



30: HOW THE SPARTANS FRIED MAGNETO'S BACON (Luke 8:26-39)

Back in the summer of 1998, I scored 2 hits of acid at an infamous hole full of hardcore hippies and drug dealers called "Nelson's Ledges". These were where the hard-core druggies spent a lot of time. I went there to jump off of a 15-foot cliff into the deep water below, and had run into some space pirate hippies that sold me two hits of what they called "Wizard of Oz" blotter acid. They told me it was really strong, and recommended taking only one hit.

While recording music with a friend in my basement makeshift recording studio, I popped both hits on my tongue. Within 30 minutes, I began to feel the numbing effects and body buzz taking over my entire anatomy, and it was peculiar, because it normally had taken an hour before. My friend was finishing up his guitar tracks. At one point, he looked at me and said, "Are you alright man? You look kind of freaked out!" I tried to ignore the fear that this statement had instilled in me, but I was alarmed that this LSD was stronger than I was ready for.

The next memory I had was being at a party, about an hour later. This party was full of drunken people that had once been friends of mine. Because of my heavier drug use, they had distanced themselves from me. I remember a moment when one friend came

up to talk to me. He was drunk and mocking me and my hippie ways, saying, "So Benny, how you been buddy? You been "TOKING IT UP" lately huh? Hahaha..." The words seemed to echo and his face distorted as he said it. All around him, shadow mites of darkness swirled around in a tornado of madness. I barked back at him; "DON'T MOCK ME OR I'LL STRANGLE YOU RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW!!!"

It was as if a phantom had entered into me at that moment. Some kind of demon of a dark force of which I knew nothing of. I only know that this moment of anger seemed to overtake my entire brain and body, and I had no awareness of who I was. My friend stared back at me in fear for a moment, and then walked away...

The trip continued, and is a blur in my memory. I know that the effects of the LSD went completely haywire. I was in a dark fantasy world of which I had no control, nor escape. The people I saw contorted into minions... the very air I breathed seemed to be filled with acidic poison. The back of my brain felt like it was melting off of my head. I didn't know then that LSD physically made your brain hemorrhage. I only felt completely out of control. I remembered reading of Mephistopheles in the legend of Faust. Had I been overcome by some dark angel like him? Would I ever make it out of this state of mind, or was I doomed to wear a straightjacket in a little white room for the rest of my life?

The profound, dark thoughts seemed to overcome my mind like a swarm of wasps...

The next memory I had was 3 hours later, being in my parents' living room. It was midnight, and somehow, another friend of mine had come to keep me company. We were watching a rerun of the show, "The Wonder Years" on TV. Whatever I thought in my mind, the main character of the show, Kevin Arnold, would become before my very eyes. I thought of the Ku Klux Klan for some weird reason, and he grew a hood on the TV. I thought of a werewolf, and he turned into one before my very eyes. I told my friend, "I'm freaking out man! I can't control my mind... I hate this man!"

My friend, very stoned, looked at me in bewilderment. He was tired from smoking pot earlier, and told me he had to go home. After all, it was midnight and he had a curfew to keep. I begged him to stay with me and not leave me alone. "Please man. You can't go. I will die man, I WILL DIE!"

Nonetheless, my friend had to obey his parents' rules. He went home. I was left to myself and the effects of this evil drug.

I looked on the ground in my parents' living room as I sat there alone, and afraid out of my mind... What appeared to be glowing ravens engulfed in fire began to appear in a pattern all over the floor and the walls. They were intertwined in a pattern of hieroglyphics. I looked at my hand and they were imprinted all over me as well. I felt for certain that I was about to die and these patterns I was seeing represented all the

horrible things I had done. I sensed that a swift judgment was about to come upon me. I was doomed... cursed. There was no way out and I would leave this life condemned forever.

I tried to make my way through the night. I had no one I could reach out to... at least not that I was aware of... I so desperately wanted to call my girlfriend at the time, but it was 2am. I was sitting there in my bed freaking out, seeing the scroll of my life laid out before me in an interconnected life pattern that engulfed all of reality and nature.

The Goo Goo Dolls song "Iris" was high on the charts in those days, and it's chorus accurately described this profound alienation:

*And I don't want the world to see me
Cause I don't think that they'd understand
When everything's made to be broken
I just want you to know who I am*

I just wanted someone, anyone to be there for me. I was too afraid to reach out to a higher power of any sort. I felt too condemned, too dirty, too crazy and broken. I wrote my girlfriend a long letter, describing my fear. That carried me until 3 a.m. Then I pulled out a VHS tape that contained the movie, "Forrest Gump". I began watching the 3 hour long feature to try and calm my fretful heart and mind. From the moment where the feather began to lilt in the wind in the opening credits I was pulled into this movie like never before. I cried practically the entire time it was on. I was afraid for my soul...

