

## WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

Luke 8:22-39

Key Verse 8:30

Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion" he replied, because many demons had gone into him.

**First, "Where is your faith?" (22-25)** One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." It meant to the disciples that they would have a picnic without the crowd. "Yahoo! Hurray!" They shouted for joy. They got into the boat and began their voyage. For a while, it was pleasant. But suddenly, a furious squall came down on the lake. The word "squall" means "to scream or cry loudly and harshly." This shows how dangerous the storm was. The waves broke over the boat and very soon, it was nearly swamped. Their skill as experienced fishermen did not help them at all. At that time, what was Jesus doing? Verse 23 shows that he fell asleep. Jesus is really cool! The furious and harsh sound of the wind was attacking the boat and the waters broke over the boat! But still he was sleeping! All his twelve disciples were shouting frantically trying to keep the control of the boat! But neither noise nor water splashing on him could wake him up. In the middle of all this terrible situation, Jesus was sleeping! This shows us how wholeheartedly Jesus had served God's work - to his complete exhaustion. After serving God that way, now he was enjoying sweet sleep even in the storm; as a result, the storm was not a storm to him at all. When we serve God wholeheartedly in the same way, we are so concerned about God's work alone that, even if storms attack us, we do not recognize them; they simply pass by, and we enjoy sweet sleep. Let's follow Jesus' example and serve God's work wholeheartedly.

Finally, when the disciples realized that it was beyond their control, they came to Jesus and woke him up saying, "Master, Master, we are going to drown!" Their words show that they were a little sorry to Jesus because while they were in great danger, Jesus was just sleeping. Mark's gospel describes their sentiment very well. Mark 4:38 reads: "The disciples woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" Jesus was resting very well for the new work he was going to serve, and because of God's peace in him, he was enjoying good time in the boat. But in the eyes of the disciples who thought they were about to die, Jesus looked indifferent to their sufferings. They felt a little sorry that even though they were about to drown, Jesus didn't care but was sleeping all the way.

How did Jesus respond? Look at verses 24 and 25. Jesus simply got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided,

and all was clam. Then, he turned to his disciples and rebuked them, saying, "Where is your faith?" It seemed that Jesus had to apologize for sleeping too deeply while his weak disciples were suffering so much for the storm. It seemed that the disciples suffered terribly only because Jesus did not care about them quickly. But Jesus did not apologize nor show sympathy on them. Instead, he rebuked them, saying, "Where is your faith?" It meant, "I thought that you believed in God." Jesus expected that his disciples should have come up with a different response when the storm came, thanks to their faith in God. Then, what kind of response? Perhaps, sleeping together with him in the boat while the storm attacked them, thanks to their absolute trust in God's goodness, protection and guidance, entrusting their life in God's hands completely, then, soon, after having enjoyed sweet sleep in the storm, they would find themselves on the other side of the lake safe and secure. Or like Jesus, when they felt bothered by the storm too much, they would simply get up, rebuke the wind and the raising waters, and all would be completely calm. But instead, even though they were his disciples, at the attack of the storm, they panicked, screaming to each other, trembling with the fear of death. Simply, not good! So, he rebuked them, saying, "Where is your faith?"

When we think about this passage, we see that this kind of dangerous storms, maybe, financially, or in health matter, or family matter, can come to us even when we are fully dedicated to God's work, and even when we are with Jesus, enjoying good relationship with him. At that time, if we panic, if we freak out, Jesus challenges us, saying, "Where is your faith?" In the time of storm, Jesus challenges us, "Where is your faith?" How should we respond when storms come to us? We must strive to show the response that are caused by our absolute faith in God. That way, we impress him. Don't freak out.

When the disciples saw how Jesus calmed everything, they were shocked. In fear and amazement they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him." Through this experience, they came to see Jesus differently; their eyes were being opened to who Jesus really was. Through this kind of practical challenges and struggles, we come to meet and experience God personally and, thereby, we grow up in Him. So, don't just panic when such challenges come. You will not die because of storms. There is God's good purpose and plan in all those storms you have in your life.

**Second, "What is your name?" (26-39).** After the voyage, they came to the other side of the lake, the region of the Gerasenes. Gerasa was one of the ten cities of the Decapolis; it was a Gentile area. There, another venture was waiting for them. Look at verse 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." What a spooky scene it must have been! The disciples were tired from their struggle against the furious storm. Then, as soon as they came out of the boat, soaked to the bones, a man came out to greet them from the tombs, saying, "Hello! How're you doing?" At this, their hair stood up. He didn't wear any clothes, and his eyes looked very scary. What kind of a person was he? He was a demon-possessed man.

