

Title: Out of Control and Under Authority
Text: Luke 8.26-39
Theme: The all-powerful word of Christ
Series: Luke
Prop Stmt: Jesus demonstrates his unrivaled authority for the good of those who will believe him.

Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay and will cost you more than you want to pay. The man in our text was a sad and terrifying example of that. Even though he is a case study in the downward spiral of the binding and addicting nature of sin, he is not the poster child that Satan would like you to see. Satan wants to disguise what sin does by making it appear to be inviting, appealing and satisfying. This man is hard to look at because he has nothing to hide behind. This is what Jesus came to save us from. Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost. And this man is lost.

Read Text:

The sea is calm, the water is still, but there is enough breeze to take the boat to other side of the lake to the country of the Gerasenes, the more Gentile region on the eastern coast of the Sea of Galilee. Back in v.22 Jesus said, *"Let us across to the other side of the lake."* On the way, they encountered a storm and now they are about to encounter another. Luke description has a cinematic feel. Jesus steps on the land and the battle begins. It's not one vs. one, it's one vs. hundreds, maybe thousands. But just as the winds and the waves bowed in submission, so do the principalities and powers answer to the voice of their Creator. Jesus came to rescue this man. He may have been the only one in the region. But Jesus came for him. And in coming for him, he demonstrated his unrivaled authority for the good of those who will believe in him. The text begins with...

1. **The obvious effects of sin.** (27-28)

This man was demon possessed. This is a not a mental health issue, this is a demonic issue that does not respond to mental health treatments or any other measures that were attempted for his safety or the safety of others. This man was possessed by multiple demons who identified themselves as Legion. Legion is a military term for a unit of soldiers that numbered in the thousands. This one man vs. thousands of demons is in a hopeless state until the thousands of demons encounter the one God-man Jesus.

A. **He had demons.**

Demons are terrifying and pitiful. 2 Peter 2.4 and Jude 6 refer to them as angels who refused to accept their position they were created for. Like Satan, their leader, they rebelled and wanted more and of course ended up with so much less. The sin of pride is no small matter. As angels who are under the tyranny and curse of sin, demons are terrifying. They are powerful beings who possess superhuman strength and they are pure evil. There is nothing redemptive about

them. They are so full of evil that everything that they say is intended to deceive or defeat. Even when they speak the truth it is intended to deceive or manipulate. They know the unseen world. They live in it. They know things that you do not and know things about you and your family and this world that on their own would terrify you and immobilize you with fear apart from the grace and power of God. They can destroy. They are committed to destroying. They cannot be redeemed. They are hell-bent on destroying every work of God and every child of God, if they could. If they could.

But they cannot. Thank God, they cannot. While demons have superhuman strength, it is limited by the power of God and they, like all of creation, are under the control and authority of God as we see in this text. Therefore, while they are terrifying, they are pitiful. They are damned. There is no hope for them. There is nothing that can be redeemed about them. There is not one ounce of goodness in them. This man, possessed by demons had supernatural strength and supernatural knowledge. He knew who Jesus was and called him by name and correctly identified him as ***"Son of the Most High God."*** This is sobering. The theology of these demons was more accurate than any of the disciples at this point. These demons knew, intellectually who Jesus was and they trembled before him and in fact, they obeyed him. But they did not love him. They heard the Word of God and even obeyed it, but not from an honest and good heart (v.15). They obeyed because they had to. Good theology is necessary, but not sufficient. Keeping the rules is good, but not the heart of Christianity. These demons prove the warning that good theology without humble heart application leads to condemnation. Going to church and hearing good sermons will only increase judgment if you don't hear with your heart.

