

The Outcasts:

Are You Crazy?

Several years ago, my pastor asked me to give my testimony at one of our Sunday services. As I like to speak in public, I readily accepted his invitation and immediately began working on my presentation.



I had given portions of my testimony many times before, but I had never shared my story in its entirety because I was afraid that people would think I was crazy. (During my early teen years I went through an intense season of spiritual oppression in which, Satan did his best to intimidate and destroy me. I did not think anyone would understand or worse, they would think I was crazy, so I kept my struggles to myself.) This time, however, I decided to step out in faith, trust God for my reputation and “tell what great things God has done for [me].”

Over the next few days, I prayed for God’s guidance and wrote out my testimony. I also asked a few other people to pray for me as I knew that due to the nature of my testimony, the Enemy would try to discourage me. Upon completion, I practiced giving my testimony until it flowed naturally and then I asked a friend to give me a little feedback on how I was doing. To my surprise, my friend told me pointedly that my testimony was fine if “you want everyone to think you’re crazy.” I felt the comment was a direct attack from the enemy, aimed straight at my heart. I remembered the many years that I suffered from the fear of going crazy, the panic attacks and nightmares, and how my life used to be controlled by fear. My friend’s criticism went deep, but it proved to me the necessity of my message. Other people also needed to know that in Christ, they could find freedom from fear.

In the Bible, there was a man everyone thought was crazy. His craziness was ruining his whole life. His friends and family tried to help him, but they weren’t strong enough. He needed a Savior. While many people probably thought this Outcast was beyond help, Jesus knew differently. Jesus loves the Outcasts and He calls them to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Please take a moment to go to your Holy Father in prayer. Ask Him to clean your heart from all unrighteousness and pride.

Now please read Luke 8:22-40.

Please write a quick recap of the events from verses 22-25, noting in particular anything that stands out to you.

There are many wonderful and remarkable events that occur in this section of scripture. One thing that caught my eye, however, was the phrase "Now it happened on a certain day..." The words *certain day* made me think that God had a special plan in mind for that day; perhaps there was more to that phrase than meets the eye. As usual, I was not disappointed; a look into the original language backed up my hunch! Let's dig into the Greek and see what we can uncover!

The words "it happened" ("it came to pass" KJV, "one day" RSV) come from the Greek word *ginomai*. *Ginomai* means "appear in history, be fulfilled, of miracles to be performed, of purposes, of events."¹ Go back and circle the part of that definition that means the most to you. It is reasonable to assume from the above definition, that God had planned to work a miracle on that special day.

File those meanings away in your head for a moment while we consider another word. The original Greek word for *certain* transliterates to *mia* which means "only one, one thing before all others."

Now let us take the meanings of these Greek words and expand verse 22. I'll get us started:

"Now it happened that..."

¹ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *ginomai* (Strong's 1096)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 15 Jul 2010. < <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G1096&t=KJV> >

The following is my attempt:

“God had written on His calendar that on this particular day in history, Jesus had *one thing* that He needed to do before He did anything else; He needed to work a miracle for one demon-possessed man.”

Where was Jesus taking His disciples (verse 26)?

Interestingly, name Gadarenes (also called Gerasenes) means “reward at the end.”

What happened the second Jesus set foot on the land?

How do you think this outcast knew exactly where and when to meet Jesus?

Now, please go back and consider verses 22-25 for a moment. Do you think that there was a connection between the events of 22-25 and the work that Jesus did from 26-39? Do you think that the storm occurred by accident or was there a motive behind the storm? From what we have already learned, Jesus had a very specific mission to accomplish in Gadarenes that day. He crossed the lake for one reason only. I think the storm was an attempt of the enemy to thwart the will of God. Is there any other instance in scripture when God allowed Satan to cause a storm to add credence to my theory? Let’s see what we can discover!

Please read Job 1:7-19.

Satan used a "storm of wind" to bring death to Job's children.

Concerning verses 22-25, Matthew Henry stated that Jesus showed:

"...His power over *the devil*, the *prince of the power of the air*. In the next passage of story he comes into a closer grapple with him than he did when he commanded *the winds*. Presently after the winds were stilled they were brought to their desired haven, and *arrived at the country of the Gadarenes*, and there went ashore (v. 26, 27); and he soon met with that which was his business over, and which he thought it worth his while to go through a storm to accomplish."²

Please go back and read verse 27 again

Please describe what the demon-possessed man was like.

