

I. Introduction

Good morning! From the beginning of history, people have felt the presence of God whenever they looked at the twinkling stars of the night sky. In recent years, bright lights have made it harder to see the stars from the cities, but from the images taken by the Hubble Space Telescope, we know now that our galaxy has on the order of 400 billion stars and that the universe has 80 billion galaxies or more. That adds up to a lot of stars!



Isaiah 40:26a, challenges us to know the Creator God, **“Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these?”** The heavens reveal the power and wisdom of God. But, when we consider the vastness of God’s creation, we also realize how tiny earth is, and we may wonder whether our existence even matters at all. But the Bible teaches us that the Creator God who made the heavens is also a God of love. His love is endless, and He cares about every detail of His creation. And He especially loves each and every person He has made.



Last week we saw how Jesus demonstrated His power over nature by calming the storm. In today’s passage we will see that Jesus also has power over the invisible supernatural world. Let’s read Luke 8:26-39.

II. Scripture Luke 8:26-39 (NIV)

[26] They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. [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. [28] When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" [29] For Jesus had commanded the evil 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. [30] Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. [31] And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss. [32] A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into them, and he gave them permission. [33] 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. [38] The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, [39] "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.

III. Teaching

In this passage Jesus and the disciples cross the Sea of Galilee in a small boat, perhaps similar to this model of a first century boat. This time, unlike in last week’s passage, it seems that the sea is calm and they are able to cross without difficulty. But when they arrive at the far shore, they are met by a demon-possessed man.



We are told that this man did not wear clothing and that he had been living among the tombs for a long time. The people of the town had tried to chain him, but the chains could not hold him. Everyone would have been terrified of him, and the man himself would have been suffering greatly. Can you imagine the life of this man? Tormented by demons. Living alone in the place of the dead. Naked, afraid, ashamed and without hope. The people of the town would have run from him. But Jesus did not flee from the man.



Luke 8:30, “Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him.” A standard Roman legion consisted of 6,000 soldiers. But here the name probably just means many, many demons and not a particular number. Oppressed by so many powerful demons, the man had no hope of freeing himself. He was enslaved and imprisoned by evil. But no matter how bad the situation, there is someone who can help. Jesus.



The demons knew they had to obey the word of Jesus. They begged to be sent into a herd of swine and not into the abyss, a place of imprisonment for demons. Jesus granted their request and the demons left the man and entered the pigs. And the pigs rushed down the hill into the lake and drowned. Notice that Jesus did not kill the pigs, the demons did that.



There is some debate concerning the exact location of these events. Many scholars believe that it was at the place which is now called Kursi. Others believe that it was at another location in the region, not far away. It is difficult to be certain because the level of the lake and the shape of the cliffs have changed over time.

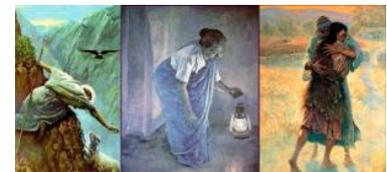


Regardless of the exact location, Jesus did a great miracle and freed a man who had been possessed by many demons. But how did the people of the town react? **Luke 8:37, “Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left.”** There are several things that we could talk about here, but for today, I want to focus on just one thing.

This is what I want you to notice. Jesus crossed the lake to find and free one man who was hopelessly lost and trapped by evil. Jesus did not mind that it took all day. Jesus did not mind how hard it was to handle the boat, or that it required a dramatic encounter with demons. Jesus was willing to accept the loss of a herd of swine. Jesus was not even disturbed when all the people rejected Him and asked Him to leave. In order to find and save one man, Jesus was willing to pay a high price.



In Luke 15, we will study the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son. In each case, we will see that Jesus shows that He is deeply concerned about the individual, the one. **Luke 19:10** tells us, **“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”** The ultimate expression of Jesus’ love for every person is seen at the cross. At the cross, Jesus paid the ultimate price in order to offer to each of us the priceless gift of salvation.



Why does God care so much about each individual person? We have a good hint back in Genesis. Take a look at **Genesis 1:27, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”** The flowers, the fish, the fowl of the air, the animals, yes, even the pigs, are all important to God. Jesus even had compassion on the demons and granted their request. But men and women are worth far more than pigs or animals. Why? Because men and women are created in God’s image. Because we are created in



God's image, so that we are able to have true fellowship with Him. And that is what the Lord seeks, a personal and loving relationship with each and every man and woman.

IV. Conclusion

Jesus is Lord over the natural world and the supernatural world. Jesus is able to command the wind, the waves, and the demons with a single word and they all must obey Him. Jesus has all authority and power. And Jesus loves us so much that He gave His life as a ransom for ours on the cross. Jesus is worthy of worship. But the Lord Jesus does not force us to follow Him; instead He gently invites us, because He wants us to love Him as He loves us. And love cannot be forced, or it would no longer be true love. Jesus is inviting us to follow Him. He is inviting you, to follow Him.



V. Closing Prayer