**What is Your Name?**

**Luke 8:22-39**

**Key Verse: 30**

**“Jesus asked him, ‘What is your name?’ ‘Legion,’ he replied, because many demons had gone into him.”**

Through today’s passage, we will learn about Jesus who controlled nature and who drove out demons from a man at great cost. In other words, we can see how Jesus had the authority and power over the physical world and the spiritual world. At the same time, we can be amazed how Jesus wanted to restore one man who suffered from demon possession. To help him, Jesus asked a simple question, “What is your name?” Jesus wanted to help him to see his real self. He was a man who was helpless before the power of sin and unclean spirits. By God’s grace, Jesus restored him and became a witness of Jesus. I pray that through this message, we can come to Jesus – the Almighty God and let him be our Lord and ruler of our lives so that we can be restored as our true selves. That is why Jesus asks, “What is your name?”

1. **Who is this Jesus? (22-25)**

Let us look at verse 22. So far, Jesus had been preaching, teaching and healing in the region of Galilee. He drew large crowds to him. So doing this kind of work wasn’t easy. These days we have microphones, but in those days, Jesus used open areas and the beach to carry his voice. There were demanding people who were in dire need that Jesus had to constantly attend to one by one. It would seem that Jesus was so busy that it was very hard to take a break. To live such a life was meaningful but exhausting. So Jesus tells the disciples to go to the other side of the lake. And as soon as they set out, Jesus fell asleep. (23a)

Now to tell us how fatigued he was, the author Luke mentions that he was still asleep despite that they were in the middle of a terrible storm. Here we can see Jesus’ human nature. The Bible says that though Jesus is God, he came in human form. Philippians 2: 6-7 says “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.” So obviously Jesus was exposed to the same limitations as a human being. He ate, he slept, and he worked hard. He was also susceptible to weakness. And, in this sense, it was grace for us because Jesus could understand human beings very well. Hebrews 4:15 says, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.”

During this time, a squall came down on the lake. Since Galilee is located about -212 m (695 ft), below sea level. Because many mountains surrounded the lake, the the weather patterns would change unpredictably. A squall – which is a sudden storm of considerable magnitude came and overcame the boat. I don’t know if anyone of you saw the movie “White Squall” (1996). It is a story about a ship’s crew manned by teenagers and shepherded by its captain Christopher Sheldon. It describes how a storm struck the ship so quickly and with such force that the ship capsizes. Capt. Sheldon loses his wife and 4 of his crew in the process. Mr. Sheldon described the storm as this, “It was as if there was a giant hand who took hold of us. In 15 seconds, the Albatross [the ship] was on its side. In 60, it was filled with water. And then it was gone and the water was calm.” The point here, is not even the disciples, who many were experienced fishermen could not overcome this type of storm. They were in grave danger.

They frantically shook up Jesus from his sweet sleep. They said, “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!” (24a) And what happened? Jesus got up, rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. (24b) Jesus then asked them, “Where is your faith?” At this point the disciples were in fear and amazement. They asked one another, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.” Since tagging along with Jesus, they could experience miraculous powers of healing and who taught with great wisdom. However, they never saw the magnitude of Jesus’ power that they witnessed Jesus calm the storm by the word of his command. This tells us that Jesus was much more than a man. He displayed his power as the Creator God. In Genesis, God created the universe by his words. In John 1, he attests that through Jesus, all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. (John 1:3) God demonstrated his power to create something out of nothing. It shows Jesus’ divinity by having the power to control over the natural world. Who is Jesus? Who is he to me and to you? We have to go beyond our limited human understanding to realize that he is God Almighty himself.

Jesus also asks us, “Where is your faith?” Jesus knew that his disciples had given in to fear. However, they should have remembered that Jesus was with him in the boat. There are times in life when we encounter sudden storms of life. It is during these times when our faith is tested. I had a kind stepmother. She encouraged me to go to Catholic church and planted a spiritual desire in my heart. So when I expressed my desire to be baptised, the priest introduced me to a Catholic nun to study the Bible one to one. Then one day, I came home and saw my stepmother dead on the floor. She had a stroke in her brain and instantaneously had passed away. It was my first experience at death. But my Bible teacher taught me it was my first test of faith. Would I have resurrection faith? There are other kinds of storms. Failures at school. A job loss. Marriage problems. Intense sinful desires. All these point to our need to have faith in Jesus. “Where is your faith?” We have to remember that Jesus is with us. We need to come to overcome fear, but come to Jesus in prayer.