As the sun arose at around 5:57 a.m. and the feather lilted in the air during the closing credits of "Forrest Gump", I realized that the acid was finally beginning to wear down, and my wearied body would finally be able to sleep. I cried as I watched the sunrise, and had a moment where I was simply thankful to be alive, and sane.

I had no understanding or knowledge of any religion or spirituality at this time. But this profound feeling was very real. I learned only years later that I was experiencing something on earth that Jesus talked often about... Hell, and demon possession.¹

And two years and nine months later, Jesus would fully drive the demons that tormented me fully out of me, and rescue me!

I know what it's like for Jesus to have power over the spiritual forces of one's life first hand. And that's exactly what Luke was writing about in the text that we now know as Luke 8:26-39.

¹ <https://goddrugsandrocknroll.com/2013/07/22/my-bad-trip-on-lsd/>

This text was the first exorcism that Luke spoke of occurring in Gentile territory, since Gerasa (in the region of the Gerasenes) was located east of the Jordan. It showed how Jesus' ministry was expanding in scope. This exorcism involved a multi-faceted demonic possession of one person, so it was a more intense encounter than previous ones. This account dealt more fully with an array of responses to Jesus' miracles, from the request of the locals for Jesus to depart to the transformation of the demon-possessed man into a witness for the Lord. This miracle continued the sequence of four miracles in Luke 8:22-56, and each one represented a different sphere of activity (nature, to demons, to disease, to death).²

This text is truly one of the most powerful accounts of Christ's power over demons! Let's dig in;

26 Then (Jesus and His disciples) sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27 When he got out on land, a demon-possessed man from the town met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes and did not stay in a house but in the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before him, and said in a loud voice, "What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torment me!" 29 For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was guarded, bound by chains and shackles, he would snap the restraints and be driven by the demon into deserted places. (Luke 8:26-29)

The region of the Gerasenes was the Decapolis, a group of Hellenistic cities in Syria near Galilee, including such towns as Gadara (Mt 8:28) and Gerasa, Hippos and Pella. The population of the region was predominantly Gentile. A region could be named by a town in its vicinity, even a town that is farther from the site. Some suggest instead the site of Gergesa (modern Kursi), which has a cliff and tombs in the area.³

The detailed description of the demoniac shows the destructive power of the demons, for the man had totally withdrawn from society, living unclothed and naked in tombs.⁴

Metal is drawn to magnets. This is true in every case. Magnets exert forces and torques on each other through the interaction of their magnetic fields. The forces of attraction and repulsion are a result of these interactions. The magnetic field of each magnet is due to microscopic currents of electrically charged electrons orbiting nuclei and the intrinsic magnetism of fundamental particles (such as electrons) that make up the material. Both of these are modeled quite well as tiny loops of current called magnetic

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dipoles produce their own magnetic field and are affected by external magnetic fields. The most elementary force between magnets is the magnetic dipole–dipole interaction. If all magnetic dipoles for each magnet are known then the net force on both magnets can be determined by summing all the interactions between the dipoles of the first magnet and the dipoles of the second magnet.⁵

But it's amazing how the opposite forces within metal and magnets cause them to be drawn to each other. This demon possessed man, who was tormented in every way, left to feel unacceptable in the sight of God and people, insane, out of control, and utterly rejected, felt absolutely drawn to the One who was abiding in God in every way, was fully accepted in the sight of God and people (who saw Him for who He was!), totally master of all reality, totally in control, and fully the Son of God! And Jesus, like a magnetic force, was reciprocally drawn to this person.

Jesus was in no way afraid of the outcasts of society. Rather, He was drawn to them, and they were synonymously drawn to Him. Those of us who truly have the spirit of Christ in us via the Holy Spirit will, with His magnetic force, draw the desperate, the broken, the poor, the unhinged, the crazy, the wildly sinful, and the rejects of society to Him, through us! Mark my words! Merely religious people simply do not experience this supernatural power of the God of the Margins living inside of them, and the desperate, broken, poor, unhinged, crazy, wildly sinful, and rejects of society are actually turned off to God by their pious platitudes, arrogant disposition, fakeness, and hypocrisy. Just like dogs can sense a bad vibe coming from a person, sinners can smell religious bull about a mile away. That's why Jesus loved self-proclaimed "sinners" who needed real help!

