

Jesus Can Lift You Up!

No. 228

Introduction.

I. Luke records this thrilling story in the 8th chapter of his gospel. (Lk. 8:26-40).

26 And they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27 And when He had come out onto the land, He was met by a certain man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs. 28 And seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, "What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me." 29 For He had been commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard; and yet he would burst his fetters and be driven by the demon into the desert. 30 And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. 31 And they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss. 32 Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons entreated Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission. 33 And the demons came out from the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake, and were drowned. 34 And when the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported it in the city and out in the country. 35 And the people went out to see what had happened; and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they became frightened. 36 And those who had seen it reported to them how the man who was demon-possessed had been made well. 37 And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to depart from them; for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat, and returned. 38 But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying, 39 "Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him. 40 ¶ And as Jesus returned, the multitude welcomed Him, for they had all been waiting for Him.

II. **This story is indeed one of the most thrilling stories in all the New Testament.**

- A. It is the story of a man who met Jesus in the worst way and left in the best way.
- B. It is a story that exemplifies what Satan will do with a life and what Jesus can do for a life.
- C. It is a story that illustrates the unpleasant life without Christ and the happiness of a life in Christ.

III. **John Newton's** great hymn, "Amazing Grace," is a fitting backdrop to the story.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me; I was lost, but now I'm found, Twas blind, but now I see.

IV. This story is one that magnifies God's amazing grace. Let us consider three important spiritual truths found in this story.

- I. **Sin Will Bring You Down** - The first spiritual truth is that sin will bring you down.

26 And they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27 And when He had come out onto the land, He was met by a certain man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs.

- A. This story is a classic example of the presence and power of sin and Satan in a life.
- B. **When we consider where he lived**, we see how sin and Satan will degrade a life. He did not live in a warm, comfortable house, but lived in the cold, dreary tombs. Sin has also affected his mental state. The Bible says "who had not put on any clothing for a long time." The Bible says he had to be placed in chains and shackles and kept under guard.

C. **Sin will take the innocent and make them guilty.**

- 1. Sin will take the **pure** and make them impure. Sin will take the **clean** and make them unclean. Sin will take the **moral** and make them immoral. Sin will take the **decent** and make them indecent. Sin will take the **good** and make them bad.
- 2. **Contrary to the picture the world** paints, sin always lowers a person and never lifts that person.
- 3. **One night a man was brought into New York's busy Bellvue Hospital.** He appeared to be just another bum with a slashed throat. He had been brought from the Bowery, which was a synonym of filth, loneliness, cheap booze, drugs, and the dead end of many a life. He looked like all the rest. It was obvious that he had only lived to drink. His health was gone. He was cold and starving and bruised and semi-conscious. This man who looked twice his age, was found lying in a heap, naked and bleeding from a deep gash in his throat. A doctor was called. Time ran out. The man died and was sent to the morgue for identification. He left this world with almost no belongings. When they scrapped together his belongings, they found a ragged, dirty coat with 38 cents in one pocket. They found a scrap of paper in the other pocket. It had five words on it, "Dear friends and gentle hearts." This man had tragically died at the age of 38. Once upon a time this man had written songs that literally made the whole world sing:

Camptown Races Oh! Susanna! Beautiful Dreamer Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair Old Folks at Home My Old Kentucky Home and over 200 more

3. The bum found in the Bowery was Stephen Foster. What happened? Who knows for sure, but one thing is obvious. Sin and Satan can and will take a person to the bottom!

II. **Jesus Can Lift You Up** - The second spiritual truth is Jesus can lift you up.

LUK 8:28 And seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, "What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me." 29 For He had been commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard; and yet he would burst his fetters and be driven by the demon into the desert.

- A. **This man who was living in sins domination**, experienced transformation. Jesus freed him from Satan's stronghold.
 1. Jesus commanded the demons to come out of the man, setting him free from the power of sin and Satan.
 2. What others could not do for him, Jesus was able to accomplish.
- B. **Satan is powerful, but Jesus is all-powerful!** Satan is strong, but Jesus is stronger! Satan may lower a life, but Jesus can lift that life!
 1. **On February 24, 2001, a one year old Canadian girl** named Erika somehow wandered out of her mother's bed and house and spent the entire night in freezing snow. When her mother found her, Erika appeared to be totally frozen. Her legs were stiff, her body frozen, and all signs of life appeared to be gone. Erika was treated at Children's Health Center, and the doctors and rescue workers brought her back to life. To the amazement of all, there appeared to be no sign of brain damage and doctors gave Erika a clear prognosis. She would soon be able to hop and skip and play like other girls her age.
 2. **Some of us have wandered away from our Father's house**, and it has brought us near the point of death. Our hearts have been hardened, and our spiritual bodies look as lifeless as the little girl in the snow. But Christ is eager for us to return home to the Father. Once we return He can take our lifeless spirits and restore them to health. We need to let Jesus pick us up and take us to His house.

III. **Jesus Has A Mission For Us** - A third spiritual truth we learn from the story of the demoniac is that Jesus has a mission for us.

LUK 8:38 But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying, 8:39 "Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

- A. **This man was saved by Jesus and then sent by Jesus.** There was something that Jesus needed him to do.

- B. You see once our lives are transformed, Jesus has a mission for us. He wants us to “return home and tell how much God has done for us.”
- C. We are to tell the story of God’s love and His ability to save the lost. Others need to know what Jesus can do for them and God has sent each of us to tell them. God could have commissioned angels to deliver this glorious message, but He chose us to deliver the message.
- D. **The Times-Reporter of New Philadelphia, Ohio**, reported in September 1985 a celebration at a New Orleans municipal pool. The party around the pool was held to celebrate the first summer in memory without a drowning at any New Orleans city pool. In honor of the occasion, two hundred people gathered, including one hundred certified lifeguards. As the party was breaking up and the four lifeguards on duty began to clear the pool, they found a fully dressed body in the deep end. They tried to revive Jerome Moody, thirty-one, but it was too late. He had drowned surrounded by lifeguards celebrating their successful season.
- E. I wonder how many around and near us are drowning in sin, loneliness, hurt, and doubt, while we, who could help them, do not realize it. We Christians have reason to celebrate, but our mission, as the old hymn says, is to “rescue the perishing.” And often they are right next to us.

Conclusion.

- I. **The Lord’s message today is this:** “If sin has a grip on our life..if sin has us down...Jesus can lift us up. He can transform our life. He can deliver us from the grip of Satan and provide us with forgiveness, peace, hope, and a new direction.
- II. Come now and prostrate yourself before the Lord. Be baptized for the remission of sins and He will lift you up. Come as we stand and sing.

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