

Luke 8C

- Jesus has been teaching his disciples and the crowds in Galilee,
 - Previously in this chapter He taught the parable of the sower and the seed
 - A powerful picture of the various reactions men will display when exposed to the Word of God
 - Now Jesus is going to begin demonstrating the truth of what He's preached through a series of miracles and teachings continuing through 8 and into 9
- For example, immediately after he finished teaching the parable, we saw last time how he corrected the disciples when they told Jesus that His mother and brothers were waiting for Him outside the crowd
 - Jesus said that those who hear and do the Word of God were truly in His family
 - Coming on the heels of his teaching of the sower, we can see that Jesus was reinforcing the point of the parable
 - Only those who hear the word and do it can be considered the children of God – believers in other words
 - The event gave Jesus a nice opportunity to
- The miracles in Chap 8 especially are designed to expand the disciples' understanding of Jesus as God and to expose them to a small sample of God's power
 - Remember what we've said Jesus is about doing in these early years of His ministry
 - He has a very limited time with the disciples and He must train them for a very difficult and trying mission
 - They will found the early church, in the face of all manner of persecution and hatred
 - They are not scholars or religious leaders – they must obtain a lifetime of training in a few short years

- So Jesus not only must educate them, He must strengthen them for the ministry He will assign them
 - So the events and miracles we'll study over the next few weeks in Chaps 8 & 9 are a major part of Jesus' work to demonstrate the power of the God they will be serving
 - And to give the disciples the chance to stretch their own wings in learning to serve in that same power according to God's will

[Luke 8:22](#) ¶ Now on one of *those* days Jesus and His disciples got into a boat, and He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." So they launched out.

[Luke 8:23](#) But as they were sailing along He fell asleep; and a fierce gale of wind descended on the lake, and they *began* to be swamped and to be in danger.

[Luke 8:24](#) They came to Jesus and woke Him up, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm.

[Luke 8:25](#) And He said to them, "Where is your faith?" They were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?"

- When Jesus taught the parable of the sower, Matt tells us that he used a favorite technique to separate himself from the crowds – he sat in a boat while the crowd stayed on the shore
 - The sea Jesus was sitting on was the Sea of Galilee (**SLIDES**)
 - Galilee means "circle" - Freshwater lake
 - The Sea of Galilee lies roughly 212 m below the level of the Mediterranean, the 2nd lowest point on the earth's surface after the Dead Sea.
 - It is 13 miles long and 8 miles at its greatest width, covering about 41,000 acres with a circumference of 33 miles, and up to 158 ft deep.
 - Not a very large lake but it is substantial
 - By comparison, Canyon Lake is only 8,240 acres and is only 43 feet deep – Galilee is about 4 times larger
 - Depth can produce significant waves

- Now we hear that Jesus brings the other 12 into the boat and commands them to depart to the other side
 - To give you some idea of the size of the boat, here's a picture of a 19th Century fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee
 - At the other extreme, here's a modern replica of a Roman Fishing boat
 - The one Jesus is in probably falls somewhere in between
 - (I'll make these images available on the website for download along with the teaching)
- As most astute Bible student right away, Jesus' command to the disciples included an assumption
 - He says they should get in the boat, because Jesus wants to visit the other side of the lake
 - Naturally, this means He intends to make it to the other side
 - Any understanding of who Jesus was and where His power came from would take great comfort – and certainty – from hearing Him say that they were going to reach the other side of the lake
 - He didn't say lets go sailing around the lake
 - His goal was to reach the destination
 - And knowing this, the disciples should have been able to rest in that promise, regardless of the circumstances
 - But the ability to enjoy that rest depended upon the extent of their faith
- So they set out, moving from the west side of the lake to the east side
 - And Jesus retreats to the rear of the boat and goes to sleep
 - Mark 4 says Jesus went to the stern of the boat and went to sleep on the cushion
 - Remembering this is probably a larger boat, the stern would have had a high point in the boat, probably protected from the rain by a covering
- Then a fierce gail descended on the boat

- Now the sea is surrounded by mountain ranges, and so the winds can whip through this region unpredictably and harshly
- The speed of the winds are also prone to extremes – so sudden strong gales are not unheard of
- But the events of the story seem to suggest that the way this storm came upon them was unusually strong and unusually swift
- Luke describes the scene in the boat by saying they were being swamped
 - The word in Greek there is *sumplerro*, which means to fill up completely
 - Mark says that the boat had waves crashing on to it so that it was filling up and in real danger of going under
 - Matthew also says the boat was being covered by the waves
 - Clearly, this would be a hair raising experience
 - Remember these men were experienced fishermen on the Sea of Galilee, and they must have seen most everything in their day
 - Yet this storm makes them fear for their lives – extraordinary storm
- And then there's Jesus – asleep and the rear of the boat
 - The disciples must have been battling the sail and trying to bail the water – maybe just trying to stay in the boat, holding on for dear life
 - And every now and then, they look back toward the stern and keep expecting Jesus to get up anytime now
 - Interestingly, what were they expecting Jesus to do?
 - It's obvious from their later comments that they didn't expect Jesus to stop the storm
 - When He did that, it surprised them
 - So what was their point in watching to see if He had awoken?
 - They expected Him to be as worried as they were
 - Misery loves company