But not so with Jesus and this sinful, demon possessed man. Something within the man was desperately, and uncontrollably drawn to Jesus, and Jesus was wide open to engaging with Him. Unlike the cowards of Rev. 21:8, who are the first listed who will eternally burn in the lake of fire, Jesus boldly stepped foot, in a spiritual offensive posture, right into the territories of hell.

We are told how this demon possessed man had been seized many times and bound with ropes, chains, or both. But he shattered them and could not be restrained.⁶ Many have noted the seemingly super powers that evil can unleash in people. I've heard of people, under the influence of demonic power, or under high doses of demonic drugs, having what appears to be superhuman strength. That appears to be the case here.

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Force_between_magnets

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Super villains in the world of comic books have been described as having superhuman powers also. Thanos had telepathy, Doomsday had the ability to adapt to any attack and develop an immunity to it,

But Thanos got defeated by Iron Man. Doomsday was eventually defeated, stabbed by Superman. Jesus had power over the demons that controlled and possessed this man—who really was a human, beautifully and wonderfully created in the image of God.

The man fell before Jesus as the demons confessed him to be the “Son of the Most High God,” and he asked Jesus not to torment him.⁷

James 2:19 points out so poignantly, “You believe that God is one. Good! Even the demons believe—and they shudder!” Truthfully, the powers of darkness are aware of the light in a way that’s even more profound than those who somehow dissipate into the neutral middle.



Dementors, in the world of Harry Potter, as Remus Lupin described them, were among the foulest creatures that walked the earth. They infested the darkest, filthiest places, they gloried in decay and despair, they drained peace, hope, and happiness out of the air around them... Get too near a Dementor and every good feeling, every happy memory would be sucked out of you. If it could, the Dementor would feed on you long enough to reduce you to something like itself... soulless and evil. You would be left with nothing but the worst experiences of your life, and you would just be an empty shell that

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lost its soul." There were certain defenses one could use against Dementors, specifically the Patronus Charm.⁸

Demons, looking to infest dark, filthy places, glorying in decay and despair, draining the peace, hope and happiness of God out of this man now called Legion, bathing in darkness, were absolutely repelled by the Patronus light of Jesus Christ.

The demon's name was Legion, indicating that a whole battle division of demons inhabited the man. In the Roman world, legion referred to a company of thousands of soldiers. In other words, Jesus was engaging in a major battle here. He was outnumbered, but not overmatched.⁹



Many of us may be aware of one of the ultimate “dude movies” of all time “300”, starring Gerard Butler, which was based on the actual historical event “The Battle of Thermopylae”

Around the start of this battle, the Persian army invaded, and a Greek force of approximately 7,000 men led by Leonidas I marched north to block the pass of Thermopylae. The Persian army, estimated by ancient authors to number in the millions, and by modern scholars to be between 120,000 and 300,000 soldiers, arrived at Thermopylae by late August or early September. During two full days of battle, the Greeks blocked the only road by which the massive Persian army could traverse the narrow pass. After the second day, a local resident named Ephialtes revealed to the Persians the existence of a path leading behind the Greek lines. Subsequently, Leonidas, aware that his force was being outflanked by the Persians, dismissed the bulk

⁸ <https://harrypotter.fandom.com/wiki/Dementor>

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of the Greek army and remained to guard their retreat along with 300 Spartans and 700 Thespians. The Greeks fought the Persians to the death in one of history's most famous last stands.¹⁰

The Greek army was vastly outnumbered by the Persian Army, and yet, through military tactics and straight up grit, defeated them in one of the greatest recorded underdog victories of all time.

But Jesus was no underdog. He was and is the only real “alpha dog”. We’re talking about one who helped to create the heavens and the earth, and in this instance of the exorcism of legion, we were getting a glimpse into what His glorified, heavenly glory would really be like. We were getting a glimpse into the kind of authority He really had.

