

Sunday, December 18th sermon: "The Only Prince We Dare Trust – Put Not Your Trust in Princes (Part 9)"

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS,  
by John Pittman Hey

Luke 8:26-39; John 20:10-18

We have seen how King Saul, by disobedience to God, plagued by an evil spirit sent from God, quickly sank into paranoia, delusion, madness, and murder, dragging his people down with him, just as Samuel had warned.

Our princes betray us, and we betray them, and together we are fit for the judgment of God.

We can see similar conduct in our leaders today!

Only Jesus can save men from demons, and mental illness, and the frailties of our minds and hearts.

Christ saved the poor man's son from a devil, even though that man had little faith.

Salvation from demons does not come from calming music, or psychiatrists, or medicines. Only the power of Jesus can save any of us.

To us, Christ's deliverance comes as a free gift. But to the Savior, it cost Him His life. He laid down His life to save His poor, helpless, sinful sheep.

The Lord's standard for kings and rulers and leaders is justice and the fear of God.

This was never close to perfect in King Saul, or even in King David – only in our Lord Jesus Christ! He is the perfect king we were promised of olden times!

Jesus is the only King Who can rule us rightly and justly, because only Jesus can reconcile us to God by His Own blood!

Rather than our sin polluting our Prince, He takes away our sins upon Himself! Our sins were judged in His Body on the tree by God.

Then Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, and by His power we are conformed to His perfect image one day!

So we come to our final consideration in this series: we have a king who is not crazy like Saul, paranoid, delusional, or driven by an evil spirit, betraying his closest friends.

No! our King Jesus is all wisdom, knowledge, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, to us and for us!

By these means, Jesus heals broken minds and casts away evil spirits.

In his gospel, the physician Luke was particularly drawn toward this mighty power of Christ, because he knew how impossible it is for doctors to heal demonic possession or mental defects.

Jesus healed many demon possessed people (along with many other physical diseases), and often He rebuked the demons for crying out the truth of Who Jesus is – the Messiah, the Christ.

This shows us that demons, and their victims, can often articulate true things about spiritual matters. The demons know very well that Christ is their only real foe in this world!

We must not be surprised when demonically oppressed or mentally ill people articulate truth on occasion, but that is no sign of their sanity!

Christ healed a very severe case of demon possession at the tombs of Gadara, where a man broke his chains, and refused to wear clothes. He was possessed by many devils, but Jesus cast them all out, and they entered into a herd of swine which were then drowned in the sea.

When the townspeople showed up, they found the man perfectly sane, clothed, and sitting at the feet of Jesus!

Jesus told him to return home and proclaim what great things God had done for him, so he went home, and proclaimed what great things Jesus had done for him!

Think of it: this poor man knew more about the true identity of Jesus, as Messiah, than most of Jesus' disciples understood at the time! He knew that Jesus is Lord, and God of very God, and that He had rescued him!

Soon, Jesus gave his disciples the power to heal the sick and cast out demons, and they reported back with delight that the devils were subject to them!

But Jesus instructed them, that they ought rather to rejoice that their names are written down as Christ's saved ones in heaven!

Jesus Himself stated that He cast out demons in part, so that the people would know that He came from God, and that the kingdom of God has come upon you!

Most remarkable of all was Christ's healing of Mary Magdalene from seven demons. She turned in love towards her Savior, and ministered to Him and His disciples from then on.

Mary's ultimate privilege, of course, was to serve as the very first human witness to the resurrection of Jesus. She went early to the tomb that Sunday morning, and was much grieved that the body of Jesus was not there. She lingered after the other disciples had left in their confusion.

Then Jesus appeared to Mary, and gave her His message of resurrection, and the kinship that He Himself has with all His people. Christ and His people are all brethren, and in our shared humanity, God is our Father!

When Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples, they refused to believe her.

Mary had been transformed by Christ from demonic lunacy, to a clear-eyed love for and dedication to Jesus, that survived His death, and rose exultant in His resurrection!

To her, then, was given that ultimate privilege to be the very first saint of God to see her risen Redeemer and Lord!

Perhaps the Lord chose Mary for this high honor because, having healed her of demonic possession, she was now the sanest disciple Jesus had! Who better to be given the task of reporting what the world would claim was insane and unbelievable news!

She went from possession by devils, to the first believer to actually believe that Jesus had risen from the dead!

Indeed, Jesus can heal those possessed by devils, those with broken minds, those with delusions and paranoia.

But these days, we seem not to really believe that.

We ought to seek the Lord in supplication for those we know with demons, or crazy minds, or irrational thoughts.

We must never write such poor people off, or give up on them. Even when there is nothing we can personally do to help them, we can still pray to our Lord Jesus, Who has all power to deliver them.

Like the poor leper, we must cry out, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make them whole!

This ought to remind us that, in a sense, we all have our own mental defects. Our minds, the great pride of the human race, are broken, defective, and bound in sin.

That is why we will not repent or trust in Christ, until the Holy Ghost heals us, makes us alive again, and gives us faith and repentance unto salvation.

Even after that, we still need the power of God sanctifying us, and mending our thoughts and minds and hearts.

We must pray to God to teach us His ways, and His mind, and take away our ignorance and sin and fears and misunderstandings. God does all that slowly, and methodically, until one day, when we see Jesus' face, we will finally be transformed into His image.

Read the Gospels, and note Christ's healing of the demon possessed, and cry out for deliverance by the King for all His people from all our mental defects.

Our own princes and leaders fill our minds with lies, and false promises, and illusive hopes, and too often we actually believe their wild claims, and are led astray by them.

Pray that Christ will help us to see them for what they actually are, and to show us, over and over again, that He Alone is our Great Prince!

Christ is the only Prince we dare put our trust in!