

## **“Though Devils All the World Should Fill” Jesus Manifests His Divine Power Over Them.**

Text: Luke 8:27-39

1) In the Land of the Gadarenes

Suggested Hymns:

2) In the Days of Martin Luther

518, 330, 195, 199, 207

3) In Our Day

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 8:27–39, <sup>27</sup> *And when [Jesus] stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs.*

<sup>28</sup> *When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!”* <sup>29</sup> *For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness.*

<sup>30</sup> *Jesus asked him, saying, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” because many demons had entered him.* <sup>31</sup> *And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.* <sup>32</sup> *Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them.* <sup>33</sup> *Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.*

<sup>34</sup> *When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country.* <sup>35</sup> *Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.*

<sup>36</sup> *They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed.* <sup>37</sup> *Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned.*

*<sup>38</sup> Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup> “Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.” And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

We just sang,<sup>1</sup>

Though devils all the world should fill,  
All eager to devour us,  
We tremble not, we fear no ill,  
They shall not overpower us.  
This world's prince may still  
Scowl fierce as he will,  
He can harm us none;  
He's judged, for e'er undone;  
One little word can fell him.

The singing of these words remind us of the Reformation. Martin Luther was born on November 10, 1483. Under God, this man, in leading the Reformation, gave to the world an event which has done more to fashion the history of the modern world than anything else since the birth of Jesus Christ.

While it is true that the history of mankind, marred as it is by depravity and sin, has occasionally undergone some radical and often critical changes, yet the Lord Jesus Christ, our all-sufficient Saviour and Redeemer, has maintained His eternal and unchangeable qualities since the eternal period prior to the beginning of time.

The truth of Scripture: *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever”*<sup>2</sup> has never been disproved, and just as our Lord in essence is unchangeable, so also is His almighty power.

Our text is the familiar account of Jesus' miraculous healing of the Gadarene demoniac. Let us consider the following subject: *“Though Devils All the World*

*Should Fill,” Jesus Manifests His Divine Power Over Them.* May the Lord bless our meditation.

## 1. In The Land Of The Gadarenes

### The Devil Is The Deep-Seated Enemy Of Christ

The devil’s hatred of Christ dates back to that fateful day after the world’s creation when Satan failed in his attempt to overthrow God in the battle for heaven and his subsequent exclusion from eternal life. Of this the sacred writer states in Jude 6, *“And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.*

And again Scripture declares in 2 Peter 2:4, *“God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.* From these passages it is quite evident that, from the beginning, Jesus exercised His divine power over the devil and his demons.

Satan, however, was by no means content to acknowledge the supremacy of Christ — he wanted to seek vengeance. Since he could not overpower God, he dedicated himself to the overthrow of God’s creatures. His first vengeful attack was directed upon the highest and foremost of God’s earthly creatures, man, in the Garden of Eden.

Still not satisfied, the devil’s next major attempt at vengeance was his effort to nullify God’s plan of salvation and to overthrow the efficacy of the first Messianic promise,<sup>3</sup> and all other promises of the Messiah, by his direct attack on Jesus Christ Himself in the threefold temptation<sup>4</sup> of our Lord when He entered upon His ministry.

Even though Christ, with His exemplary use of Scripture, denounced and defeated the devil with His powerful *“It is written,”* Satan continued his numerous attacks on the Saviour during His ministry. This he did both directly and indirectly, through the snares set by the scribes, Pharisees, priests, etc., being the servants of hell.

However, the most severe attacks upon Christ came at the time of His Passion — in the Garden of Gethsemane, and especially when He was suspended

on Calvary's cross, where in our stead He was called upon to suffer the very tortures of hell in order to establish Himself as the Victor over Satan and hell.

### **The Devil Is The Firmly Established Enemy Of Man**

Having again failed in his efforts to overpower Christ, the devil continues his quest for vengeance upon man. Since man is God's prize handiwork, originally created in the image of God, and by faith in the blood atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, restored to the family of heaven as God's forgiven children, Satan will not rest in his enmity against God and man, so long as there is a believing child of God on the earth.

Hence he places all manner of obstacles in man's way to prevent him from being restored to the "image of God" through faith in Jesus Christ.

The example of our text shows with what brutish and fiendish power the devil attacks man. He robs him of his comforts and necessities of life, no clothing, no house, no home. He makes of this poor Gadarene a virtual "zombie" (mythically, the living-dead). Though physically alive, the demoniac prefers to make his abode with the dead.