And let me tell you right now, if you’re battling depression, anxiety, insanity, mental health issues, debilitating addiction, suicidal ideation, marginalization, social ostracization, or any other mental, psychological, and emotional issue, Jesus has the power to bring healing like you could never imagine. Just watch what happens in the text next;

30 *“What is your name?” Jesus asked him. “Legion,” he said, because many demons had entered him. 31 And they begged him not to banish them to the abyss. 32 A large herd of pigs was there, feeding on the hillside. The demons begged him to permit them to enter the pigs, and he gave them permission. 33 The demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned. (Luke 8:30-33)*

The demons asked to be sent into a herd of pigs rather than into the abyss. This request has produced much speculation, none of which is answered by the text. What the incident involving the pigs does indicate is the real impact of demonic presence and influence, namely, the destruction of life. At Jesus’ command, the demons departed to enter the pigs. Their possession of them threw the herd into a panic that caused them to run over the edge of a steep bank and into the water, where they drowned. The demons’ effort to continue their presence in the area apparently failed.¹¹

These demons begged to not be banished into “the abyss”. What is “the abyss”? a 1989 American science fiction film written and directed by James Cameron and starring Ed Harris, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Michael Biehn?¹²

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Thermopylae

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¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Abyss

In the NT, there are 9 occurrences of Gk *abyssos*, which, in the older English versions, are usually rendered by “the deep” (Luke 8:31, Rom 10:7) and “bottomless” or “the bottomless pit” (seven times in Revelation). Other English versions use “the abyss” or “the Abyss” with more or less frequency (RSV, twice; NASB, 7 times; JB, GNB, NIV, NJB, 8 times; NEB all 9 times). In 2 Pet. 2:4, NJB renders Gk *zophos*, “dark, gloomy (place),” as “the dark abyss” (i.e., hell).

There are two meanings for “the abyss” in the NT. First, it refers to (1) the place to which the forces of evil are consigned (e.g., the demons in Luke 8:31), and from which they come by way of a shaft (the demonic “locusts” of Rev 9:1–11; cf. ABADDON; Apollyon). From the abyss comes the beast (Rev 11:7), and into it is cast the dragon, i.e. Satan (Rev 20:1, 3). Second, in one passage “the abyss” is a synonym for Hades (Rom 10:7).¹³

We can speculate all we want, but it seems clear that these demons were begging Jesus not to be sent back to hell, where they belonged. They wanted to go on tormenting this human instead of being assigned back to the place of torment. They wanted to do the tormenting rather than just perpetually experiencing the torment.

For some reason, Jesus showed mercy to these demons, and rather than allow them to continue tormenting a human, rather than sending them back to hell where they belonged, Jesus allowed them to torment and kill a herd of pigs. They had to ask Him permission to do so, and He gave consent.

Jesus had this much authority over the spiritual realm. No wonder why Col. 1:16 states so powerfully;

*For everything was created by him,
in heaven and on earth,
the visible and the invisible,
whether thrones or dominions
or rulers or authorities—
all things have been created through him and for him.*

Did Jesus care less about these pigs than He did this human being? When considering our context, Jesus certainly wasn't trying to commit some sort of PETA violation here. And remember, pigs, in our era, are used for protein filled foods for those who aren't vegetarians. In the era and Israelite culture of Christ, pigs were seen to be unclean.

¹³ Herbert G. Grether, “[Abyss, The.](#)” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 49.

(Lev. 11:7-8) One could conclude that Jesus, in reflection of His Father, **did** in fact care more for this man than these pigs. After all, God did create every living thing on the earth, and He did say that it was good. (Gen. 1:20-25) But then, when God made men and women in His image, and gave them a rational mind, a soul, a conscience, and a spirit to engage with Him on a deeper level than any creature, God had an apparently deeper affection for this aspect of His Creation than the rest. (Gen. 1:26-31)

There's a lot we could say and speculate on here, but all over bloated animal ethics aside, aren't you glad that God cares more about you than a dog, a cat, a fly, a lizard, a mosquito, or a pig? God does want us to have a loving, caretaking relationship with many creatures of the earth (not wasps, in my opinion!) But some also use some animals for food. This has been the case since post-flood creation (Gen. 9:1-3) But praise God, we are uniquely created in His image! You're uniquely created in His image! We get to bear that amazing, beautiful image!

Overall, the swine incident indicates vividly, even tragically, how deadly the forces of evil are. The presence of evil and the demonic should not be taken lightly. Jesus probably performs this incident to demonstrate in a painful manner how the presence of evil results in death. This reminds us how the presence of sin in the human race required his own death as payment.¹⁴

Jesus wants us whole. Jesus wants us well. We will have struggles. Nothing will ever remain perfect. Our minds, souls, spirits and bodies will experience brokenness of all kinds in this life. But ultimately, we have the resurrection promise of Jesus! We get to lean into His atoning sacrifice! We get eternal life, eternal forgiveness, pardon, sanctification, and resurrection! It's a promise we will someday fully experience in all its wondrous beauty!!!!

