark chapter 5 verses 1-20, we have this same story being told, with some difference. So we are going to look at all three to piece this story together, apply it to today and see what we can learn from it. Now just because there might seem to be discrepancies in these stories, doesn’t mean that it didn’t take place.

Take any event, witnessed by multiple people, and you will have the same story told slightly different, because we all have different perspectives, and we all focus on what we deem as important as the event is taking place. So as we look at today’s gospel from Luke’s perspective, we are also going to look at Matthew and Mark’s perspective.

In the beginning of our gospel it is interesting to note that as soon as Jesus stepped out onto the land, He was immediately greeted by a demon-possessed man. Now here is where the disciples’ focus is different during this event. Matthew mentions they were met by two possessed men, while Mark and Luke mention only one. Matthew notes that these two possessed men were so violent that nobody could pass that way, while Mark and Luke are so focused on one of these men’s physical appearance. Mark goes on to describe him as having gashes on his body, and Luke describes the man as not having worn clothes for a long time. So while Mark and Luke are focused on the more violent or dominant and what seems to be the more cut or scarred of the two, Matthew is focused on both demon-possessed men. What they do agree on is that they were immediately met by them as soon as Jesus got out of the boat, and onto the land.

In Matthew chapter 8 verse 29 it says, “And they cried out saying, ‘What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?’”

In Mark chapter 5 verse 7 it says, “And shouting with a loud voice he said, ‘What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!’”

And in Luke chapter 8 verse 28 it says, “Seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, ‘What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me.’”

These demon-possessed men's response to Jesus tells us a few things. The first thing is that even the demons of that time recognized that Jesus was the Son of God, the Son of the Most High God. The second is that the demons also acknowledged that Jesus had power over them, as they dropped to Jesus’ feet and begged not to be tormented by Him, because He was commanding them to come out. The third thing is that they knew Jesus to be the judge of the world and all things in it.

In Matthew they cried out, “Have you come here to torment us before the time?” The time here refers to the final judgment and damnation of all those deserving of it.

In Luke verse 31 in our gospel it says, “They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.” They know where the final judgment is going to take them, and even the demons are afraid to go there. So what happens next? There was a herd of swine feeding on the mountain, and the demons implored, begged, and pleaded for Jesus to permit them to enter the swine. They couldn’t do it without Jesus’ permission. And when they entered the swine they ran down the hill, into the lake, and drowned.

When the herdsmen of the pigs seen this, they ran to the town and country and told the people what happened. In verse 37 of our gospel it says, “And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to leave them, for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat and returned.”

Now there’s one more part left in this gospel, but I want to focus on what we’ve heard so far and apply it to the world today. Ever since Adam and Eve took that first bite from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, this world has been cursed. Cursed with sin and death. From that first bite, a darkness has descended on this world and blinded many. When people live in darkness they don’t know any better. They can’t see their sin because all about them is darkness, and they are surrounded by others in this darkness, so it seems normal.

Then a light appears, a light so bright that it pushes the darkness back. A light so pure that it exposes what the darkness was hiding. And this light has two different reactions to it. Both reactions will acknowledge their sin, but will respond differently.

One will respond like the demon-possessed men. There might be some resistance in the beginning, but the Word of God will soften their hearts, and they will go from raving madness, living in the darkness, to a right, sane mind, living in the light. They will understand their need for a Savior and repent of their sin and trust in Jesus, the Son of the Most High God. It isn’t enough to just ask for forgiveness, you must repent or turn away from your sinful desires and trust in Jesus in all things.

Unfortunately there are few who will respond this way. A lot of people will respond as the people of Gerasenes and the surrounding districts responded. When the light appears and their sins are exposed they will push back. And here’s an interesting take on this part. They didn’t send one person or a small envoy to deal with Jesus. These people heard what happened to a demon-possessed man. They weren’t going to take any chances. These people were cowards and by themselves were afraid they would succumb to the light. They didn’t want to join the light, they enjoyed the darkness too much, so they came *en masse* to embolden each other, to push the light away. There might have been some in that crowd that wanted to hear the Word of God, but didn’t want to be ostracized by their community, so they went along with the crowd. Think about how many people came to push Jesus away. The people of the country and the surrounding district.

Now let’s look at our country. The people of this country are coming together, forming a mob asking Jesus, no imploring, begging, pleading for Jesus to leave this region. In fact the people of this country are on the verge of picking Jesus up, throwing Him in the boat and shoving the boat out to sea. How you ask?

Look at the agenda of our leadership. Instead of concentrating on securing our borders, fighting homelessness, reducing inflation, and caring about the needs of this country. They want to kill babies in the womb, indoctrinate children into the trans community, then destroy their bodies with pills and mutilation, indoctrinate them into the gay community, and this happens in schools, the same place where they are supposed to be learning about Math, English and Science. Just this week, Michigan’s Attorney General said that drag queens are fun and make everything better, and said she wants a drag queen for every school.

There was an event in Dallas, Texas called drag your kid to pride at a gay nightclub. The President of the United States signed an executive order to curb anti-trans laws and conversion therapy. This whole month people are celebrating their pride for sin. This month might as well be called flaunt your sin in front of God month. These people don’t care about the light. They know it’s there, but have put on blinders so they don’t have to look at it.

In Galations chapter 5 verses 19-21 it says, “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.”

Scripture, the Word of God, exposes sin and offends or convicts those that hear it. It offends those who love living in the darkness, and convicts those living or longing for the light. Just because we’re Christians doesn’t mean we are immune to the scriptures. If we feel a heavy burden when hearing the Word of God, we need to look at why we feel that way. Dig into that verse and see what it is trying to show us and praise God for bringing it into the light.

And don’t get me wrong, there are some elected officials fighting back against this war on children, this push to remove God from this country and that’s fine, but what is the church doing about it? What are we, as Christians, doing about it? Let’s look at the last part of our gospel.

In verses 38 & 39 it says, “But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying, ‘Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you.’ So he went away proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.”

This man didn’t want to stay in this evil place that rejected Jesus. He wanted to leave and stay by Jesus’ side, to live in the light. And when it says that Jesus sent him away, don’t misread this. Jesus didn’t reject him, but gave him a mission, a purpose. Go back to your house, go back into that evil city and proclaim the Word of God. And he did just that. He obeyed and trusted in Jesus and proclaimed His Word, not just in his neighborhood, but the whole city.

And just as this man longed to stay by Jesus’ side, we long to be with Him, but our work here is not done. Our work here will only be finished when He calls us home. Until that time He gave us a mission, a purpose.

In Matthew chapter 28 verses 18-20 it says, “And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”

We need to expose the evil and sin people are living in, making them aware of their need for a Savior. One that died for them paying the ultimate price. To get them to repent of their sinful ways and to put their full trust in Jesus, the One True Living God, because if they don’t they will get paid for their sin.

In Romans chapter 6 verse 23 it says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Jesus will not force anyone to love Him, it must be their choice. A forced love is no love at all. The people of Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave and He did. He did not force His way into their land. What He did do is He left a seed behind. A seed to proclaim His word. When we talk to people about Jesus we are planting or watering a seed. Don’t be disappointed if you are rejected. Remember the seeds you plant could be for someone else to water. AMEN.