

Delivered from Satan's Power!

Luke 8:26-39; Matthew 7:13-14

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To hear the stories of young people who have been abused as sex slaves by wicked, vile slave owners is heartbreaking. It is indeed man-stealing which God's Word condemns as worthy of the death penalty. Those enslaved are controlled by the pleasures of their owner. May God destroy this slavery and set these young people free. But as devastating as is this modern form of slavery, we are brought to see from our text this Lord's Day another form of bondage—bondage to Satan.

As the lure and attraction for Satanism grows, there will correspondingly be more lives that are given over to consciously serve Satan and to be controlled by him who hates the freedom that is ours in Jesus Christ. What we see from this account is that Satan enslaves his prisoners to do his wicked will (which leads to their destruction) while Jesus sets the slaves free to do the will of a loving, good, and holy God (which leads to life). The main points from our text this Lord's Day are these: (1) The Bondage of the Demoniac (Luke 8:26-29); (2) The Liberator of the Demoniac (Luke 8:28-33); (3) Two Different Responses to This Deliverance (Luke 8:34-39).

I. The Bondage of the Demoniac (Luke 8:26-29).

A. Upon entering the country of the Gadarenes, a man possessed by demons quickly approaches the Lord. We are not told how the man came to be possessed of demons, but a man in such a desperate situation cannot help but arouse our pity (as for anyone who is enslaved).

B. What was the condition of this man who had within him a satanically inspired raging storm that was out of control? Let us see.

1. He dwelt in and among the graves and the tombs, and was naked (Luke 8:27).

a. Here is a picture of death (not mere physical death, but especially spiritual death). Here was a man who was cut off from family, friends, and God. His communion was with the dead and with the angel of the abyss. His hopes of ever being set free were as much buried as the corpses within those graves and tombs.

b. There are only two kingdoms and every person lives in one of them: Christ's or Satan's. There is no neutral territory between these two kingdoms. You are either in one or the other. By nature, we are all in Satan's kingdom, and the hopeless stench of death is all about us in that natural state in which we were all conceived (Psalm 51:5). One may not even realize that Satan is his/her master (after all he/she is not a Satanist, or Satan worshipper, right?).

c. However, God declares that Satan has blinded the eyes of all natural men to the Gospel of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4), that all men (as to nature) are held captive by the power of darkness (Colossians 1:13), and that all are bound to do the will of the devil (2 Timothy 2:26). This is the natural condition of us all apart from Christ.

d. You who have been set free through faith alone in Christ alone, have you forgotten your natural bondage to Satan and that smell of death that surrounded you? There is a necessity in all of our lives to remember that from which we have been set free, lest we forget the glories of Christ's deliverance in setting us free from the guilt and power of sin and sinful habits that would have destroyed us. The picture of the demoniac among the tombs is a picture of you and me by nature.

2. He could not be restrained by man (Luke 8:29).

a. This man was so violent and filled with such rage that people were even afraid to pass by that way (Matthew 8:28). Those who are in Satan's kingdom are called "the children of disobedience"

Ephesians 2:2). They will not be restrained by the authority of Christ. They will not have this Man (Jesus Christ) to reign over them.

b. This is a picture of the unregenerate man. Whereas the unbeliever does not desire nor can he/she trust in Christ and submit to His will, the faith of the believer is manifested in the prayer of the Lord Jesus, “Not my will, but thine be done”? This is an evidence of God’s amazing work of grace in your life, for it is not natural for us to want to be restrained by God’s will in directing our lives.

3. **He was self-destructive** (Mark 5:5).

a. The pitiful state of this poor man is depicted as one crying night and day in anguish of body and soul. Dear ones, the unbeliever may seem to have his/her life together by way of having a family, house, job, and even a pension, but he/she is in a very real sense self-destructive. The sin in which unbelievers live is destroying their life. It’s like a cancer that is silently growing within and God says is destroying them and preparing them for everlasting destruction and judgment (apart from the love, mercy, forgiveness, and healing of Jesus Christ).

b. We do not have to cut ourselves with stones, glass, or knives and run around like a naked wild man (as was true of this demoniac) in order to be self-destructive. All we have to do to be self-destructive is to reject the healing and forgiveness of the Lord Jesus offered to us in the gospel and we will prove that we love the cancer of sin and death (Proverbs 8:36). This is the pitiful and desperate condition in which we all by nature find ourselves.

II. **The Liberator of the Demoniac (Luke 8:28-33).**

A. As Jesus approaches, the demoniac is forced to cast himself down before the absolute supremacy of the Son of God (Luke 8:28).