### **The Forces of Hell Are Of Great Number**

Our text reveals that the demoniac was possessed by numerous demons, note the plural. In fact, the spokesman of Satan refers to himself as "Legion," *because many demons had entered him.*

### **The Devil Delights In Mischief And Destruction**

When Satan had caused Adam and Eve to fall, he likewise brought a curse upon all creation. At that time God said to Adam as we read in Genesis 3:17-19, *"Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': 'Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field.*

*<sup>19</sup> In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."*

In Rom. 8-19-22, we are told that all creatures, yes, the very earth itself, groans under the curse of sin and anxiously awaits deliverance from its bondage.

So again in our text we learn that when the devil could not “have” the man whom he had possessed, he was bent on destroying the swine. If he cannot hurt men in their bodies, then he seeks to hurt them by destroying their possessions, which sometimes proves to be an even greater temptation to draw people away from Christ. On this occasion, *the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked [Jesus] to depart from them.*

But why would Christ allow the demons to enter this herd of swine? Certainly not because He found pleasure in the devil’s mischief, and most assuredly not because He was willing and ready to make a compromise with Satan.

Rather, it was our Lord’s desire to show the whole country what mischief and destruction the devil is capable of doing, and what’s more, to show the entire countryside that the soul of one man is much more valuable than any amount of earthly possessions. For, as Jesus once said, we read in Matthew 16:26, <sup>26</sup> *For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*

### **The Devil Is Constantly At The Command And Under The Power Of The Lord Jesus**

While it is a fact that the devil and his demons must bow to the supreme will of Christ, our text shows further that they know it. No sooner did Christ appear on the scene than the demon cries out: *“What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!”*

Our text submits further proof of the fact that the demons must acknowledge Christ’s supremacy. <sup>31</sup> *And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.* Compare to Rev. 9:1-2 and Rev. 20:3 (abyss, or bottomless pit, is the same word used in our text, denoting the eternal abode of Satan and his evil angels).

Again, we read <sup>32</sup> *Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged [Jesus] that He would permit them to enter them. And [Jesus] permitted them.*

## **Once the Devil's Power Is Broken in Any Soul, That Person Returns to Jesus**

What joy to read in our text that, having been loosed from the scourge of demon possession, they *found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.*

While under the devil's spell, this poor man was ready to "fly in the face" of Jesus. Verse 28 tells us that "*he saw Jesus,*" he "*cried out*" (lit., yelled, shouted, roared) with a loud voice.

But, once freed of the devil's possession, he was calmly "*sitting at Jesus' feet,*" "*in his right mind,*" and eager to serve the Lord as our text says, <sup>38</sup> *Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged [Jesus] that he might be with Him.*

However, when Jesus showed him that he could render a greater service by staying in his own country and witnessing to the multitudes who had brazenly demanded that Jesus depart, we find this man ready and willing to obey his Saviour's bidding, *And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.*

### **2. In The Days Of Martin Luther**

What our text so pointedly shows us about the horde of hell and so gloriously reveals about the supremacy of the divine Christ, this certainly was manifested also in the life and times of Martin Luther.

Prior to the days of the Reformation, Satan, as the entrenched enemy of Christ, had used every trick at his command to bring to naught the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Church, which He had established.

The devil had succeeded in keeping the Bible hidden from the people. He had caused the Church to degenerate into a ritualistic formalism rather than be the dispenser of the means of grace. Salvation by grace through faith and the forgiveness of sins, wrought by the precious blood of Christ, had been reduced to a disgraceful form of commercial traffic, for example - penances, and the indulgences sold by John Tetzel.

The devil, moreover, had asserted his power over man, God's precious handiwork. The spiritual darkness which surrounded mankind at that time was

comparable to the darkness of the tomb, the dwelling place of the demon-possessed man in our text. The manner in which Satan had used the “Church” of that day to strip the people of their spiritual heritage and reduce them to a point of spiritual nakedness and starvation, is likewise exemplified by the condition of the man in our text.

This dark day in the history of the Church likewise shows that the forces of hell were out in great number. It made no difference whether in Rome, Germany, or elsewhere, the powerful forces of hell were at work everywhere. Luther was aware of this, for he stated prior to his departure to appear at the Diet of Worms: *“Though there be as many devils in Worms as tiles on the housetops,”* yet he must go there in defence of God’s truth. Later he wrote in his famous Battle Hymn of the Reformation: *Though devils all the world should fill All eager to devour us.*

Yes, hell was out in full force at the time of the Reformation.

### **Subject To Christ**

Today, as we look back upon that history-making event, we can see how the hand of God was leading His Church. It soon became evident that the devil was subject to the power of the omnipotent Christ. When Martin Luther took his famous stand before the Diet in defence of God’s Word — *“Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise; God help me. Amen”* — the power of the Lord Jesus Christ was publicly asserting itself over the forces of hell.