Back to the text to see the aftermath of this wild incident!

34 *When the men who tended them saw what had happened, they ran off and reported it in the town and in the countryside. 35* *Then people went out to see what had happened. They came to Jesus and found the man the demons had departed from, sitting at Jesus's feet, dressed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. 36* *Meanwhile, the eyewitnesses reported to them how the demon-possessed man was delivered. 37* *Then all the people of the Gerasene region asked him to leave them, because they were gripped by great fear. So getting into the boat, he returned. (Luke 8:34-37)*

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Word spread fast as those tending the pigs fled into the city and country to report what had happened. Most amazing of all, when many people went out to the area, they saw the new character that now inhabited the formerly possessed man. He was seated calmly at the feet of Jesus, restored, clothed, and of sound mind. Jesus had rescued him from life among the tombs and brought him into the real world again. The scene is a picture of new life.¹⁵

We sing the song “Better Than Good” by Todd Galberth regularly. In the bridge of that song, Todd sings, “I shoulda been dead, but You’ve been better than good to me! Shoulda lost my mind, but You’ve been better than good to me!” When I sing those lines, they hit home for me!

As you read in the beginning of this writing, I was once a drug addict, who was toying with drugs that were very dangerous to my sanity and health. I quite literally could, on many occasions, have died, but Jesus saved me! I quite literally almost lost my mind, and Jesus restored me!

So when I read about Legion, I can truly put myself in His place. I was possessed by multiple demons and deeply addicted, and Jesus flipped my life around 180 degrees! People who knew me before were truly shocked by the change that had happened! People were literally coming to my house to buy drugs and then having to get sat down and told the gospel on my front porch! 😊

Have you been changed by Jesus? Were you once completely entrenched in sin and bondage, and experienced His freedom? How can you not continually praise Him for rescuing your life! “He called your name, and you came outta that grave!”

Are you entrenched in sin and bondage and needing His freedom? Stop being in denial about it and confess it! “If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. (Romans 10:9-10) Some of you are like me and never got exposed to Jesus Christ and the gospel of freedom, and it’s time for you to hand your life fully over to Him! Some of you have lived a life steeped in religion, surrounded by the things of the gospel constantly, and are still entrenched in sin and bondage all wrapped up in fake religious pretense and Sunday morning mind games. Get real and give your life fully over to Christ just like this man once called Legion did, and find that finally, you get to be in your right mind!

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So we had these demons warring with Jesus, Jesus taking em by the nads and casting em outta this dude, and then we see an adverse reaction from the general public to the whole situation.

The local people in this town did not care for Jesus' work. Luke did not tell us exactly why they asked him to leave other than their fear, but Mark 5:16 made it clear that Jesus had a negative economic impact on the region. They did not want to lose more livestock. Their fear had turned into rejection and a desire to have nothing more to do with the presence of divine authority.¹⁶

Some folks think Jesus is fine and dandy until He threatens their pocketbooks! As soon as following Jesus costs something to people, many reject Him. That's just how it is.

Have you heard the myth of Achilles' Heel?

So the myth goes, that Thetis, in order to make her son invulnerable to all weapons, dipped Achilles in the waters of the Styx, the river in the Underworld. She held him by the heel, which meant that all of Achilles was dipped in the magic waters of the river – except for his heel, which remained out of the water. Eventually, Paris, avenging his brother Hector's murder by Achilles, managed to kill the seemingly invulnerable Achilles by shooting an arrow into his heel, the one vulnerable part of his body.¹⁷

For many, their Achilles Heel is their pocketbook- their bank account! That's being proven by these locals who prefer the jing that's coming in from their pork business than the miracle that Jesus performed by restoring a formerly insane, destructive man. It was also proven by the Rich Young Ruler. (Mark 10:17-22)

But people have many Achilles Heels! For some, it's sex. For others, it's sexual identity, pleasure, power, popularity, purpose, control, anger, unforgiveness, bitterness, selfishness, theology, politics, and religiosity. It can be a job, a spouse, someone's kids, a house, a car, clothes, a talent, and more. Why do you think the first of the ten commandments is; "Do not have other gods besides me?" (Ex. 20:3) We all struggle with many "gods" in the place of "God"!

