

THE BIG IDEA: God can overpower whatever overpowers us.The Take-Off

This will be our last message in our True Story journey through Luke until August (because “Breathe” is in July), and we are going out with a bang!

Demons and bacon and screams, oh my!

Most of the time, we don’t talk a lot about demons because people either get freaked or they think the person talking about them is a freak, but they’re in the passage, and so we’d be foolish to ignore them.

Some passages allow for a smooth take off, but not this one.

This one takes off like a rocket, so let’s read it and then I’m going to give you 5 observations and the Big Idea.

Luke 8:26-39

Now, there’s plenty here for you to chew on throughout the rest of the week, so don’t think for a second that the 5 observations I’m making are the only ones. In fact, I’ve been praying that what I point out would simply wet your appetite to want more, and the Holy Spirit is so good about giving us more!

Here we go. 5 things we can learn from this crazy story about a naked dude and some pigs.

1. God’s best moments often happen during our worst

- a. It’s so easy for us to read this a week removed from last week, but let’s not forget what this boat full of men had just encountered: a squall that shook fishermen to their core and a Lord who stilled it.
- b. They had to have been stepping out a little shaken, heads spinning.
- c. Jesus just quieted a storm, and probably would have been happy with some quiet time.
- d. Instead, when their feet hit the shore, there met by a demon-possessed man.
- e. More on him later, but for now, can we just acknowledge that often, God’s best moments happen during our worst?
- f. It isn’t because God likes to make us look bad. It’s because our weakness is such a great backdrop for his strength!
- g. Don’t wait until YOU’RE strong to offer yourself to God. Offer yourself to God now because HE’S strong!

2. Never play chicken with demons

- a. What do we make of this demon possessed man?
- b. Demonic power is real. (Praying for deliverance in a middle school girl at camp!)
- c. Demonic power isn’t something to play with. (We do this all the time!)
- d. While believers can’t be possessed by Satan, they can surely partner with him!
 - Matthew 16:23 / Peter partnered with Satan
 - John 10:10 / We can, too, if we’re stealing, killing or destroying others
- e. People tend to make too much or too little of demons, but the best thing to do about demons is to make much of Jesus!
- f. Don’t try to convince yourself or demons that you’re stronger than them. Just point them back to the cross and remind them that Jesus is. (see Colossians 2:15!!)
- g. Do you know what happens when we play with evil? We accept it as normal. That leads to #3...

3. The presence of Jesus shakes the preferences of men

- a. Don’t miss the situation that Jesus stepped into: there was a crazy, naked demon possessed man living in a graveyard next to people tending pigs near a town full of people.
- b. That was “normal” - the status quo
- c. And the reaction of the people to the action of Jesus would indicate that they preferred it that way
- d. They had accepted the demonic presence, but Jesus didn’t
- e. He acknowledged that it was real, he addressed it and then he exercised his authority over it
- f. In the end, the demons that were driving a man crazy drove pigs over a cliff, and the people got upset over the pigs and asked Jesus to leave (Mark 5 shed more light on it)
- g. They preferred bacon over the man’s freedom
- h. Let’s shoot straight: some of us are flat out afraid of the authority of Jesus because of how it may disrupt the lives we’ve come to love, or at least grown comfortable with

- i. The people in this town were trying to manage the evil
- j. But Jesus was on a mission to destroy evil
- k. Their approach kept this poor man from living free, which brings up the fourth observation

4. Being free and living free aren't the same

- a. Verse 29 is interesting, because it reveals that this man got free a lot, but he couldn't stay free
- b. I don't fully understand this, but being free every now and then is definitely not the same as living free
- c. I think the saddest part of a community that wants to manage evil is that it keeps people from finding true freedom from the addictions and sins that haunt them
- d. John 8:36 says that when Jesus sets us free, we're free indeed - we're free IN DEED (action!!)
- e. While we may not know everything about how he does that, we know this: he didn't look the other way when this man approached him, or chain him back in the graveyard
- f. Jesus addressed it, asked the demon its name and called it out
- g. You and I will never know complete freedom if we're only willing to acknowledge partial problems
- h. Can you help me pay my bill (but don't help me handle money better)
- i. Can you help me fix my marriage (but don't tell me to stop looking at porn)
- j. Most of us want to manage the sin and live with some damage, but true freedom comes when we step into the light fully

5. Messy people make the best messengers

- a. Finally, this man found freedom - real, life-changing freedom - and he became a witness about it
- b. This last observation is so powerful, because so many of us have messy areas in our lives
- c. Messy situations, relationships, sins and addictions, but messy people make the best messengers!
- d. Look what happened to this demon possessed tomb dweller:
 - He was CHANGED BY JESUS / vv. 27, 29, 25 - naked to clothed, restless to still
 - He was COMMITTED TO JESUS / v. 38 - he BEGGED to go with Jesus
 - He was COMMISSIONED BY JESUS / v. 39 - go home and tell what God's done for you
 - He was COURAGEOUS FOR JESUS / v. 39 - he told all over town (to the people mad about the pigs)
- e. So often, we want to get cleaned up from our mess and then leave, but the power of your story is when you can tell the end of it to those who have seen the beginning of it!
- f. Genesis 41:52 / God makes us fruitful in the land of our affliction!
- g. Go back to the people who have seen the mess in you and tell them the message of what Jesus has done for you

The Landing

How do we wrap this up? We remember a simple Big Idea: God can overpower whatever overpowers us.

What are you facing? What has you chained in the tombs?

What is so messy that others are trying to manage you more than help you?

What evil are you accommodating instead of eradicating?

Let's end this morning praying and inviting Jesus to step into those very areas.

Let's name them - you tell Jesus what it is - and let's allow him to take authority over it.

It doesn't matter if you feel powerless against it, because God can overpower whatever overpowers us.

Let's pray, and trust him to do just that.