

## **Sermon for Home Moravian Church**

**June 22nd, 2025**

**Sermon Title: "Permission to Stay Broken?"**

**Text:** *Luke 8:26–39*

**Theme:** Jesus disrupts not only personal demons but social systems that depend on brokenness to survive.

Luke 8:26-39

*Jesus casts out demons*

8:26 Then they arrived at the region of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.

8:27 As he stepped out on shore, a man from the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had not worn any clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs.

8:28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, shouting, 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,"

8:29 for 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.)

8:30 Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him.

8:31 They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

8:32 Now 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.

8:33 Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd stampeded down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

8:34 When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country.

8:35 Then 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 became frightened.

8:36 Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed.

8:37 Then the whole throng of people of the surrounding region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned.

8:38 The man from whom the demons had gone out begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying,

8:39 "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.

In our Gospel text for today we follow Jesus and his disciples as he is crossing the Sea of Galilee, into Gentile territory. This land, on the eastern shore of the Galilee, was populated by a group of people known as the Gerasenes (JERASEENES). And when Jesus and his disciples dock their boat and arrive, his feet barely touch the ground before he is confronted by a man. A man that society had seemingly written off. This man had been living in tombs without clothes, being rejected by his home community. The man was filled with many demons, "legion" to be precise. And because of his demons, his society chose that they could not fix him, and instead chose to isolate him. But Jesus does not isolate this man, Jesus heals him. He cleanses the demons from him, sends the demons into a herd of pigs that jump and drown in the Galilee.

Well this must be a good ending then right? Man has been healed, demons sent away, all should be good in this town. Well, that unfortunately was not the case. Instead of reacting to Jesus' miracle with celebration, the people react with fear. They see this man who was possessed by demons now being clothed and whole and in his right mind, and the people **ask Jesus to leave. Not because he failed, but because he had succeeded.**

We can't forget, this man's brokenness served a function in this society. The system needed someone to blame, and for this group of gentiles, it was this demon possessed man. His brokenness served as a social function that allowed for everyone else to say "well at least I'm not him". He carried the fears of the community, he absorbed the judgement from this society. He had become the scapegoat, quite literally pushed to the margins of society. He was cast out into the wilderness, because this society needed someone to carry its own demons. Friends let us tell the truth today, every society has people it chooses to live among the tombs. Even in our own societies, we have those who we let live out among the tombs. The unhoused, who become criminalized instead of cared for. Those experiencing mental illness, institutionalized instead of healed. The formerly incarcerated, defined by their past instead of welcomed into a future.

And the question this text forces to ask is, **Have we grown too comfortable with some people staying broken, because it keeps the system running smoothly?**

See the reason why the people are frustrated with Jesus after he heals this man is because he breaks the “solution” the system had created for itself. Jesus restores the man the community had cast away. But now there is a problem in the town.

**What do you do with someone you only knew how to fear?** This man is no longer controllable, no longer useful as a symbol for evil. And rather than just rethink their own assumptions and presuppositions, the town chooses fear. This isn't a story about one man, it is a story about what happens when **Christ confronts systems built on quiet suffering.**

Healing challenges us. It challenges all of us, especially those in power to relinquish comfort. And too often, we would rather maintain the status quo than face the disruption of true justice, which we know to be from Christ.

See friends, Jesus challenges us to not confuse silence with peace. He won't be complicit with systems that prefer for some people to be in chains. This story is not just about a man possessed by demons, it is a story about a society possessed by the need to control, contain, and condemn. But the savior refuses to leave it that way. Jesus came in this story to disrupt the false peace. To bring healing to those who were diminished, left behind, chained up. To speak life and love even when it can disrupt our own sense of comfort.

Something fascinating about this story is that when Jesus heals the man, he begs to follow Jesus. But Jesus does not tell him to follow him, he sends him home. Why? Because the people in the community needed to see what true healing looked like. They needed a living witness to the power that they wanted to send away. We who have been touched by Christ's liberating love are not meant to disappear into a private sense of remembrance, we are sent into the world as proof that freedom is possible.

Our worldview is meant to be challenged often, in ways that can be seemingly radical at first. For the gentiles in this community, they more than likely assumed the man they had chained would eventually die out there, forgotten by the community. His legacy would be nothing more than a man who was possessed by demons, the "worst of us." But instead of taking that role, the man takes on a different role. A man, touched and healed by our Savior Jesus Christ, who then goes back into the same community that cast him away.

Each of us at some point in our lives will be able to relate to the characters in this story. One of the most fascinating things about gospel stories is how relatable they truly can be. This story is no different. In our own life journey we might find ourselves like the people in the community, fearful of change that is coming our way. Fearful of the way that Christ moves in all people, even those we have personally deemed unworthy in our own lives. And we might relate with this broken man, possessed with demons. Who is shackled and chained, forgotten by community and family. But the important thing in this story is, after this man is healed, he goes

back into his community. And we do not know what happens to him beyond this story, but I like to imagine that he radically changes the perspective of those who turned him away.

Friends, this story reminds us that Christ's healing is never just personal. The healing of the Gerasene man wasn't just a moment of personal mercy—it was a challenge to a community that had grown comfortable with keeping someone broken for the sake of their own stability.

And if we're honest, we know how that works. We know what it's like to live in a world where brokenness becomes normalized. Where suffering is pushed to the edges, and peace is confused with quiet compliance. But Jesus refuses to leave people in tombs. Jesus heals and in doing so, he calls the healed *and the whole community* into transformation.

When Christ heals us, when he restores us from the places we've been shackled, silenced, and cast aside, he doesn't just call us into safety. He sends us back into a hurting world as witnesses. As proof that healing is possible. As proof that resurrection still happens.

So let us not be a people who ask Jesus to leave when his love gets uncomfortable. Let us not be a people that needs someone to stay broken so we can feel whole. Let us be a people who believe in healing enough to make room for it, make room for the healing nature of Christ's love.

**And if today you feel like the man among the tombs...forgotten, isolated, haunted by pain...hear this: Jesus sees you. He knows you. He crosses storms for you. And the chains that bind you are not stronger than the love that heals you.**

So go, go back into the world as witnesses of this liberating love. Be the living proof that no one is too far gone, no community too entrenched, no system too fixed, that Christ cannot bring freedom.

May we be bold in that truth.

May we be brave in that love.

And may we never settle for a world that asks anyone to stay broken.

**In the name of the Loving Christ, who breaks our chains and sends us back whole—Amen.**