Revelation 20.10 speaks of the final judgment of Satan and his cohorts with the result being, *"they will be thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur ... and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."* Demons live under this curse, even as they attempt to deny its authority. What a miserable curse they are under. They obey Jesus because they have to. But they hate him. They know that he is the Son of the Most High God. They know that God is the Most High, not Satan. And yet their entire existence is dedicated and driven to the doomed and damned goal of overthrowing God. They have no hope and cannot be rescued from this plight. Like Satan their master, they are liars, but they appear to be deceived by their lies. Demons are under the curse of sin. They live under the effects of sin even as they seek to influence others with those same effects. They hate, they are full of hatred and they are hated. As soon as Jesus stepped on to the land, he was confronted with this man whose life was a picture of the effects of sin. Given the fact that he had no home, no family, and that he lived among the tombs, he was probably filthy, disgusting, threatening, and about as repulsive as you can imagine. He is a picture of where sin, unaddressed will take you.

B. He had nothing. - *"for a long time he had worn no clothes."*

Sin will take everything from you. It will place you under its bondage and many of you know this too well. You will spend your last dime on your addiction believing the lie that you have to have it, even though you hate it and love it. You will lose jobs, lose cars, even lose a home and a career because you could not control sin. This man has lost absolutely everything. His life is

about as close to hell that you can get on earth. I've heard it for years and see it on t-shirts. If I go to hell at least I will be with all my friends. There are no friends in hell.

C. He was alone. – *“he had not lived in a house”*

Sin creates a lot of loneliness. How many promises did this guy break? How many times did this guy give himself to evil and now could not even live in a house with others anymore? His dad, mom, siblings, perhaps others could not live with him. He ruined everything. Neighbors could not let their children around him. He could not be controlled. This guy was a terror to others even as he was to himself. V.29 says that the demons would drive him into the desert.

D. He lived with the dead. – *“but among the tombs”*

The cemetery was his home even as it was clear to all, his destination.

Dads, if some 30-year-old pimp started grooming your 13-year-old daughter by making her promises, by complimenting her beauty, by buying her things and by lying about you and your wife, you would possibly go OT on him, wouldn't you? You know that he is a liar. You know that he has done this to so many others. You know that she is gullible. You know that he wants to take her, use her, get her addicted, isolated from everyone who loves her, then destroy her and leave her to die. What you may not realize is that 30-year-old pimp is the personification of every sin that threatens you and me. This is what sin will do, left unchecked. The enemy of our soul wants to isolate us and take us to the grave and make us think that there is no hope for us.

E. He was condemned. *“I beg you, do not torment me”*

He (the demons speaking through him) knew that he was under judgment from God. He knew his day was coming. He was begging God to delay it. This is so pathetic.

2. The absurd attempts of managing sin. (29b)

The middle of verse 29, tells us of some of the things that the people had done in an attempt to deal with this guy. This guy was a threat to those who lived near him and they tried to manage him by placing him under guard and by binding him with chains and shackles. If a guy like this is your neighbor, how is the HOA supposed to handle this? Let's call a meeting in order to discuss this. What good will that do? Let's assign someone to guard him. Think that will help? I cannot imagine that too many people stood in line to volunteer for that guard duty position. Can you think of a worse job than getting the midnight shift guarding this guy? You are trying to guard him. That is, you are in a position of authority over a guy that you cannot control, who knows where you live, where your family is, and knows that you are terrified of him with good reason. He has a power that you don't understand and that will destroy you and you are supposed to guard him. How do you control him? How do you control sin, apart from Jesus? You can't! You are in over your head. What can you say to threaten him? You have nothing. You have no power that intimidates him.

3. The intrinsic authority of Jesus. (28-29)

Jesus steps onto the land and this man met him. *“When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him.”* (v.28) Clearly this is a divine appointment set by Jesus. Jesus is coming for this man. He set out to rescue him. This is awesome! The man, inhabited by the demons falls before Jesus even as he cries out, “What have you to do with me?” It’s the idea of, “can’t you leave me alone?” What have you to do with me? Jesus is answering that charge. You have someone that I want. You have someone that I have come for. You have someone that I am going to save. You have someone that I am going to rescue, clothe, feed and put in my home forever. You have one of my sheep, and I will not be denied.