The return of the “open Bible” likewise gave the Church an indestructible weapon with which to overpower Satan. Of this Luther sang, as we do today, *“One little word can fell him.”*

### **Hellish Mischief And Destruction**

But note how the old evil Foe had made a plaything of the Church and the holy ministry. Even after Christ had again established His supremacy through Luther’s preaching of the Truth, we find Satan turning the minds of men to fanaticism. The “enthusiasm” of some turned to the destroying of Christian symbols and pictures in what they felt was a “righteous destruction” in churches and cathedrals. Others directed their efforts to ruthless killing and bloodshed in the Thirty Years’ War.

However, also in the days of Luther, once the power of Satan over his possessed was broken, a normal, healthy, and God-pleasing situation resulted; and though Satan has since launched numerous counterattacks, yet under the blessings of Almighty God the Church of the Reformation has marched on to glorious victory.

### 3. In Our Day

As Satan sees the end of his days approaching, as the deep-rooted enemy of Christ and of men, he is busier today than ever before to overthrow the Lord Jesus Christ, our only Hope for eternal salvation.

#### Modern Mischief

Today Satan has entered the ranks of the Church by means of the trickery of Modernism. As always he is practising deception. Under the guise of glorifying Jesus Christ as the greatest man that ever lived; the most excellent example for man to follow; the greatest teacher of virtue and morality that the world has ever known, etc., Satan has succeeded in denuding much of the Church of the essential and fundamental truths so necessary for salvation — such truths, as even the devil in our text was forced to confess, i.e., that Jesus is the “*Son of God Most High God*”; that Jesus is the Victor over sin, death, and the devil; that Jesus by His vicarious atonement on Calvary’s cross and by His glorious resurrection from the dead, and has brought “*life and immortality to light*”<sup>5</sup> through the Gospel.

Also note how Satan has succeeded in dividing Christ’s Church into very many denominations, sects, isms, and schisms by appealing to the pride of human reason, thus causing many to forsake the plain and simple truths of God’s holy Word and instead “*teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.*”<sup>6</sup>

Notice, too, that the numerical strength of hell is just as formidable as ever. What is more, Satan’s forces never seem to be divided in their hell-bent purposes. The minions of hell are today actively engaged in an all-out struggle against the souls of men everywhere, either by keeping them in the “tomb darkness” of paganism or by dividing the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ into many contending factions and sects.

Oh, how the devil delights in mischief and destruction on every hand! His hellish possession of the hearts of men keeps the world in a continuous state of



political strife and warfare. He causes the nations of the world to think in terms of spending billions of dollars for armament and weapons of destruction, whereas only a partial amount of this same cost, wisely directed toward the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, would bring peace instead of war; happiness instead of fear; love in place of suspicion and hatred; salvation instead of eternal destruction.

Furthermore, Satan causes people to think in terms of national security through man-made weapons rather than eternal security through the more powerful weapon, “the sword of the Spirit,” which is the Word of God.

### **Christ, The Son Of God Is Still Supreme**

For us, and for all the children of God, there remains this glorious assurance: in spite of the great havoc and heartache wreaked by the legions of hell, the fact remains that they are still under the command of, and directed by, the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Saviour’s promise: *“The gates of hell shall not prevail”* against His Church,<sup>7</sup> has to this day never been revoked by Him, nor has it been disproved by the events of history. His gracious assurance *“All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth”*<sup>8</sup> is just as certain and efficacious today as it was at the time He spoke these words prior to His visible departure from the earth.

And so we thank God that today as always, once the yoke of Satan is broken, the soul of man becomes the grateful and ardent servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. When at the time of your conversion the Holy Spirit rescued you from the bondage of hell, He also made it possible for you, not only to sit at Jesus’ feet (regular church attendance; regular participation in the Lord’s Supper; daily prayer and Bible study, etc.), but, like the man in our text, the Lord Jesus immediately sends you out to join the spiritual army which is striving vigorously to destroy the fiendish forces of hell.

You, my friends, are pictured by the man of our text. You have been relieved of devil possession by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to you He says today: *“Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.”*

The words of Luther’s hymn ring out loud and clear today as always:

The Word shall stand despite all foes—  
No thanks they for it merit—  
For God is with us, and bestows  
His gifts and Holy Spirit.  
And take they our life,  
Goods, fame, child, and wife:  
Though these all be gone,  
Yet have our foes not won;  
The kingdom ours remaineth. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Hymn 195 v3

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 13:8

<sup>3</sup> Gen. 3:15

<sup>4</sup> Luke 4:1-13

<sup>5</sup> 2 Tim 1:10

<sup>6</sup> Matt 15:9

<sup>7</sup> Matt 16:18

<sup>8</sup> Matt 28:18