- But finally, they can't take it any longer...one of the disciples – I always imagine it's Peter – venture to the rear of the boat and wake Him up
 - Imagine the absurdity of the scene
 - The boat is being tossed by huge swells
 - Waves crashing onto the boat and water filling up
 - And Jesus sleeping away peacefully
 - To the disciples, the whole set of circumstances must have seemed surreal, bizarre
 - And when they awaken Jesus, they tell Him they are perishing
 - The word in Greek there is *apullimi*, which means destroyed or brought to an end, dying
 - Mark adds an interesting detail – I think the more accurate record of the disciples statement
 - They are quoted as asking, “Do you not care that we are perishing?”
 - By that comment, it's clear that they were most bothered by Jesus not sharing their concern
 - If they were going to be afraid and panicked, they didn't appreciate that Jesus didn't seem interested in joining them
- Aroused from sleep, Jesus asks, “Where is your faith?”
 - Mark records it as, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?”
 - What if Jesus referring to? What faith is He talking about?
 - Does He mean they should have had faith that Jesus had power over the elements? - Perhaps
 - Did He mean that they didn't have faith that Jesus was sent by God and could save them? – Perhaps
 - But I think the clearest connection we can make from the events recorded in scripture is that Jesus was referring to their lack of faith in His word

- What word? – Well, His instructions to cross to the other side, of course
 - Had they had faith in Jesus word, then the storm would have simply posed an inconvenience to their travel
 - It might have slowed them down
 - It might have added to their burden
 - But it certainly didn't mean that they wouldn't make it across the sea, much less that they were going to die in the process
 - Jesus admonishes them for their lack of faith in His word
- Remember in the parable of the sower, Jesus described a condition of the Christian who has true faith but the trials of this world choke off any fruit?
 - Condition 3 Christian we called that person
 - In my earlier teaching we talked a lot about how the pleasures and distractions of our lives can lead to this condition, but we didn't talk as much about worries
 - In Luke 8:14 Jesus says that the worries of this world pose just as much of a risk to our fruitfulness as our distraction by pleasures
 - For many Christians, I believe fear plays an even bigger role in distracting them from producing fruit than pleasures ever could
- We fear so many things in this world – poverty, rejection, discomfort, sickness, weather disasters, even death itself – all things that a Christian has no business fearing
 - Before the apostles can be used by God to produce fruit, they must be able to trust in His word and be willing to act upon it –
 - Because they will be expected to perform miracles with a faith that God will up when they need Him
 - This very issue is going to be front and center in Chap 9, as the Jesus empowers his disciples to go out in ministry for the first time
 - Likewise, we can't expect to produce fruit if we don't trust His word without fear
 - For if we truly understand what it meant to be a child of God

- to realize that He controls all things,
 - that even the day of death has been determined before we were born –
- Then we would hear His word and act upon it with absolute assurance that whatever happens is according to His will
- For example, was this storm an unplanned accident for Jesus and the disciples?
 - I think it's clear from the events of the story that God Himself produced the storm as a test of faith for the disciples
 - He wanted an opportunity to show the disciples that are at risk of living a life like that Condition 3 Christian – the seed that grows up to a certain point but have their spiritual fruit choked off
 - And so the storm is their test of faithfulness
 - And they failed it miserably
- Remember, despite all that their eyes saw and their bodies experienced, they were in no danger,
 - Had they believed in Jesus words and God's power, they wouldn't have had to suffer in fear and panic
 - What a powerful lesson for all of us
 - We have every opportunity to know God's word and trust in it
 - To read His word and understand His promises and assurance
 - To hear His voice in prayer or in circumstances in our lives
 - And then rest in those promises
 - And when the storms of life come upon us, instead of worrying, wringing our hands, crying to God asking why He isn't saving us from the trial
 - Instead, we can be as restful as Jesus in that boat, demonstrating our faith in His word that we are going to reach whatever goal God has set before us
 - And why aren't we so peaceful in the face of trials

- The only reason that makes sense is that we fear more than we trust
- But here's the main point
 - Even when our faith does fail us as it did for the disciples
 - Even when we assume the worst, and believe we are going to perish, God's plan doesn't change
 - If it's His plan for us to make it to the other side, so to speak, then we're going to make it – even when we don't believe it will happen
 - When the apostles woke Jesus, they had given up hope
 - But Jesus had already said they would make it to the other side
 - And sure enough, they did – despite their lack of faith
 - We can have little or no faith in His word, but he still keeps His word