1. **My Name is Legion (26-39)**

Look at verse 26. “They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee.” If you look at a map, this region of Gerasa was Gentile territory. The disciples might have thought that, after a terrible storm, it was a chance to take a break and chill out. Unfortunately, as they had landed they had heard a shriek that came from the tombs and a man ran out to meet Jesus. Who was this man?

From verses 27 and 29, we learn a few things about him. He was alone; he did not wear any clothes nor did he live in a house. He lived in the tombs, the resting place of the dead. This man did not live by conscience and reason. He accepted to rebel against any conventional norms of society. He was a rebel without a cause. He felt free. But the more he lived without any inhibition, the more he craved. And the more he craved, the more restless he became. And the more restless he was, the more outrageous things he did in the community. The people of Gerasa did not know how to deal with this guy. They tried to give him principles to live by. But that did not work. They tried to chain him hand and foot and kept him under guard. And that did not work either. The man broke through them with supernatural strength. In the modern world, it would be most likely that he would label the man as insane. That is how many people would see it. In the modern world, people would tend to resolve problems related to the mind and the body. If there was a physical sickness, we can take medication. If we are without knowledge, we just Google it. But we tend to forget that man does not just equate itself by mind and body, but is also a soul. We have a spiritual nature. When we ignore the needs of our physical body, we suffer from health issues. When we feed our minds with all kinds of gossip and useless information, we become idiots. Likewise, when we ignore the soul - the immaterial part of our being, we do not know what to do with it. We become empty and try to find other means to satisfy it – which usually is expressed in a form of sin. In other words, we are likely to become the target of the work of demons also known as unclean spirits.

So we have to understand that there exists a spiritual world. The Bible teaches this and Jesus confirms this. Just as there is the Holy Spirit exists who counsels us and convicts of sin and of our forgiveness, there exists the forces of Satan (Eph 2:2) and of demons who oppose God and who want to destroy mankind.

Now, do we have anything to say about it? Yes, we have freewill of choice. However, as in any choice, we have the responsibility to bear its consequences. We can gauge this through our obedience. Romans 8:16 says that we are slaves to whom we obey – whether we are slaves to sin which leads to death, or to the Spirit which leads to righteousness. At first, I thought that this was a ridiculous statement. I believed in human freedom. But I learned that I could not control sin by my human power. I was ruled by it. I needed to come to God by the help of Jesus. There is no gray area here. It is black and white. Either we pledge our obedience to God, or to Satan; to be ruled by what the Spirit desires and what the sinful nature desire. And because Christians are belonging to Christ, they are engaged in spiritual warfare 24/7 between what the Spirit desires and by the work of unclean spirits.

Now when the demon-possessed man came to Jesus, he expressed contradictory behavior. He sought Jesus’ help, and the same time he expressed fear of judgement. Sometimes we too exhibit this kind of behavior. We want Jesus’ help, and at the same time we do not want to lose out the enjoyment of our sinful habits. Look at verse 28. “When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, ‘What do you want to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torture me!’” It wasn’t the man speaking. It was the demons in him that bowed before Jesus as the Lord and Judge. They were full of fear of condemnation. Why? Verse 31 states that they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss. In other words, this pointed to their eternal destruction in hell. (Rev 9:2) At this time, Jesus did not come as judge. Jesus came to this world first to free us from the captivity of our sin through his death on the cross. Still, Jesus will come again the second time, not as the Savior, but as the Judge of the living and the dead.

Even though Jesus commanded the demons to leave the man as he did with others, these demons weren’t willing to go. (29a) To help this man, Jesus asked him a question. Let us read verse 30 together. “Jesus asked him, ‘What is your name?’ ‘Legion,’ he replied, because many demons had gone into him.” Why did Jesus ask him for his name?