1. The demons must bow before their Creator—not out of love, but out of necessity—not willingly, but unwillingly. They must acknowledge the lordship of Jesus Christ even though they hate and despise Him. Dear friend, true Christian worship is voluntary (not coerced), and flows freely from a heart that has been changed by the grace of God, that is filled with the love of Jesus, and that knows the bondage from which it has been set free (not “I have to worship Christ” but “I am free to worship Jesus, and I want with all my heart to worship Him as He has authorized in His Word”).

2. The demon even acknowledges Christ as the “Son of God most high” (Luke 8:28). The demons acknowledge who Jesus is and assent that He is indeed the Son of God (James 2:19), but what they do not have is true saving faith—they do not rest in Christ and His righteousness alone for their eternal salvation. Mere knowledge is not enough save anyone. Such knowledge that does not lead to receiving and resting in Jesus Christ will bring God’s judgment upon us. Let us not bring to Jesus either an imitation worship that is not freely offered out of love for Him, or a counterfeit faith that rests only in our knowledge, but does not embrace Christ as our only hope of eternal salvation.

B. The Lord then commands the unclean spirit to come out of this man (Luke 8:29). While this man was yet in his bondage and unable to ask that he might be set free, the undeserved grace of God was demonstrated in Christ’s command. Do we deserve the grace and mercy of Christ any more than this demoniac? Here is the Divine purpose of this graphic account. We in ourselves are no better than this demoniac. How then can we take any glory to ourselves for a deliverance of which we had no more part than did this demoniac (or compare the deliverance of Lazarus, who was raised from the dead after being dead and putrefying for four days)? Such pride and self-righteousness are among the most serious insults that we can offer to God. It would be like Adam taking credit for his own creation as for us to take any credit for our new creation in Christ Jesus.

C. This poor man was possessed by many demons—Legion (Luke 8:30). Since these evil spirits

knew they must leave this poor man at the almighty command of Jesus, they sought that they might be set loose on the swine that were feeding, which the Lord grants (Luke 8:31). If they could not destroy this man's life, they would at least destroy these swine. Here we see the subjection of these evil spirits to God's power.

1. Although a Christian in whom God's Spirit abides cannot be possessed of demons as was this man, nevertheless, let us not be so naive as to think that we cannot be severely tempted by the enemy (as was Peter in Luke 22:31-32—he was sifted like wheat). It was Peter's pride that made him so vulnerable to the temptation to deny Jesus.

2. And Satan will use our pride as well to think we cannot fall into the temptation—we are strong enough and determined enough. But the Lord shows us that without Him we can do nothing and that we can do all things through Christ that strengthens us (Philippians 4:13).

III. Two Different Responses to This Deliverance (Luke 8:34-39).

A. The Response of the People of that Country (Luke 8:34-37)—they asked Christ to leave.

1. The owners of these pigs rejected a most gracious and powerful display of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They had been informed that their herd of swine were destroyed and with their own eyes they beheld the former demoniac clothed, reasonable, and peacefully sitting at the feet of Christ. Rather than embracing Jesus, they feared Him (because here was a power greater than that of the demons that had enslaved the demoniac and One before whom they must bow as Lord of their life). All these people could see is what they lost, not what they might gain—true freedom and eternal life through Jesus Christ. In rejecting Jesus Christ, they revealed whose kingdom they were in. Their bondage to Satan was more deceptive, but it was bondage nevertheless.

2. How many make decisions in their lives by looking down the road to the hardships that will be theirs (or what they may lose in this life) if they come by faith to Jesus Christ and submit to Him, and then rather than taking the right but hard road, they take the sinful but easy road (Matthew 7:13-14). The world wants Christ on their own terms, not on His terms (Luke 9:23). They want to make their own Jesus.

B. The All-Together Different Response of the Former Demoniac (Luke 8:38-39)—He asked Jesus to allow him to go with Him.

1. This man who was set free was moved by love and thankfulness to Jesus for the tender mercies freely extended to him. Whatever he had to give up in order to be as near to Jesus as he could be, he was willing to do. He had not yet seen his family or friends since having been delivered; yet it was all expendable in comparison to being near the Lord Jesus. Here is the expression of one who remembers the bondage from which he/she has been delivered. Have you forgotten the despair of Satan's cruel dominion and the hope that is in the merciful Kingdom of Christ? Our nearness with Jesus fades away because we have forgotten what He delivered us from, but it grows when we remember. The Lord sends him back to those who know him best—his family and friends. He is to begin there first.

2. Christ's call to advance His kingdom is ordinarily a call to begin at home and with those who know us best. We must not only tell people what Christ can do for them, but we must let them see what Christ has done for us. If our Christianity does not work at home, it doesn't work.

3. Each Lord's Day is a celebration of our liberation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Each Lord's Day, we should find ourselves remembering both our former bondage and now our present liberation through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

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