

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Luke 8: 26-39

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. This week, we are continuing reading Luke Chapter 8 and today we will read verses 26 to 39. Yesterday we read that Jesus and His disciples crossed over the Sea of Galilee and came to the eastern side of the lake.

Verse 26: "Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee."

On the western side of the Sea of Galilee, most of the residents were Jews. On the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, there were also many Jews, but among them Gentiles were living mixed together. Therefore, the atmosphere and environment on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee were somewhat different from those on the western side.

On the one hand, on the western side of the lake, Jesus was leading His disciples to heal the sick, cast out demons, and preach—that was one kind of environment. Now He brought His disciples to the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, especially to places where Jews and Gentiles were living mixed together. The local customs, culture, and way of life were all somewhat different. At that time, during His earthly ministry, the principle of Jesus' work was still mainly directed toward the Jews.

Verse 27: "And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs."

Luke uses three simple sentences to give a very clear description of a man possessed by demons: this man wore no clothes and had no sense of shame; he did

not live in a house and had no rest; he lived among the tombs, keeping company with demons every day in dark and gloomy places.

It was so at that time, and it is still so today. In the past, in places where civilization was less developed, those who were demon-possessed appeared less civilized. In undeveloped regions, when a person was possessed by demons, he truly lived among the tombs, truly did not wear clothes, and truly did not dwell in a house. In modern, civilized societies, there are still many who are demon-possessed.

These are demon-possessed in a civilized way. They may dress fashionably and elegantly every day, yet have no sense of shame at all. They may live daily in luxurious and comfortable villas, yet have no rest within. They may frequently enter and leave high-class social settings, yet the people they meet scheme against one another, each seeking to gain advantage from the other. Therefore, being demon-possessed is not something unique to ancient times; it is the same today.

Verse 28: “When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, ‘What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!’”

This demon-possessed man had his humanity completely controlled by the demons within him. Therefore, the words spoken were not the words of a man, but of demons. Man often does not know God, but demons always know God—and they know Him with fear and trembling. As soon as the demon saw Jesus coming, it immediately declared that He was Jesus, the Son of the Most High God.

Unlike each of us who have received grace—when we mention Jesus Christ, our hearts are filled with thanksgiving, joy, and peace—the demon cried out to Jesus, the Son of the Most High God, yet was filled with fear. It said, “What have I to do with You? I beg You, do not torment me.

Verse 29: “For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness.”

Jesus had already been healing the sick and casting out demons for some time. Some of these demons had previously been cast out by Jesus, yet later they occupied the person again. We know that when man was created, he was actually made as a vessel. God’s original intention was that man would contain God; when God comes in, the demons must go out. But if the demons are cast out and God does not come in, those demons will invite other, more wicked spirits to come and dwell there together. Demons are disembodied unclean spirits. They are constantly seeking a place to dwell, and man is their most desirable habitation. When unclean spirits dwell in a person, they are able to control him and cause him not to live according to God’s will. These unclean spirits recognize Jesus.

Verse 30: “Jesus asked him, saying, ‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘Legion,’ because many demons had entered him.”

Jesus was asking the man, yet the one who answered was the demon—and not just one demon, but many. It said, “My name is Legion,” because many demons had entered him. The word translated “Legion” in English refers to a Roman military unit. According to the original Greek usage in the Roman army system, a legion consisted of approximately three to six thousand soldiers. Therefore, this man had many unclean spirits within him.

We need to understand that demons also like to gather in groups. Once you allow one unclean spirit to come in, it will usually bring its companions with it. This is why we see that if a person has one unhealthy or sinful habit, often there are many spirits behind it: a spirit of drugs may lead to drunkenness; drunkenness may lead to gambling; and so on. Demons tend to move in groups. Therefore, if there is any harmful habit in us that we are aware of, we should quickly ask God for help.

Through the help of Jesus Christ, we can be restored and become a holy person once again.

Verse 31: “And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.”