Clothing and shelter are two of the five basic requirements for sustaining human life. Remember the Enemy always comes to kill, steal and destroy; he was out to destroy the demon-possessed man. I think the fact that he lived among the tombs portrayed the state of his soul; he was spiritually dead.

What did the demon-possessed man do when he saw Jesus?

Jesus had previously demonstrated His power over the wind and rain by quieting them. Now, the demons also show their subservience to Christ by falling at His feet.

According to the first part of verse 29, what did the unclean spirit do to the man?

² Henry, Matthew. "Commentary on Luke 8." . Blue Letter Bible. 1 Mar 1996. 2010. 15 Jul 2010.
< [http:// www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?
AuthorID=4&contentID=1649&commInfo=5&topic=Luke&ar=Luk_8_28](http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=4&contentID=1649&commInfo=5&topic=Luke&ar=Luk_8_28) >

The NKJV says that the spirit *seized* him. At first I thought this meant that the spirit came upon the man and tormented him. When I looked up the original Greek word, I discovered that *seized* actually means to catch or lay hold of, to seize by force and carry away, "to catch or lay hold of one so that he is *no longer his own master*" (*emphasis mine*).³ This poor man was completely at the mercy of the demons that *seized* him, doomed to carry out whatever plan they chose to implement.

What did men do to try to control the demon possessed man (verse 29)?

Did any of these things work?

Spiritual issues will never be conquered by the power or wisdom of men.

After the demon possessed man broke his physical bonds, Satan drove him into the wilderness. As a lion works to separate a weak animal from the safety of the herd, Satan worked to drive this man into isolation.

Let us take a moment to consider what we have learned so far:

- Satan isolates, but Jesus fellowships!
- Satan binds, but Jesus frees!
- Satan possesses, but the Holy Spirit inhabits.
- Satan drives into the wilderness, but Jesus leads to the Promised Land!

Take another look at verses 28 and 31. Do you notice anything?

In verse 28, the pronouns *I* and *me* were used, but in verse 31, the pronouns *they* and *them* were used. It seemed as if Satan, since he wasn't able to stop Jesus with the storm, gathered a great force of demons

³Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *synarpazō* (Strong's 4884)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 15 Jul 2010. <<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G4884&t=KJV>>

to battle Jesus for the soul of this one poor man. Matthew Henry concurs with this point of view: "But perhaps [the demons], upon some foresight of our Savior's coming to attack them, and finding they could not prevent it by the storm they had raised, sent for recruits, intending this to be a decisive battle, and hoping now that it would be too hard for Him to cast out so many unclean spirits..."⁴ Despite the *legion* (about 7,000) of demons, the evil ones were infinitely outnumbered by the mighty power of the One and Only begotten Son of God.

As you read earlier in this study, the demons were finished, cast out by a Word from Jesus and sent over a cliff via a herd of pigs, to drown in the lake below. Satan's plan was turned against him; the very lake that Satan used to try to defeat Jesus was then used to defeat Satan! "He made a pit and dug it out, and has fallen into the ditch which he has made."

What about the demon possessed man? What happened to him?

Please write down how the demon-possessed man was described in verse 35.

He ended up right where he belonged—at the feet of Jesus. Scripture says that the man was "in his right mind." In other words, he was in the mind that God intended him to have from the beginning. The Greek word for "in his right mind" is *sophroneo* which means "to be of sound mind, to exercise self control, to curb one's passions." *Sophroneo* descends from other Greek words which mean "in one's senses, sane, and safe." Most interestingly, it also means, "to rescue from danger or destruction, to save a suffering one, to restore health and to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of the Messianic deliverance."⁵ Verse 35 also states that he was *clothed*. Have you ever wondered where Jesus procured clothing for this man?



⁴ Henry, Matthew. "Commentary on Luke 8." . Blue Letter Bible. 1 Mar 1996. 2010. 15 Jul 2010. < [http:// www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm? AuthorID=4&contentID=1649&commInfo=5&topic=Luke&ar=Luk_8_28](http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=4&contentID=1649&commInfo=5&topic=Luke&ar=Luk_8_28) >

⁵ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *sōphrōn* (*Strong's 4998*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 15 Jul 2010. < [http:// www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/Lexicon.cfm? Strong=G4998&t=KJV](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?Strong=G4998&t=KJV) >

Did He have extra clothing with Him? Did Jesus give the healed man some of His own clothes? However he was dressed, we know for sure that he was wearing “robes of righteousness”!

