

Jesus Heals a Wild Man

Luke 8:26-39

Introduction

I hope I am not offending anyone when I say, I am really tired of every crazy anybody commercial. I switch the channel on the TV or radio whenever I hear a crazy Dave or crazy Jim, or insane prices, or some one who is “Mad I tell you! Mad about high prices!” They just drive me insane – Oh. I guess I should say, they irritate me somewhat.

All these advertisers who have a “wild man” for their spokesperson hope everyone will pay attention because of all the noise and all the annoyance caused by that guy.

In Luke 8, Jesus met a real wild man. Not something made up. Certainly not someone who was wanting attention. No one wanted to associate with him.

Luke 8:26 They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. ²⁷When 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.

This event happened during the second year of Jesus’ 3 year ministry. He had just left Capernaum, a city at the northwest end of the Sea of Galilee. He spent a lot of time in this area. Just weeks before this He preached the Sermon on the Mount. He met with His family, He had large crowds following Him. He had been confronted by religious leaders, and now, after teaching in parables to hundreds of people, He needed a break.

Jesus and His disciples left town in the evening. According to Mark’s version of this event, they left “when evening came”. This would mean they got on their boat around 7PM or so. They went out onto the Sea of Galilee, where a storm blew up. I think God caused this storm to come up to give Jesus a break. After all, a whole lot people were following Him at this point, and there would have been a lot of other boats in the water wanting to pursue Him. This big of a storm would have forced those boats back.

The boat where Jesus was continued on. The storm got so violent, the disciples thought they were going to die and woke Jesus up. He reminded them of their lack of faith, and then, calmed the storm.

The disciples had to have been quite rattled at this point. Jesus and His disciples left Hebrew territory, and landed in Gentile territory at night in a spooky place – among the tombs – after almost dying. They get to shore somewhere between 9PM and midnight. It was dark, everyone was wet and tired, and when they got to shore, they are met by a wild man. The ultimate wild man. A guy that was so scary the townspeople had tried to restrain him with chains, and he was able to break them. He was out of control, and he lived out on the shore in and among the caves and cliffs of that area.

Luke 8:28 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!”

The Greek language is quite different to English. It is kind of hard to make it make sense in English sometimes. The best translation we can get is the guy ran up to Jesus and said, “What do you want with me?” If you were to translate the words literally, he said, “What to me and to you?” That makes no sense. But back then, in that language, the guy was saying, “What are you doing here – what is this all about – why are you interrupting my life – what do you want with me?” A question more people need to ask of God.

He called Jesus Son of the Most High God. He knew who Jesus was, and he used the proper address for Jesus. “Most High God” was the orthodox or established title for Jehovah God. There was no mistaking who Jesus is. He is no less than God. He is God.

When the man controlled by Satan saw God standing before him, Satan knew he was in a lot of trouble, and there was nothing he could do to stand up against God.

In Jr Worship today the kids are talking about this same story. One of the points of the lesson is about the strength this man had with the help of those spirits within him. Even with all that strength – which probably freaked out the disciples – those spirits froze, when confronted with God.

Luke 8:29 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.

³⁰Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

“Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him. ³¹And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

³²A 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. ³³When 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.

The spirits inside the man gave their name as “Legion”. Now, a legion is a Roman term that refers to a group of 6000 soldiers. Some say this means the guy had 6000 evil spirits in him. I don’t know. There were a lot of them though because Mark tells us there were about 2000 pigs in that herd.

They begged Jesus not to send them to the Abyss. The Abyss means “bottomless”. It refers to the realm of the dead. The evil spirits did not want to go there. If it is so bad evil spirits didn’t want to go there, that should help us understand we don’t want to go there. This one example should help us understand why it is so important to teach our children, and to help as many as we can, not go to that place.

PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) would have been up in arms over what happened here. I don't know why, after being allowed to move out of the man, and into the pigs this evil caused the death of the pigs, outside of one other thing we can understand about Satan. He is only interested in destruction. Satan will destroy any life, any marriage, any family, any reputation, any person he can get a hold of. With God's help, we fight against him in every aspect of our lives. The really great thing to keep in mind as well here, is to remember, Satan was and is powerless when confronted with God. God promises to be inside us. Where God is, Satan cannot be. Because of Satan, one commentator said these pigs committed SUIside.

Luke 8:34 When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, ³⁵and 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. ³⁶Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. ³⁷Then 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.

³⁸The 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.

When people are confronted with God, and recognize His power, and His majesty, they respond one of two ways:

I want you to stay with me

I want you to leave me

1. The man who was healed
 - a. Wanted to spend the rest of his life with Jesus.
 - i. Was willing to leave his life, and his home.
 - ii. He was willing to leave all he knew.
 - b. Begged Jesus not to leave him.
 - i. There was nothing more important.
 1. There was nothing in his life – this new life with so much potential – that was more important than being with Jesus.
 2. He couldn't think of a thing that would hold him back.
 - ii. He humbled himself.
 1. He went to his knees and begged Jesus to stay with him.
 2. He didn't care who saw or heard him. He didn't care what other people thought of his commitment. Jesus was more important than anything.
 3. He was completely different than the people there.
2. The people who knew him
 - a. Wanted Jesus to leave.
 - i. There are a lot of people who don't understand who Jesus is. They are confused, or they just don't want to know, so they ask Jesus to leave.
 - ii. How many people do we know who have decided to give their heart to Jesus, and after a while, they just walk away?

- iii. How many people decide they just don't want to be like the man who was healed – to humble ourselves and to want Jesus to stay with us. Instead, we just want Him to get us through the tough times, not to actually change our lives, so we want Jesus to leave.
- b. Were overcome with fear.
 - i. The people were afraid of Jesus because they didn't understand what just happened. They saw a great miracle. They saw Satan's greatest strength wiped out in a matter of minutes. They saw power greater than they could handle, taken out by Jesus merely speaking a word.
 - ii. The people were overcome with fear.
 - 1. It is not bad to understand fear when dealing with God.
 - 2. **Luke 1:50 His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.**
 - iii. The people didn't fear Jesus healing touch, or His authority over those demons, they feared what they didn't understand.
 - iv. Sometimes it is easier to ask God to stay out of our lives, than it is to accept His authority, and to fear Him, and to love Him.

Conclusion

Jesus returned to this area about 6 months later. When He arrived, thousands came to see Him.

Matthew 15:29 Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. ³⁰Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. ³¹The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

This one man who was healed, was given a simple command by Jesus. **Return home and tell how much God has done for you.** The man did this, and 6 months later, thousands were touched because of the ministry of this one man.

2 guys were talking. One asked the other, "How did you enjoy your drive in the country?"

The man responded, "I had a bad experience. I was driving along a winding road with the top down on my convertible, when a pretty woman driving in the opposite direction stuck her head out her window and yelled, 'Pig!' I knew she was some kind of women's libber or something."

His friend asked, "So what did you do?"

The driver replied, "I decided to turn the car around and go after her so I could confront her!"

The friend asked, "Did you?"

The driver answered, "I was going to but when I drove around the next bend I crashed into a pig."

Watch out for those pigs. You never know where they are going to turn up. We need to watch out for those things that keep us from going the direction we need to go.

Matthew 7:13 “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Those wild men might be annoying, but they aren't the problem. We can turn off the TV and radio when they come on. What we need to watch out for are the pigs – are the things that keep us from the road that leads to life. Can we keep our hands on the wheel, and stay on the road, or are we going to run into a pig? Make your choice today.