Demons most prefer to dwell in human beings. If that is not possible, they settle for the next best thing and inhabit other living creatures. What they fear most is being sent back to their original place—the abyss—and wandering about. Therefore, a wandering spirit by itself is not truly frightening; it cannot do much to you. But when a demon possesses a person, that is truly frightening.

Demons can use people to do many things that humans should not do, including harming others. The repeated occurrences of school shootings in the United States are, in fact, a stark portrayal of a society that is moving further and further away from God.

Verse 32-33: “Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.”

In the region of the Gerasenes, if you visit the Holy Land today, this is a site that is often included on tour itineraries. From a distance, you can see a hillside which is traditionally identified as the very place where the herd of pigs rushed down the steep bank and fell into the lake. Other Gospels tell us that there were about two thousand pigs (Mark 5:13). This suggests that there were many demons in the man. After these demons left the man, they entered the swine; and the herd, suddenly out of control, rushed down the steep place into the lake and drowned.

Verse 34: “When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country.”

Under the law of Israel, pigs were considered unclean. Therefore, they were not to be eaten and could not be offered as sacrifices. Among the Israelites, no one was supposed to raise pigs, because pigs were regarded as unclean. However, on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, Jews and Gentiles lived together. Some of these Jews, for the sake of profit, violated their own law by raising pigs.

In today’s terms, it would be similar to people engaging in illegal or improper trades—such as dealing drugs, smuggling, or trafficking. The reason Jesus allowed the demons to enter the herd of swine seems also to have been to let those engaged in improper occupations experience a rebuke in their conscience.

Verse 35-36: “Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed.”

This man had originally worn no clothes, lived in no house, and dwelt only among the tombs. But once the demons left him, he became clear-minded, sitting at Jesus’ feet, clothed; all that was unclean and shameful departed from him, and he became a saved man. The people who raised the pigs saw this man sitting there calmly in front of Jesus. Those who witnessed it then told them how the demon-possessed man had been delivered.

Verse 37: “Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned.”

Their reaction was truly very strange. They valued their illegal, unclean pig-raising business far more than the value of this man. Jesus’ judgment was exactly the

opposite. He was willing to cross the Sea of Galilee, endure a storm all night, and even allow the loss of two thousand pigs, all for the sake of saving one person. In God's eyes, the value of a human being is immense; the salvation of a single person is of the highest worth.

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, was even willing to leave His heavenly throne to come to earth for the redemption of humanity. He greatly values human life. Yet these people, seeing the profit from their illegal and unclean business, feared that if Jesus continued casting out demons, they would lose more of their gain. So they begged Jesus to leave them. Jesus, in His great respect for men's free will, simply departed by boat since they would not accept Him.

Verse 38-39: "Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.' And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him."

Jesus left the region of the Gerasenes, but He did not abandon the city of the Gerasenes. On the one hand, God gives people free will and greatly respects their choices; when people choose to reject Him and not accept Him, Jesus still does not abandon the city. Instead, He sent the man who had been saved—the one who had been demon-possessed—to remain in that city as a witness for Him. As a result, the man went home and proclaimed throughout the city the great things Jesus had done for him.

It is the same today. In our society, in our workplaces, and even among unbelieving relatives and friends, Jesus respects each person's free choice. At the same time, He places us among them. Every one of us who has received grace and salvation carries the responsibility to proclaim the grace and power we have experienced in the environments God has arranged for us, just as the demon-possessed man did.

Let us pray together: Lord, You are truly merciful to us. In the environments where we live, we see how deeply people need Your salvation. On one hand, we thank You for the grace You have given us, allowing us to know You, receive forgiveness for our sins, be freed from the dominion of demons, and live lives that are pleasing to You. Lord, please help us to boldly testify for You in the environments You have placed us. You desire that all be saved and that none should perish; grant us that same heart, so that today, in the circles around our lives, we may courageously bear witness for You. Bless this day of our lives, we pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen!