**Jesus and the Demon-Possessed Man**

**The Word**

Read together Luke 8:26-39

**The Big Idea**

This passage gives us clear insight to both Satan and Jesus’ endgame. Satan is at work in the world to bring about bondage, disintegration, and destruction, but Jesus is powerfully at work to bring healing, wholeness, and restoration. Life in Christ involves trusting Jesus and continually surrendering to his healing power in our lives.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. What is a detail from this story that really stood out to you this time around?

2. How should we think about spiritual warfare in our modern scientific age? For example, if most people encountered the Luke 8 man on the streets today, they might chalk up his condition to addiction or mental illness. How should we hold together the supernatural framework of Scripture with modern scientific understandings of natural conditions?

3. By way of encouragement to your group: Can you share a story in the past couple of years where Jesus’s power has brought significant freedom and healing into your life or into the life of someone close to you?

4. Where do you identify with the townspeople in the story? That is, where do you relate to the fear of “surrendering it all” to Jesus because you’re unsure of the changes he might want to make in your life?

**Digging Deeper**

Read together Ephesians 6:10-18. As we consider the spiritual battle we are in, what stands out most to you about Paul’s exhortations?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Consider the spiritual forces of evil and their end game

 A. This man has been completely overrun by demons (a legion of demons!)

 B. Consider what they have done to this man

 1. He’s naked: lost his dignity

2. He’s restless/roaming: unhoused and without peace

3. He’s solitary: completely cut off from all human relationship

4. He’s self-destructive (Mark’s gospel tells us he would cut himself with stones

5. In sum, he is totally in bondage, and he is totally dis-integrated. He is more like a beast than a human bearing God’s image

C. It’s helpful to remember that Satan’s end game is always to bring people to bondage, disintegration, destruction. Because usually when we experience his temptations, we aren’t thinking of his end game, we are just seeing opportunities for pleasure and satisfaction.

II. Consider Jesus and his end game

 A. Notice the power of Jesus

1. Jesus is vastly outnumbered, yet thousands of demons are no match for him (they resort to begging three times)

2. The demons name Jesus in an attempt to gain control over him, but their attempts are futile

3. The demons don’t want to go into “the Abyss” which probably refers to their final place of punishment at the end of time. They know their ultimate destiny and are begging to have that postponed. They also seem to not want to roam about without having a being to inhabit, so they beg to go into the pigs

 4. Consider the destruction of the pigs

a. One option is the demons, in their usual destructive tendencies, possess the pigs to run into the sea and drown.

b. Another option is the demons aren’t anticipating the pigs rushing into the lake and are hoping to inhabit them for some time. Jesus then is utterly defeating them by sending them into the sea (and perhaps even the Abyss) against their expectations.

 B. Notice the end game of Jesus’ power: to bring healing, wholeness, and restoration

 1. Notice this man’s transformation (v. 35)

 a. Sitting: No longer restless/roaming but at peace, calm

 b. At Jesus’ feet: no longer isolated but in community

 c. Clothed: dignity restored

 d. In his right mind: freed mentally

 e. The image of God has been restored.

2. Matthew 12:29: “How can anyone enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.” We see Jesus binding up the strong man (Satan) and plundering his property by freeing people from demonic influence and restoring them.

 3. Jesus continues to do this in our lives today

a. We were under the bondage of the world, the flesh, and the devil (see Ephesians 2:1-3)

b. Jesus is in the process of freeing us from bondage

4. Consider the end of this man’s story

a. He begs Jesus to let him come with him, but Jesus sends him home. This town would need a faithful witness of the healing power of Jesus

b. Sometimes when Jesus heals us, he gives us a fresh start and sends out into a new context. Other times, he heals us and sends us right back into familiar situations with a new story and a new way of being in those contexts.

III. Consider the townspeople

 A. Their reaction to all of this is fear

B. They are afraid of the power Jesus has displayed in this man’s life. It feels foreign and uncontrollable to them.

 C. They are afraid of the loss of livelihood that came from the destruction of the pigs

 D. So rather than choose Jesus in all his glory, they choose what is safe and comfortable.