* **(video testimony of John David Silas)**
* **Criminal or Child of the King?**
* *Trash or Treasure (miracles: sermon series #2)*
* LUKE 8:26-39
* **26**So they arrived in the region of the Gerasenes,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%208:26-39" \l "fen-NLT-25240a" \o "See footnote a)] across the lake from Galilee. **27**As Jesus was climbing out of the boat, a man who was possessed by demons came out to meet him. For a long time he had been homeless and naked, living in the tombs outside the town.
* **28**As soon as he saw Jesus, he shrieked and fell down in front of him. Then he screamed, “Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Please, I beg you, don’t torture me!”
* **29**For Jesus had already commanded the evil[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%208:26-39" \l "fen-NLT-25243b" \o "See footnote b)] spirit to come out of him. This spirit had often taken control of the man. Even when he was placed under guard and put in chains and shackles, he simply broke them and rushed out into the wilderness, completely under the demon’s power.
* **30**Jesus demanded, “What is your name?”
* “Legion,” he replied, for he was filled with many demons. **31**The demons kept begging Jesus not to send them into the bottomless pit.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%208:26-39#fen-NLT-25245c)]
* **32**There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby, and the demons begged him to let them enter into the pigs.
* So Jesus gave them permission.
* **33**Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned.
* **34**When the herdsmen saw it, they fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran.
* **35**People rushed out to see what had happened. A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been freed from the demons. He was sitting at Jesus’ feet, fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid. **3**
* **6**Then those who had seen what happened told the others how the demon-possessed man had been healed.
* **37**And all the people in the region of the Gerasenes begged Jesus to go away and leave them alone, for a great wave of fear swept over them. So Jesus returned to the boat and left, crossing back to the other side of the lake. **38**The man who had been freed from the demons begged to go with him. But Jesus sent him home, saying,
* **39**“No, go back to your family, and tell them everything God has done for you.” So he went all through the town proclaiming the great things Jesus had done for him.
* The world’s most expensive coffee is dung (poop), literally.
* **Luwak coffee, or kopi luwak,** cost hundreds of American dollars a pound, but ***the beans are the droppings of the civet creature found in South East Asia***.
* Originally seen as pests to coffee farmers **YET** a delicacy to food lovers. The animals are now treasured by the coffee world a thriving business today.
* The locals patiently wait at night in the remotest forests for the animals that eat the ripest, sweetest and tastiest coffee beans to excrete the beans that the critter could not digest.
* **The indigestible coffee beans spend at least a day in the animal’s stomach acids and enzymes before resurfacing on the other end. The beans are then thoroughly washed and sun-dried for a smooth, aromatic and chocolaty brew with no bitter aftertaste.**
* The company exports the product to distributors overseas, especially Japan and South Korea, for $227 a pound.
* **Our Story**
* In Luke 8 Jesus came to a man whom **society considered an outcast, an untouchable, a demon, a scumbag or a bum.**
* **Jesus treated him as a person and a soul. Jesus was unafraid of and uncompromising to the unwanted man. Jesus refused to give up and go away; instead the demons were cast out and wiped out.**
* How did Jesus treat society’s abandoned people?
* What do we learn from this miracle?
* **God Pursues Us with Passion**
* **26 They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. 27 When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. (Luke 8:26-27)**
* Up to this point, even though Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good
* news of the kingdom of God (Luke 8:1), His ministry and travels were mainly confined to the Jewish side of Galilee.
* **The first thing we notice in this chapter about this miracle is that Jesus took the time and initiated the trip to the region of the Gerasenes, which is on the Gentile side, across the lake from Galilee (v 26).**
* Jesus suggested the trip to His disciples (v 22).
* No one prompted and pressured him to do so.
* The book of Matthew indicated that Jesus got into the boat first and his disciples followed him (Matt 8:23).
* **It was a planned, premeditated, and punishing trip.**
* The trip was strange and surprising. It was unusual, unnecessary and unwanted in the eyes of others. It was a risk and a ride no disciple wanted.
* They were headed to nowhere land (the boonies).
* The place seems so far and foreign that Luke uses another one-of-a-kind word in the Bible: “across” (v 26), which should be translated as “over/beyond against” Galilee.
* **It was an extremely dangerous and long trip.** They started in the evening, according to Mark 4:35, and arrived the next day when farmers were already herding pigs (v 32).