What do we find out about the townspeople in verse 35?

I find it ironically funny that *now*, when the demon-possessed man is in his right mind, that the people are afraid of him!

Why do you think they were afraid?

Verse 36 gives us a little more information about the once demon-possessed man. Please fill in the missing word.

“They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon possessed had been _____.”

The original word used for healed in this text is *sozo* means salvation or saved!

Take a look at verse 37 again.

What did the “whole multitude” ask Jesus to do?

They asked Him to *depart* from *them*. Notice they do not ask Jesus to depart from the *region* but to depart from *them*. Please consider carefully the following information: The Greek word for *depart* used in this verse is *aperchomai*, which is made up of two smaller Greek words, one of which is *apo*. *Apo* means “of a whole, where some part is taken, of any kind of separation of one thing from another by which the union

or fellowship of the two is destroyed.”⁶ The multitude had rejected Christ; they destroyed their chance for fellowship with Him.

God in His Omniscience knew that the people of this region would reject Him... all except for one... one crazy person...one person God was crazy about... one important person. Jesus made that trip all the way across the lake and faced a storm just to save one crazy person in Genesares ...one out of a multitude... one who would be a witness for His kingdom.

“...for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”
Matthew 7:13

What did the healed man ask of Jesus in verse 38?

Of all the things that the healed man could have asked Jesus for, he asked for His presence. All he wanted after all the years of bondage, isolation and shame was to be with Jesus, because he knew that Jesus was all he needed. May we do the same, Lord; may we ask for a greater measure of Your Presence.

Jesus, however, had a better plan. He immediately sent the healed man back to his hometown to be a witness for His kingdom. Don't you love it? My pastor once said when preaching on this passage, Jesus did not send him away to Bible College for four years to earn a degree, in order to launch a mega ministry. The healed man knew all that was required to be an effective witness for his Savior—the great things that God had done for him.

How about you? Do you have some great things to tell others about what God has done for you?

⁶ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *apo* (Strong's 575)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 15 Jul 2010. < <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G575&t=KJV> >

What are they?

So the man did just as Jesus told him. Not only did he witness to his own house, but he proclaimed to the whole city what God had done for Him.

Isn't it wonderful that even though the multitude of that city had rejected Jesus, Jesus had not rejected them? Jesus left behind a witness to continually preach His message to a multitude of people that He was crazy about.

In closing, this poor man represents all of us before we came to Jesus; we were bound up in the chains and shackles of our sins, completely under the authority of Satan; powerless to resist him, and driven by him where ever he desired. Then one day we met Jesus!

Please remember, like the demon-possessed man:

- **Some people will be intimidated by your healing.** To admit that you have been miraculously healed is cause to believe that there is a Miraculous Healer! Also, if you are healed, you may no longer need the help of certain friends or family members; relationships will change.
- **Some will be afraid of your relationship with Jesus.** Change is hard for people to accept. Some people may say that you are becoming a fanatic. You must follow Jesus regardless of what the multitude says.
- **Some people need to hear about the great things that God done for you.** When Jesus delivers you from something, He calls you to witness for Him. Like the man in our passage today, your ministry begins at home and spreads from there. Start telling your story!

- **The Power of One:** The demon possessed-man was *one* of a multitude that lived in the city of Gadarenes. All Jesus needed was one man who was willing to share his faith.
- **The Power of Poverty:** He did not have a job, money or any material possessions that he could give to help another. Even the clothes on his back were borrowed. The only thing that the demon-possessed man had to offer the multitude was his faith in Jesus.
- **The Power of Position:** Jesus healed the demon-possessed man and gave him a new position in his hometown; he was now an Ambassador of Christ! Now he's no longer just crazy—he's crazy about Jesus.

Perhaps like me, you have struggled with feelings of panic, depression or fear; maybe other people have called you hurtful names. I used to think that Jesus couldn't use a person like me, but I was wrong. Jesus will use anyone who is willing to be used for His glory, because Jesus loves the Outcasts!

By Mary Kane

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