[2Tim. 2:13](#) If we are **faithless**, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

- Our lack of faith is nothing more than a product of our own spiritual immaturity
 - Once we have been given the gift of faith and the Holy Spirit indwells us, we are adopted into the family of God and there's no going back
 - In the meantime, we may be weak in that faith from time to time, especially in the face of trials, but God doesn't forsake us
 - And He is somehow thwarted from working through us
- On the other hand, consider what we've lost when we fail to trust
 - It is us, not God, who suffer from our lack of faithfulness
 - We lack peace
 - We suffer from fear and apprehension and depression
 - And if this fear and concern is great enough and pervasive enough, it can get in the way of our producing fruit
- But the Word says:

[Phil. 4:6](#) Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

[Phil. 4:7](#) And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- Notice that a prerequisite for this incredible peace is to place everything in God's hands – make your needs known to Him
 - But the implication from these verses is that we make known these needs because we trust in God to handle them
 - And then we rest in that dependency and trust
 - And then we have peace that defies worldly understanding – Just like Jesus had in that boat
- And since the Father desires to see us prosper spiritually in that same way, He may bring trials upon us so that our strength may be a witness to others in the boat with us
 - Or as the case may be, He may bring trials so that our weakness in faith may be exposed
 - In that way we can see our mistakes and perhaps grow to trust in His word regardless of our circumstances
 - That's a Christian who can be used mightily for the Lord – who will do anything asked and won't hesitate because the worries or riches of this world hold back fruit
- Upon waking and criticizing the apostles, Jesus then proceeds to calm the water with only His word
 - Again a powerful demonstration of His word
 - This outcome continues to reinforce the teaching from the parable
 - Not only the fact that the disciples were still living life as Condition 3 Christians, but that God's word – the seed – is the thing with real power
 - And as expected, the scene left quite an impression on the disciples.

[Luke 8:26](#) ¶ Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.

[Luke 8:27](#) And when He came out onto the land, He was met by a man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs.

[Luke 8:28](#) Seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me.”

[Luke 8:29](#) For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, and yet he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.

[Luke 8:30](#) And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion”; for many demons had entered him.

[Luke 8:31](#) They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.

- Having demonstrated his power over the forces of nature, Jesus is now ready to tackle the second major force in creation – the demonic realm
 - Interestingly, Matt records the entire scene with two demonics rather than just one, while Mark and Luke leave the story to only one
 - It’s probably the case that Luke chose to record only one since the point of the event doesn’t change if there is one or two men
 - Luke’s description is detailed, probably reflecting his medical background
 - Here are the details he notes:
 - The man ran around naked – which was an affront and a great humiliation to him
 - The man had no home, but rather he lived in the tombs
 - He could not be bound and restrained because the demons would cause him to break his bonds, which implied the amazing strength he gained from the demonic possession
 - Marks adds that the man cut himself with stones and ran around the tombs day and night screaming
 - And all this due to demon possession
- This is an amazing scene

- When scripture says that a man is demon possessed, are you tempted to see this description in a kind of mythical way
 - Does the idea that fallen angels, demons, can inhabit and actually control a man's body seem more like fairy tale than reality to us today?
 - It probably does
 - We probably live our lives today never thinking about people being demon possessed
 - If we were to suggest that possibility to someone, we are the ones who are thought to be crazy or gullible
 - The modern mental health community would never rely on that kind of diagnosis to explain the symptoms seen in this man
- And yet the scripture tells us over and over that this happens, and in Jesus day it happened commonly
 - People recognized that that the demonic realm had this power
 - Today, we're too sophisticated to consider that possibility
 - Which means, if you don't believe that demonic control over human beings is possible today, then one of two things must be true
 - Either the scripture is wrong – demonic possessions are not real
 - Or if you believe the scripture is true, then you would need to point to something that has happened since Jesus day to put an end to demonic possessions
 - Because otherwise, we have no reason to stop believing that such things exist
 - The demonic realm still exists – scripture tells us that
 - And scripture warns us of their power and how they can work through men
- Pauls says to the Corinthian church in his day:

[1Cor. 10:19](#) What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?

[1Cor. 10:20](#) No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons.