Some people may laugh at this topic, "Demon-possession," thinking that it is a nonsense, or it is found only in fantasy novels. But demon possession is real; 2,000 years ago, many people were possessed by demons and Jesus helped them by setting them free from demons; he sent his disciples to the world with a direction to drive out demons from people. Today, Jesus still sends his disciples to go to the world and set many people free from demons. The concept of demon-possession is that several persons live in one body - the owner of the body and demons, so they show a split mentality. In today's passage, when Jesus commanded the demons to come out of the man, the man ran to Jesus as if he was happy with him, and once he came to him, he fell at his feet as if he respected Jesus highly. But then, he shouted at the top of his voice, saying, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" He was rebellious. His actions and words simply didn't match - this split mentality is the expression of demon possession. Maybe, the owner of the body really wanted to come to Jesus and receive help from him, but the demons in him did not want to do anything with Jesus; fundamentally, demons, even though they know who Jesus is, don't want to do anything with him; they are enemies of God.

When several persons live together in one body, soon all these persons fuse together that later, there is no distinction between the owner's person and the demon's person, so that the owner of the body does not know whether it is he feeling and doing all these things or the demons are doing them. The demon-possessed man in the passage had not worn clothes or lived in a house. Wearing clothes or living in a house is what everyone does and desires; that's the most general code of conduct for all humans. But this man refused to do that most general code of conduct for humans, forgetting what he was, and what he was supposed to do - he was lost. That's one symptom of demon-possession - forgetting what they are, and refusing to do what they are supposed to do as humans. In the passage, the demon-possessed man was living in the tombs. Tombs are the symbol of death, and we all feel burdened about them. No one wants to live in the tombs. But when this person was possessed by demons, he felt very comfortable with the tombs, so he was living in the tombs. This is another symptom of demon-possession. When

people are possessed by demons, they feel comfortable with the things of death such as bones, skulls, blood, knife, the Grim Reapers,... So, they collect those items or wear clothes with those things printed, or cover their bodies with tattoos of such things. When I visited one of my students at his house, he showed me his drawings - demonic figures in fine arts - the Grim Reapers, hellfire, bones and skulls all in fine arts - he had spent tons of time for each of them, drawing each line so carefully. No wonder he was suffering from Paranoia. That day, we burned them all.

When people have a demon problem, often, isolation follows, because, now as their persons are fused with demons, their words and actions are bizarre; these people refuse to go by any rules and regulations and do many bizarre things; eventually, they are driven to solitary places of their own such as their apartment room with a thick curtain; they develop their own tombs, feeling very angry at the society, blaming others for all the problems they have. In the passage, the man didn't wear any clothes, refusing to live by the general consensus of the society; he also broke off the chains, refusing any rules or regulations for his life; instead, he wanted to do whatever he wanted without any restrictions - he was rebellious, but he didn't think that way; instead, he thought that people were restricting him or bothering him. Now as he moved to the tombs and did whatever he wanted to do, running through all the tombs, jumping from one tomb to the next, was he happy? No. Mark's gospel 5:5 reads that night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones. It seemed that he was not happy at all; he was crying out day and night, shouting and screaming, bursting with anger, still thinking that it was all because of others' problems - he blamed his family, his classmates who were smarter than he was, his coworkers at work who had worked harder than he did, and he was angry with them all the more. Also, the fact that he cut himself with stones showed that he didn't like himself at all; he hated who he had become and how he was living; demon-possession leads people to self-destruction. Demons are the direct cause of high suicide rate in the society. People had given up on him long time ago. Now, it seemed that he would finish his life this way, so miserably, as a demon-possessed man. But how lucky and blessed he was that Jesus was living in his time. Jesus even visited him at his place - the tombs in a Gentile area.

As soon as Jesus saw this man, he commanded the demons to come out of him. But they rebelliously talked back, saying, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" Once they occupied the man's body, they did not want to come out of it easily, even at the command of Jesus, the Son of God; they were really rebellious. At this, Jesus asked the man, "What is your name?" Right then the man was going crazy - being naked, shouting at the top of

his voice, being rebellious. In that way, the demons were controlling him. In this situation, Jesus asked the man this question, which he could think of and answer - in this way, with this question, Jesus gave him a chance to be of his own person.

At this, the man answered, "My name is Legion." The man's own person did not answer, but the demons answered, showing that his condition was really bad; he even did not have power or control to answer that kind of most basic and personal question. He was really lost. By the way, where was his own person? Certainly, in his body, but together with 6,000 evil spirits. Legion was the Roman army consisted of 6,000 soldiers. The number of demons that crept into him was equivalent to the number of soldiers in a Roman legion—6,000! Maybe, among 6,000 demons that were so aggressive and intimidating, his own person was pushed back all the way in the shadow that he had no chance to claim or control himself. That was his condition - really lost. Only when several events that were very personal and important to him happened consecutively, as if they were perfectly arranged, maybe then, he would have a chance to come to his senses, saying, "Why am I here?" But in reality, things would never happen that way. Maybe, normally, he would never come back to his own senses, but die this way, eternally lost.

