

## **Wednesday Bible Study - November 13, 2013**

### **"Jesus' Day Off" - (Luke 8:26-39)**

Luke 8:26-39 – The account of our Lord's encounter with the demoniac from the graveyard in the country of the Garasenes.

Satan had created for this man a counterfeit "Eden" where he was self-sufficient in the filth of living among the dead.

There was no need for outside help or influence for this man; in his possessed state, he had no real idea of his own condition: he was living in his own "Eden", and he didn't need anyone. He was indeed naked and unashamed, just as Adam and Eve were. Today's culture is beginning to accept the same things.

So when he encountered Jesus, the demons in him recognized Him in His deity, and implored, "What do we have to do with each other; I beg you – do not torment me." But Jesus forced the demons out of the man.

We have the same lies the demoniac had believed being promulgated within our own culture now:

- Cleaned-up versions of the same tribalistic hedonism
- Unashamed nakedness and emphasis on the naked body being a good thing – the nudist mentality
- Worship at the feet of nature – radical environmentalism, even sometimes acknowledging God, but desiring independence from Him.
- Emphasis on our own power and ingenuity to solve our own problems and improve our own lot in life (We see a psychology that emphasizes that all problems are physical, and therefore have physical solutions, always ignoring any spiritual component).
- Emphasis on political solutions for societal problems, building our own "counterfeit Eden" ("We need more laws!"... "No, we need more freedom!")

As our culture continues to turn it's back on God, there are more lies that have increasing influence on it, just amplifying its expanding depravity. These include a morbid fascination with the dead. The demoniac encountered by Jesus undoubtedly shared this fascination, so we see nothing new under the sun when it comes to the sinfulness of mankind. One such example in our own society is a relatively recent obsession with "vampires":

- The "Twilight" series of movies (about vampires) has grossed about \$1.7 billion – just in the movies alone – not the books, T-shirt sales, etc. This equals the yearly gross domestic product of Spain! This is an industry – a satanic one at that. Incidentally, a Mormon is the creator of this series.
- The "vampire" industry promulgates the lie among our young people that they should aspire to false notions of immortality, apart from faith in Jesus Christ. It is a perverted mixture of death, sex, romance and adventure with "undead" heroes.

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These are all examples of the depth to which any culture will sink without being grounded in the Truth of God's Word.

But Jesus will conquer all of this. Not only does He conquer death, He conquers false religion as well.

False religion continues to influence our society as it grounds itself in nothing (therefore in anything). An example now in our culture is something called *Moral Therapeutic Deism*, which is being called Christianity.

### Moral Therapeutic Deism

1. Holds that there is a God who created the earth and ordered the creation and watches over humanity.
2. That God wants humanity to be "good", "fair", and to be "nice" to each other, as taught in the Bible and most other world religions.
3. That the central goal of life is to be happy, and to feel good about oneself.
4. That God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life, except when He is needed to solve a problem.
5. That "good people" go to heaven when they die.

There is a 2005 study of *Moral Therapeutic Deism* showing that it's central focus is not on repentance from sin, or living as servants of the Sovereign Divine, or building one's character through suffering while basking in God's love and grace. The study shows, rather that as *the dominant religion among U. S teenagers today*, the focus is on "feeling good, happy, secure, and at peace". It is about attaining subjective well-being, being able to solve problems, and getting along amiably with other people.

The "God" of *Moral Therapeutic Deism* is not demanding; he actually *can't be*, because his job is to simply solve our problems and to make people feel good.

So is this Christianity? Certainly not according to the Bible of Christianity. So, if it is true that in 2005 this is the dominant religion among teens, these people are now in their mid-twenties, and they vote, they are starting to make decisions that determine the direction of our society. And it is clear that this does not come from the Bible, and that this is a direct failure of the parents of these people, and of whatever churches they are attending. It is clear that the Bible is no longer important in enough churches in our land, or in the hearts of enough believers in our land.

Such a study 10 years earlier might have found the same results. This problem is a long time in the making... but *there is good news*.

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### The Good News:

The good news is simply this: that God has the perfect answer to all these satanic lies. In our passage in Luke 8, verses 28-33 show that though Jesus granted the demons permission to enter the pigs, *they themselves* would soon lose their newfound home by *themselves* driving the pigs into the lake, drowning them.

Jesus allows the demons a little more time to wreak havoc, not because He is gracious, although He is absolutely gracious, but because He has a bigger plan. He will use the folly and stupidity of these demons to expose the hearts of the people in the city of this Gerasene area.

Verses 35 and following show the response of these townspeople to the Grace of our Lord in the healing of this demon-possessed man.

The herdsmen who went to the townspeople to report this incident were not Gospel messengers. When the people come back to see for themselves, we don't see them in amazement, or showing gratitude for the healing of the man now sitting at the feet of Jesus who was just before a demon-crazed menace. They were instead *afraid*.

Why were they afraid? When you see the true God for what He is, and measure that against what is going on in your own life, you can come a bit undone. You have to make a decision at the moment you are facing God. "*Will I submit to His control, or will I cling to my own control?*" The idea of them losing control of their lives on that level terrified them.

What if God calls us to the mission field, for example? What if He wants us to do something *we don't want to do*? Will we submit, and respond to His Will, or will we ask Him to go away and leave us alone, as these Gerasenes did?

The Gerasenes were in an agrarian economy, but they were also raising pigs – in an area where pigs are forbidden as unclean animals. They were involved in an underground economy. Jesus faced them as God, and they could sense this, but it made them afraid. How might God view sneaking around selling pork where the dominant religions of the area view pork as unclean, where local laws forbid it? These pagans did not like how God might view this. God was testing the priorities of these people publicly. There was a much greater purpose here. Moreover, Jesus simply instructed the man, now clothed in his right mind, grateful for his salvation, to go back home and share this good news.

We should likewise hunger to tell others about how God has transformed us as well. We need to tell others about how God's redeeming of us is exactly zero of ourselves, and exactly 100% the Grace, the Work, and the Word of the Lord Jesus Christ! As our Lord commanded the grateful ex-demoniac, we're likewise asked to go home and tell all the people *the good news* – what great things Jesus has done for us.