[1Cor. 10:21](#) You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

- Then he speaks of later days when he says:

[1Tim. 4:1](#) ¶ But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

- No reason to say that demons are a constant presence in the world until the day that Jesus defeats them and throws into the abyss
 - If you believe scripture, then the only reasonable conclusion is that demons still exist and demonic possession is still a reality
 - And look at the behavior of the man in the tombs
 - Do we not still see people who act this way today?
 - Example in restaurant, example on death penalty case
 - But today, since we are enlightened, we look only for natural causes to such behavior
 - Even if we allow for the fact that sometime the cause of this behavior is natural and not supernatural, it's only fair to assume the opposite – but we never do
- That's the way the demonic realm wants it to be
 - They are very pleased that no one believes in them, or that we only see them as mythical figures
 - They are able to do so much more harm that way
 - Paul says we should see every battle of life, every act of opposition as coming from the enemy

[Eph. 6:11](#) Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

[Eph. 6:12](#) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

- And even though we often won't recognize who are enemy is in this world them, they know that we are their enemy

[James 2:19](#) You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

- Look at how the many demons inside this man's body react to Jesus
 - They see Jesus and fall down
 - Mark says this:

[Mark 5:6](#) Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him;

- Demons know that they are promised to be tortured in the abyss awaiting their final judgment (v28)
- These demons are afraid that Jesus has come for them now
- Jesus begins by asking their name, which is an important detail
 - There was a tradition Jewish method for casting a demon out
 - Jewish religious leaders had done this in Israel in times past, and it was not terribly uncommon for people to be healed from their demon possessions by Jewish religious
 - The method required that the person performing the exorcism learn the demon's name because it had to be cast out by name – later in chapter 11
 - The demons answer legion, which isn't a name at all
 - It's the word for a Roman military unit of about 6,000 soldiers – meaning thousands of demons indwelt the man
 - You may remember a story Jesus tells later in this gospel in chap 11

[Luke 11:24](#) ¶ “When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’

[Luke 11:25](#) “And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order.

[Luke 11:26](#) “Then it goes and takes *along* seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.”

- We learn two things from this passage
 - To be cleansed of an evil spirit is not the final solution for a person who is possessed
 - Because the man is an empty house, spiritually speaking, he can be repossessed
 - Which gives us the second thing we learn
 - If we are filled by the Holy Spirit as we are when we become a believer, God hangs a giant no occupancy sign outside our bodies and the demonic realm has no access
 - A believer cannot be indwelt by anything except the holy spirit
- But an unbeliever has no such guarantee, so if a demon is cast out, it must accompany faith in Christ if that person is to remain free
 - The solution remains the same – repent and believe to be saved

[Luke 8:32](#) ¶ Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and *the demons* implored Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission.

[Luke 8:33](#) And the demons came out of the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

[Luke 8:34](#) ¶ When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported it in the city and *out* in the country.

[Luke 8:35](#) *The people* went out to see what had happened; and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they became frightened.

[Luke 8:36](#) Those who had seen it reported to them how the man who was demon-possessed had been made well.

[Luke 8:37](#) And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to leave them, for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat and returned.

[Luke 8:38](#) But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying,

[Luke 8:39](#) “Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you.” So he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

- Here it was Jesus desire to free the man from these demons – for what a wonderful testimony this man would have once freed
 - But before Jesus can say anything, the demons are so afraid that they are about to go into the abyss, they actually volunteer to leave the man if they can go into pigs instead of the abyss
 - Jesus gave them permission
 - What a powerful statement
 - They had to ask Jesus what they could do
 - Do you remember Satan talking to God about Job? How God had to grant every little aspect of Satan’s authority
 - Then do you remember perhaps in Luke 22 when Jesus tells Peter:

[Luke 22:31](#) ¶ “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat;

- Do you see the pattern? – God is in control

- We have no reason to fear the enemy because he can only do what God allows
- If God is for us, who can be against us? That doesn't promise no problems in life, but it means that it is according to what God is allowing to suit His purposes – trust Him no matter what happens
- As the demons enter the swine, the swine apparently react so badly to the indwelling that they run head long into the sea
 - Which is interesting because the sea is often a picture in scripture of the abyss, so it seems the final end of the possessed pigs was intended to be a picture of the demons ultimate fate in the future
 - As a result of this event, word is going to spread about Jesus to the townspeople by way of the herdsman and ultimately this healed man himself
- Now look at the interesting range of reactions
 - This is the first time these people have probably seen Jesus
 - You have the herdsman who were telling people about the miracle – but they were probably also complaining about losing their pigs
 - The towns people were scared by Jesus' display of power, especially upon seeing the healed demonic looking normal
 - Then the man himself, who is so grateful, he wants to remain with Jesus
 - Jesus says no, go back and witness to what I've done
- Before we came to know Christ, we were probably not demon possessed
 - But we were a lot like that man
 - We were naked spiritually
 - We were living in the tombs, a walking corpse
 - We were under the control of the enemy, even if we weren't possessed
 - And we were an enemy of God
 - But he showed up in our hearts one day and freed us from that misery and clothed us and gave us a new life

- And though we can't go with Him, he asks us to be His witness in the meantime
- Let's remember Jesus' words to that man:

[Mark 5:19](#) And He did not let him, but He *said to him, "Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and *how* He had mercy on you."

[Mark 5:20](#) And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.