What if he had only 4 demons instead of 6,000 demons? Most likely, he would have a better chance to be himself; maybe, for about 5 hours a day, he was his own person, while the rest of the day, demons were in control. But now as 6,000 demons were in him, he had no chance to be his own - in this way, his own person was lost among so many demons; he was lost. This is what demon-possession is about - one's own person is lost, because of demons.

So many people are lost because of demons. They don't live their own life, but the life of demons, desiring and doing what demons want them to do. Some people live as angry people, doing crazy things because of demons; some people live in excessive sorrows because of demons; some people are captured by a suicidal desire because of demons; some people do terrible things in the society because of demons. While they do everything demons desire, their own self is lost, and they do not live their own life, but the life of demons. That's really sad.

Many young people think of demons or spiritual world a joke, saying, "Cool!" So, they do many terrible things that can invite demons to their life. A sinful life is one direct cause to invite demons; doing occult practices such as wizard board or witchcraft is just another; when people do such practices, they are open to the evil spiritual world and demons come to them. Once they are exposed to the evil spiritual world, when they realize that demons are real, they are dead scared. They never want

to have anything to do with demons. But once demons come to them, they don't want to leave them until these people are really destroyed. Eventually, these people do not live their own life, but the life of demons, while they themselves are lost. Demons are evil spirits. Don't live in a way that can invite evil spirits into your life. Instead, live your life in a way that can invite the Holy Spirit by living a holy life that is really set apart for God.

Look at verses 31 through 33. At Jesus' command, these demons were not submissive; instead, they pleaded with him not to send them to the Abyss, but to the pigs nearby. Jesus gave them permission. They came out and went into the pigs. The herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. It was a lot of money, but Jesus was willing to sacrifice all these pigs for the sake of saving this one poor soul. When the townspeople saw that the man was out of control, and that he refused to listen to them, they gave him up and left him alone so that he might die sometime soon. He was useless and worthless to them. Maybe, if they knew that they had to pay 2,000 pigs as a ransom for him, surely they would not be willing to have that deal.

But Jesus had deep concern about him. It seemed that the reason Jesus had left Capernaum and came to the other side of the lake, the region of the Gerasenes, a Gentile area, was only because of this man. This man, with a little strength that still remained in him, cried inwardly, "What's going on in my life? Where am I going? Help me." Jesus heard this man's feeble cry on the other side of the lake. So he quickly canceled all his schedules, and decided to come to the region of the Gerasenes, the Gentile area. Leaving a whole bunch of crowd that were there in Capernaum who wanted to hear his message, Jesus came to the other side of the lake even through the storm only to meet this helplessly demon-possessed man and to save him from the demons. When the demons were not willing to give him up, but asked for a high ransom, 2,000 pigs, the ruin of the pig industry of the region, Jesus willingly accepted that deal and saved him. To him, this man was far more valuable than a whole bunch of money. Jesus was the good shepherd for this demon-possessed man – he was the only person who did not give him up, but cared for him to the end even paying such high price. No one valued him highly, but Jesus valued him so highly, more than a whole bunch of crowd, more than his precious time, and more than a lot of money.

Who is this Jesus? He is the one who pays attention to the slightest sigh of the least important person in the world. When we cry out for help from the ends of the earth, he hears us and comes to save us. The demons came to him to steal, kill and destroy his talents, character and life, but Jesus came to him to restore him to the original status as

God had created him to be. Jesus came to him so that he might have life, and have it to the full. He is the shepherd for all peoples on earth. Nowadays, even close family members abandon those who have demon-problems, because their way of thinking is weird, their lifestyle is bizarre, and their words and actions are rough - simply it is not easy to bear with them. So, they dump their sons or daughters, or their fathers or mothers to the psychiatric hospitals or convalescent hospitals where they are chained hand and foot. But Jesus is the shepherd for even these people who have been tortured by demons and abandoned by others. Jesus has given his disciples the authority to drive out demons and sent them to the world. Jesus wants us to be shepherds and shepherdesses even for the demon-possessed people - while they are at school, they laugh freely, but when they go home, they are so scared of demons that torture them day and night. Let's pray that through our prayers and one to one Bible studies, we may drive out demons from them and let them have a new life in Christ Jesus.

Look at verses 34 through 39. The people of the town felt a great sense of loss because Jesus exchanged 2,000 pigs for the man's life. They were afraid that all the pigs in the town would die if Jesus remained in their territory just a few more days. So they asked Jesus to leave their region. Because of their love of money, they rejected their good shepherd, their Messiah. As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. But Jesus gave him a different direction, saying, "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." The man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all people were amazed.

One Word: What Is Your Name?