

Here we find Jesus headed to a region called the Decapolis and the area of the Gerasenes. Remember that He has calmed the raging sea and now finds Himself and His disciples in a mostly non-Jewish area of the country.

Just a reminder that Luke points out that **Christ is Lord** throughout this book.

Take time to read Luke 8:26-39 out loud in your group. (Remember that Vaughn encouraged us to read through all the verses even though he did not have time to cover all of them on Sunday morning.)

"Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. When 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. When 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.' For 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.) Jesus then asked him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Legion,' for many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. Now 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. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned. When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. Then 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. And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. Then 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. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, '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."

Luke 8:26-39 ESV

Have the group share some of the things that they notice in this passage.

- The demon-possessed man is a mess.
- He is uncontrollable and has been put out of the city to protect the people from his actions.
- Jesus heals the man.
- Jesus has command not only over the wind and waves (we saw this earlier in Luke 8), but also over spiritual forces as well.
- The livelihood of the pig farmers is wiped out.
- There is a definite presence of evil in the world. But Jesus is more than any evil.
- The healed man wanted to go with Jesus, but Jesus sent him back to his family.
- The people of the region wanted no part of Jesus.

Paul talks about spiritual evil. Ephesians 6:12 *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

There is a spiritual battle that is raging at all times.

John 17:17 - Jesus prays for us - *"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth."* What a beautiful truth that Jesus Himself prays for His followers. He knows what we need and has not only prayed for it but has provided us with His Holy Spirit so that we can walk in His truth. It does require surrender to His lordship.

Some things to remember about God and His Word –

- Scripture is not just a collection of stories but a story of God unified in purpose.
- God's Word is a love letter about Himself to us. Too many times we try to use God's Word as a roadmap for our lives. It is specifically designed to reveal God to us and challenge us to live a surrendered life to Him Who is always faithful.
- The Word of God is our only rule of faith and practice. How does this change the way you look at circumstances and affect your decisions?
- Start with God's Word when dealing with all things. How do you do this in your life on a daily basis?

Read 1 Peter 3:15 - *But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.*

Ask, What does this verse say to us as Christ-followers? The Hope that is within us is not a feeling but the Person of Jesus Christ.

Ask, How are you sharing Christ with others with gentleness and respect?

Who is this man?

- Deeply affected by the forces of darkness
- The evil influences caused him to make antisocial choices.
- When confronted by Jesus the evil influences attempted to refuse.

Can I identify with the demon possessed man?

- Are you affected by the forces of darkness? (tv, radio, movies, music present the messages of the world)
- Are you capable of making antisocial choices that impact the key people in my life?
- When confronted by the Lord, is your first inclination? Are you quick to submit? Do you default to "What can I do to get through this? How can I control this?" What are some ways that you are learning to trust God in the good and the tough times?

Jesus Christ is the only hope for us and fill the emptiness and give true freedom.

The man from whom the demons had gone begged that Jesus might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, "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."

Are you changed? Are you sharing Christ with others? When and where do you seek help? From Christ Himself or from the cares of the world? Have you allowed Christ to take your life? Take time for prayer requests and spend time praying together.