

“Demoniac,” Pentecost 5C, 2022

at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Norwood. Luke 8:26ff.v

“Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the Devil, and all his empty promises?” These words highlight our baptismal service. Front and center, we know our Lord took on and conquered all the menacing forces of evil, for us.

In our baptism, we pronounce our trust and confidence in His almighty power over all the forces of darkness, whether we call them demons, sins or just puzzling problems: self-inflicted or otherwise. Today’s gospel is the inauguration of that belief.

Just before Jesus controlled and subdued the threats of the maddening tempests of a demoniac’s tormented mind, Jesus, out on the lake, stills the mighty out-of-control power of nature. The disciples feared the wind and waves were no match for Jesus. After, curing the demoniac, Jesus then raises the daughter of Jairus, where death is no match for His life-giving authority.

**Out of the disorder of nature, the sting of death, and inner turmoil of a human mind, Jesus provides his power to bestow peace.

Where the disciples panicked on the stormy sea,
where Jairus pleaded without hope at Jesus’ feet,
where the townspeople helplessly could not deal at all with the possessed man,
there! Jesus established for all, His authority came from God.

While others are helpless, filled with fear, overwhelmed by deep grief or disabled in their attempt to contain an overwhelming situation, *there*, Jesus displays His Lordship.

This makes the cross, a place of *willing* sacrifice. *No one has power over Him, unless He grants it. 250

Immediately upon arrival onshore, in the half-light of early evening, supposedly when demons are the most brazen, Jesus encounters the man who lived in the fear of death, among the tombs, *cut off from all society.

All other attempts failed to help the man combat the demons. All are helpless. *At best, the townspeople could not even slightly restrain the demoniac, facing these mighty powers. Their guards, their chains, their shackles were ineffective: no match to control the demons.

Their power was so strong, even the demoniac continued to bruise himself with stones (think cutting). The demoniac broke their bonds, only to have the demons drive him deeper out into the wilderness, where he gained no freedom.

EVERYTHING in life simply tormented him. He was destructive to others: and self-destructive.

*He did not seek out Jesus for help. We hear no cry as from the Ten Lepers, “Son of David, have mercy on us.”

They meet, collide almost by explosion. When he saw Jesus, “he cried out and fell down before him with a loud voice, ‘what have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beseech you, do not torment me.’”

This battle is between the demons and our Lord, for the soul of the man.

Despite threatening protests in this ugly situation, Jesus would not back down or panic.

*The man is the battleground where Jesus and the demons fight it out. Not only was he so used to his possession, he looked at Jesus to exclaim, “just don’t make it worse!”

He was too frightened to have anything to do with this battle, and accepted his plight, as bad as it was. He feared, even Jesus, could only make things WORSE. “You might taunt the demons! Don’t provoke the demons to fight harder! Don’t get them angrier than they are!”

Partly the demons spoke inside the man, partly the man cried out against Jesus. Even the text goes back and forth between the singular and plural to refer to the man. He didn’t know WHO he was. Caught between the two great forces, his battleground: the man is terrified.

He recognizes it is Jesus who might antagonize the demons, but also deeply fears the demons: *caught between both*.

His demons recognize Jesus, unlike the blindness of the others, even the disciples, and now are ready to do deep, penetrating battle with everyone.

Where other people sense the authority of our Lord, the demons know they need to fear for their lives. They know, “if we are not careful, we will meet our match.” *At times, the “fear of the Lord” even frightened the disciples, as it showed at the empty tomb. (Mark 16:8)

One sign of lack of faith is when we fear the power of Jesus changes my life: not just a distrust, whether Jesus will show up to help, or not. 461

The BIG “However:” the fear of Jesus, terrified everyone the most. Even the demons.

A new problem exists. Our Lord, is mightier than the demons, and He is now in the center of their lives. Whether he was from God or not, Jesus frightened everyone.

They ONLY wanted Him to get rid of their ONE designated problem, but did not realize, the One they invited in their midst, could not be limited or controlled. We do not want to lose control over our lives, from either demons *or* our Lord!

They only wanted Jesus to clear up the ONE problem, the demoniac, and leave. **They didn’t want Jesus to be any part of their lives, after the miracle.

“We only want life made easier and more peaceful. We still want to be in control of OUR lives! The sheriff can now leave town: we do not want him to challenge or investigate, our lives!”

After the great healing, HOW could they ever say “no” to Him?

Why trade one “powerful problem,” the Demoniac, for another, Jesus? *Actually, Jesus was more disruptive to their faith lives, than the demons, because He commands ALL of their life!

They didn’t think they needed Jesus for anything more than a great healing, of someone else, not them! “We will hand over to You, our problem, BUT not our lives

“We designate ONLY him as our problem. Everything else, the ‘little things,’ we can and will control. Please Jesus, only meddle with the things in life we ask you to do!” The Demoniac is healed. But, “we do not need or want You, anymore!”

They witnessed power beyond their comprehension.

It unnerved them. So disturbed and confused by this turn of events, they demanded Jesus: "leave!" Which He did. ***Jesus never forced Himself on them, OR ANYONE, no matter how short-sighted or ungrateful they were!

However, once you invite Him into your life to help, you should expect Him to be with you totally, not only for what you complain about at the moment. OUCH! EVERYTHING! 1030

They wanted the miracle: not Jesus.

"You can get rid of the big problem, *so we can run our own lives. We want to go back to where life was before the demoniac disrupted it, a time when we didn't THINK we would ever want or need Jesus."

*Now they know God could do anything through Jesus. It left too many questions frighteningly unanswered. They did not want to be near anyone with so much power and authority. With this, there were too many long-term risks.

Faith is not always nurtured by more miracles. Miracles disturb the faith more than it promotes it. It is more than just the easy answer to the demoniac problem.

NOW, Jesus is also Lord over all my life. Miracles throw out of balance how the townspeople always thought they could live, well, but with less interference, from our Lord!

**A powerful God made them tremble MORE than powerful demons. Jesus is gone, but the healed demoniac stays to continue Jesus' work. **A miracle did not just give them what they wanted, but what they needed. They have no power over the parameters of the miracle. In for a penny, in for a pound!

WE HAVE NO CONTROL OVER MIRACLES! We do not choose the miracle! Only our Lord can let us know what we also NEED, all along!

Strangely enough, after the miracle the "demoniac," now cured, wanted to follow Jesus. However, again Jesus does the unexpected. He tells him, "I will give you a tougher job. You will stay in your town, and try to teach your neighbors about the faith! You thought the demons were tough, well wait and see how the town treats, a healed, new you!" 1337

Children's sermon : a native American said, "when you pick up a stick, you pick up all of it." Not just the smooth, but rough

and sharp parts- all When you profess faith in Christ, you accept all of Him into your life, all areas; not just what you want, but what He wants to give you- when you pray, all of Christ enters your life;

