

Closing Prayer

Christ, to whom no one is an outcast,
you ordered the legion of demons
to depart from the one they had afflicted,
so that, clothed and in his right mind
he might be your apostle among his own people.
Look upon all who are baptized,
free them from evil and clothe them with your name,
so that they may tell of your wonders
and draw many into communion with you,
who are one with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever.

Celebrating the Christian Year · Proper 7, Year C²

Lectionary-based Catechesis • Year C

Proper 7

*Sunday between 19 and 25 June, inclusive, if after Trinity
Sunday • (Ordinary Time, week 12)*

Principal Service readings

Isaiah 65.1-9	Warning of judgement
Psalms 22.19-28	Those who seek the Lord will praise him
Galatians 3.23-29	The coming of faith
Luke 8.26-39	Jesus cures the Gerasene demoniac

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
speak to our hearts in the stillness,
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

Gospel Reading

Jesus cures the Gerasene demoniac

²⁶Jesus and his disciples arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me' – ²⁹for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰Jesus then asked him, 'What is your name?' He said, 'Legion'; for many demons had entered him. ³¹They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

³²Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵Then people came out to see what had happened, and

when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. ³⁷Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹'Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.' So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

Luke 8.26-39 NRSV¹

Comments and Questions

Luke takes the story of the Gerasene demoniac from Mark and reworks it, correcting what he sees as Mark's deficiencies. For example, he does not think it appropriate for the demoniac to 'adjure' Jesus (as in Mark 5.7), so he changes it to 'beg'. He provides clarifications. Thus, he tells where the territory of the Gerasenes is (8.26), and assures his readers that Jesus steps on land and not water (8.27). He has the pig-keepers see the events before reporting them (8.34) and supplies a motive for the assembly's request for Jesus to leave (8.37). He also puts the story into a more logical order. He does not like surprises in the narrative and so mentions the city (8.27) although the man is now among the tombs. He has the man unclothed (8.27) before he is re clothed (8.35; cp. Mark 5.15).

Luke's particular emphasis in this story is to show 'order' and to have the man 'relate all that God had done for him' (8.8.39). For Luke, this is the shape of preaching the good news – relating 'in order' what God has done.

The account itself is of an exorcism, and a normal pattern for exorcism is followed. The abyss or netherworld is the abode of spirits (Philippians 2.9-11), the dead (Romans 10.7), imprisoned spirits (1 Peter 3.19), and the place of Satan's prison (Revelation 20.3). Why do the demons want to escape the abyss? Perhaps it would be for them a prison, or perhaps beyond the reach of Christ (Philippians 2.9-11; Romans 8.38-39; 1 Peter 3.18-22). Jesus' power is no less effective among the Gentiles, even in a

place where demonic powers abound. Perhaps Luke wants us to remember this when Christian missionaries go into Gentile country and confront evil (Acts 16.16-34; 19.11-20).

Quotations

1

All our infirmities, whatever they are, are just opportunities for God to display his gracious work in us.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, 1834–1892

2

It is a promise which eminently deserves our observation that all who are united to Christ and acknowledge Him to be Christ and Mediator will remain to the end safe from all danger, for what is said of the body of the Church belongs to each of its members since they are one in Christ.

Commentary on a harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Volume 2 / John Calvin

Related topics

For further study:

Healing; repentance; forgiveness

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