The demons hate Jesus but they are powerless to resist his command. They had to be there and they had to obey Jesus. Just as the winds and the waves had to obey Jesus because it was his voice that created them, so did the demons. When Jesus commanded them to leave this man, they had to obey. Twice the demons are begging Jesus. Once not to be tormented (28) and second, not to be sent to the abyss (31). They begged because they knew they were under an authority they were completely subservient to. There are so many demons in this man that they are called Legion. Jesus is one and they are many, but they have no power to resist him. His Word cannot be stopped. His Word demands their obedience even though these demons exist to rebel against him, they ultimately have to obey him. They beg him. When do you beg? When do people beg? You beg when you have nothing left to negotiate with. If you have some influence or power you try to make a deal. But when you have nothing, you beg.

What if a demon threatened to reveal your thought life, your history, your secrets, etc.? Why do demons beg Jesus? They have nothing on him. They have no threat they can hold over him, while he holds all power over them. You and I have no power in ourselves over these enemies of our souls. But God’s Word renders them powerless. One word from Christ and the man is set free. The power in the boat was greater than the powers that threatened the boat. The power in Christ was infinitely greater than the powers that were in the man. The power of Christ is the power of his Word. This is why we read his Word to ourselves and one another. It is why we sing his Word to ourselves and one another. It is why we preach his Word and reverberate it in our hearing and responding. Demons and Satan are stripped of power over us and reduced to beggars by the power of God’s Word.

The demons beg to go into the large herd of pigs. They are so desperate to avoid the abyss, that occupying a large herd of pigs, even for a few minutes is preferable. So, Jesus gives them permission. Mark says that there were about 2,000 pigs in the herd. Meaning, this man had been inhabited by a significant concentration of demons. Now the pigs in short order show the effects of sin. They rushed down a steep bank into the lake and drowned. Makes you wonder, why the demons even bothered. They destroyed themselves. That’s all they can do. They destroy everything they inhabit. Why did Jesus let them do that? What happened to the demons after that? 2,000 pigs drowning in the lake? That had to be an ecological nightmare plus somebody just lost a lot of livestock. Luke doesn’t answer all of those questions. We do not

know the answers to those questions but we know this. Jesus was willing for those animals to die, so that this man could live.

4. **The obvious effects of Jesus.** (35)

You're 15 years old and your dad sends you out to earn some money. He tells you that a guy in town is hiring some guys to watch his pigs. It's rather boring, but you gotta start somewhere. My grandfather had a farm and he raised pigs. I know firsthand that taking care of pigs is not a glamorous job. Wilbur the pig is a nice story in Charlotte's web, but there was no Wilbur in the herd I dealt with. But pigs can earn some money, as long as they don't drown in a lake. So, you are minding your own business watching the pigs, when all of a sudden, they take off running toward the lake. 2,000 pigs running is going to shake the ground. It is going to sound and feel like an earthquake. And there is no stopping them. The squealing, grunting and thundering hooves is deafening. But now you and the other minimum wage herders are left trying to figure out what just happened and how you are going to explain to the owner what happened to his pigs? The destructive effects of the demons is obvious and so is saving effect of Jesus. The herdsmen ran into the city and told whoever would listen what had happened. The people come out to see for themselves. The power of Christ is profoundly apparent. This man who was an uncontrollable terror is now...

A. **Sitting at the feet of Jesus** (35)

He is listening and not threatening. He is under authority, not out of control. He is not among the tombs, but with the One who is life.

B. **Clothed**

He is reasonable now. He is able to be relational. He is not a terror or threat.

C. **In his right mind**

You can have a conversation with him. He will listen and he will talk. He is making sense.

V.36 sets the groundwork for what sounds like a promising and powerful influence of Christ on these people. Instead, they beg him to leave.

5. **The confusing rejection of Christ.** (37)

The man is changed. The people are safe. The area is not a terror anymore. But the people want Jesus to leave. We don't want you here. The rejection is regional. Does this make sense? No. Rejecting Jesus never makes sense, but most do. What is the reason? They were afraid. The result was they were the ones in darkness, while this man was now free. They begged Jesus to leave and he begged Jesus if he could go with him. Jesus said no. He needed to stay and be a

witness. Return to your home and declare how much God has done for you – and he did, throughout the whole city.

Conclusion:

In one scene we see our world, the ministry of Christ and our mission.