So identify your Achilles Heel, and ask God to keep massaging that thing into a strength rather than a fatal spiritual weakness like these locals in this town of the Gerasenes!

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¹⁷ <https://interestingliterature.com/2022/06/achilles-myth-summary-analysis>

And the text records one more vital interaction between Jesus and the man formerly known as Prince... I mean, Legion.

38 *The man from whom the demons had departed begged him earnestly to be with him. But he sent him away and said, 39 “Go back to your home, and tell all that God has done for you.” And off he went, proclaiming throughout the town how much Jesus had done for him. (Luke 8:38-39)*

The healed man wanted to join Jesus' traveling group of disciples. Like many who have experienced a dramatic salvation through Christ, He was all in! but Jesus had another calling in mind. He wanted to leave the dude behind to share what God had done for him in the area he lived. That was the man's task. He did that and more, preaching and proclaiming what Jesus had done for him. Those whose lives are most radically transformed often end up being the strongest witnesses for Jesus.¹⁸

And when Jesus frees you from drug addiction, sex addiction, selfishness, alcoholism, nicotine addiction, mental health battles, gluttony, sloth, envy, jealousy, arrogance, religiosity, confusion, foolishness, laziness, apathy, cowardice, insanity, passive aggression, violence, abusiveness, suicidal ideation, aggression, rage, traumatic responses to trauma, or cycles of poverty, YOU GO AND TELL PEOPLE ABOUT IT!!!! Can somebody reading this testify to what God has done in your life? Can somebody go and tell somebody what God has done for you recently? How can we not get out there and testify to His amazing, life changing, powerful grace, forgiveness, conviction, and truth???

To summarize, this miracle makes a wonderful collage of responses to Jesus, whether one considers **the demons**, **the locals**, or **the healed man** who benefits from Jesus' work.¹⁹

The demons recognize Jesus' power, but that does not stop them from trying to raise havoc with those around them. Even an army that knows it is losing a war can try to inflict as much damage as possible before going down.²⁰

The locals see the power of Jesus and want little to do with it. They are too afraid of God's power and presence.²¹

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The healed man indicates how helpless one can be without Jesus, especially when one is shackled and stripped of sanity by forces more powerful than one's own. But his turnaround indicates the startling contrast that emerges when one is freed from such enslavement. This miracle is not only about exorcism; it is especially about the liberation of a soul.²²

How do you respond to Jesus? Like the demons, the locals or the healed man?

Don't respond like the demons! Don't taste Jesus' power, but then, instead of responding with gratefulness and worship, try to raise havoc with those around you. Don't respond to Jesus with trifling, strife causing, gossiping, slandering, blaspheming, sinning, selfishness, judging, unforgiveness, violence, hatred, and foolishness! God ain't gonna keep tolerating it! But some folks still only want to inflict as much damage as possible before going down. Again, if this is your fate, know at least that I warned you beforehand!

Don't respond to Jesus like the locals, either! They see the power of Jesus and want little to do with it. They are too afraid of God's power and presence.²³

The people who ask Jesus to leave their region recognize his power, but are afraid to be too close to him. Many fear divine accountability, preferring to be left on their own and to fend for themselves. The locals were so concerned with their own affairs that they could not appreciate the deliverance that had taken place before their eyes. Perhaps the biggest tragedy of all is to see God at work and pretend nothing has really happened.²⁴

If you see God work, don't blow it off! Don't minimize it! Let me tell you something right now, there will never be anything more important or significant in your life than Jesus Christ and the power of the gospel! Jesus is worth our all! "If anyone wants to follow after Jesus, let them deny themselves, take up their crosses daily, and follow Him. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life because of Jesus will save it. For what will it benefit someone if they gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit themselves? For whoever is ashamed of Jesus and His words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in His glory and that of the Father and the holy angels. (Luke 9:23b-26)

No! Don't respond like demons! Don't respond like the Gadarene locals did! Respond like **the healed man**! Let your life be a testimony to how helpless one can be without

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Jesus! Let Jesus turn you around! Let the liberation of your soul and life be a story told again and again that influences others to know the true liberator!!!!!! His Name is Jesus! Say His Name! Live for Him!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What has Jesus saved you from? Tell someone about it!
2. What are your thoughts and beliefs about demons? Have you experienced demonic things? How have you seen God move in the midst of it?
3. Come up with a 30 second version of your testimony for Christ, and a 3 minute version. Write them both out and practice saying them.