* When they finally arrived to the other side, the person who met them was not only a Gentile outsider, but a **society outcast and a human oddball!**
* Can you imagine Jesus scheduling only **one event for one person on a day-trip over troubled waters and beyond yonder**? All this trouble for the sake of a naked and homeless demon-possessed man?
* Matthew 8:28 describes him as “violent” or “exceedingly fierce”
* He was a **threat, a terror and a tyrant**. HE WAS TRASH TO MOST, BUT TREASURE TO JESUS.
* Jesus came to find a man the locals ran from; a ghost and a monster of a man the locals feared and forsook.
* **God Empowers us for Purpose**
* **28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!”**
* **29 For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.**
* **30 Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him. 31 And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss. 32 A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into them, and he gave them permission.**
* **33 When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. (Luke 8:28-33)**
* **What do we know about demons from this passage?**
* They are **unclean**, translated as “evil”
* They are **undisciplined**
* They are **unsparing**
* They are **unrepentant**
* **“NIGHT AND DAY among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.”**
* **“chained hand and foot”**
* **ruthlessness, ferociousness and maliciousness (Mark 5:5).**
* Like hardened criminals, the demons give up only when they are ***exposed or expelled***.
* **Demons survive and thrive on people who are intimidated, isolated, irrational, irresponsible and ill.**
* Fearful, fretful and fateful people are their prey.
* The way to deal with the devil is to receive the Lord, resist the devil (James 4:7), repent from sin (2 Tim 2:25-26, 1 John 3:8).
* **The three-fold purpose of Jesus’ appearance in this story and ours is to…**
* demonstrate His authority,
* deliver the sinner
* destroy the devil (1 John 3:8)
* Jesus opposed the demons,
* ordered their departure (v 29)
* overlooked their pleas.
* The verb “command” (v 29) occurs **seven times** in the gospels all used exclusively by Jesus. He sees them for the fallen nature they are and the fate they deserve.
* **God is not looking for our Strength but rather our Surrender. We must Surrender to His Purpose.**
* **34 When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, 35 and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.**
* **36 Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. 37 Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left.**
* **38 The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 “Return home and tell how much God has done for you.” So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him. (Luke 8:34-39)**
* Claudia Minden Weisz (the mother of a Rett Syndrome child with a neurodevelopmental disorder) wrote this wonderful poem:
* **I asked God to take away my pride. And God said “No”.**
* *He said it was not for Him to take away, but for me to give up.*
* **I asked God to make my handicapped child whole. And God said “No”.**
* *He said her spirit was whole, her body was only temporary.*
* I **asked God to grant me patience. And God said “No”.**
* *He said patience is a by-product of tribulations. It isn't granted, it is earned.*
* **I asked God to give me happiness. And God said “No”.**
* *He said He gives me blessings, happiness is up to me.*
* **I asked God to spare me pain. And God said “No”.**
* *He said suffering draws me apart from worldly cares and brings me closer to Him.*
* **I asked God to make my spirit grow. And God said “No”.**
* *He said I must grow on my own. But He will prune me to make me fruitful.*
* **I asked for all things that I might enjoy life. And God said “No”.**
* *He said He will give me life, that I may enjoy all things.*
* **I ask God to help me love others, as much as he loves me.**
* ***And God said “Ah, finally you have the idea!”***
* There was nothing the healed man could do for Jesus in Jerusalem or in Judea, but His witness in Gerasenes was needed to turn the villagers’ **fear into faith**.
* His usefulness across the other side of the lake in Jewish circles was limited. However, the local boy’s turnaround was the key to reaching those that no one else could reach.
* **The people were opposed to Jesus, but they were never opposed to the man.**
* The locals asked Jesus but not the demon-possessed man to leave.
* This young man that Jesus set free was given a pass all over town and had plenty of contact with others, telling them how much Jesus had done for him (v 39).
* When Jesus was about to leave the young man **begged but never bargained**. He approached and asked, but he did not argue, **submitting and surrendering to His will.**
* Because of this one miracle, **the people were no longer afraid but were amazed**.
* The man later shared his miraculous story in Decapolis (Mark 15:20)
* This young man made his mark all over town (v 39).
* **This young man is the first person to “preach” the good news of Christ (v 39)** So he went all through the town proclaiming the great things Jesus had done for him.
* In Jesus, no willing soul is left behind.
* In Him, trash becomes treasure.
* He specializes in souls and lives that are wretched, wasted and worthless.
* Have you gone out of your way to share the good news (gospel)?
* What kind of practical ways have you ministered to those trapped in their poverty, misery, and disability?