In Jewish history and in the Bible, a name is very important. It tells us about the person’s character. For example, God changed the father of our faith Abram, “A noble father” into Abraham “A father of many nations.” God’s vision was not for Abraham to have a small dream of being a good father, but to be a man who would bear spiritual influence for many peoples. David in the Bible was known to be a man after God’s heart. Names also bear reputation. If I said, “Lance Armstrong”, would he be of good or bad reputation? How about “Abraham Lincoln”? Likewise, God gave each of you a particular name. God gave each of you an identity and entrusted to each of you your very life. For what? It is for his good and wonderful purpose. (Eph 2:10)

From Jesus’ perspective, to help the demon-possessed man was to help him to see who he actually was. What if a doctor asked someone, “Where does it hurt?” and says, “I don’t know.” It would be difficult for the doctor to treat his patient. In the same way, Jesus wanted him to state his actual state of being before God. It was his confession before Jesus. The demon-possessed man answered, “Legion.” A legion in the Roman army consisted between 3000 to 6000 soldiers. In the previous passage you learned about Mary Magdelene. She suffered from 7 demons. (Luke 8:2) After she was made well, she was so grateful to Jesus that she wanted to serve him with her life along with other faithful women. Imagine how this man felt!

When Jesus asked, “What is your name?” it is to examine our inner selves and realize who we are and repent. We can have the name of “Pride”. It is very difficult to be humble in a world that says “Only the strong survive.” “Lust” – Young men and women seem to hook up so easily without any commitment. “Addict” - There are many young people who are addicted to drugs, alcohol, pornography, video games, etc. These are the things we testify that we were once before or going through now. Sometimes, I realize that such people fail to see who they are. One of the most difficult questions to answer was my pastor who asked me, “What kind of sinner were you?” I was stumped. Actually, at that time, my name was “Self-righteous Complainer”. I complained a lot. I gave many people a hard time. But that is another story. Jesus is asking you, “What is your name?” When we confess who we are before God, Jesus can help us and heal us. More than that, he assures us of our forgiveness. 1John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” To way to true freedom is through repentance in Christ.

Since the demons felt cornered and had nowhere to go, they made a proposition. A large herd of pigs were feeding there on the hillside. (32) The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission. (33) The symbolism of pigs is ironic because they were considered as unclean animals by the Jews. When the demons entered the herd, the pigs were robbed of the joy of life eating garbage and wallowing in the mud. They were so disturbed that the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. (33)

Look at verses 34-35. “When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, 35 and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus’ feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.” The people weren’t happy that the demon-possessed man had been cured. Rather, they were afraid that Jesus became a threat to the entire pork industry. I searched out the cost of a full grown pig which is about $225 to $1000. (I am not accounting for the feed.) So for a herd of 50 pigs, let’s say, they lost about an estimated up to $50,000. Recently, I learned that there is a breakout of a pig virus in Canada that could cost the Canadian pork industry tens of millions of dollars. Because these people felt threatened, the people had asked Jesus to leave. (36)

The point I want to get here is not about the cost, but how much Jesus was willing to sacrifice to help one soul. As a Bible-teaching / pastoring ministry, it costs a lot; not just in terms of money, but in investment in time, and especially there is a huge emotional cost. I have to give credit to many faithful leaders who really sacrifice their time with their families, to help one soul for Jesus’ namesake. We really have to appreciate our mentors and Bible teachers who are willing to follow Jesus this way. In Montreal, I was very moved by two Bible teachers to serve one family. The husband had a name “Gambler”. His wife had a difficult time and thought about divorcing him. But through their Bible teacher’s sacrifice and faithfulness to serve God’s word to them, the family were restored in faith in Jesus. They have 3 girls and are now expecting a boy very soon.

Before Jesus had left, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. (38) But Jesus rather gave him another direction. Let us read verse 39. “’Return home and tell how much God has done for you.’ So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.” The man became a living testimony of Jesus’ power and grace. Jesus and the disciples would return another time, and they welcomed him with open arms.

Here we saw that Jesus is the Creator God. But how he helped this one demon-possessed man was very moving. Although we seem insignificant compared to the awesomeness of the Almighty God, we learn that he is very concerned for us. He loves us and values us as precious souls. Jesus is asking each of us, “What is your name?” He wants us to see ourselves as we really are and turn to him in repentance. Then Jesus’ power can heal us to be restored as the kind of people God meant for us to be. We can then be living witnesses of Jesus Christ who heals us and we can testify about what he has done in our lives. Let us read verse 30 once more. “Jesus asked him, ‘What is your name?’ ‘Legion,’ he replied, because many demons had gone into him.”