

A Rescuing God

Matthew 8:28-34

King of Kings! (Gospel of Matthew Series)

Prepared by: Matthew S. Black

Sunday, February 23, 2014, 10:30am at Living Hope Church of Roselle, Illinois

“We declare, upon Scriptural authority, that the human will is so desperately set on mischief, so depraved, and so inclined to everything that is evil, and so disinclined to everything that is good, that without the powerful, su-pernatural, irresistible influence of the Holy Spirit, no human will ever be constrained towards Christ.”

- CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

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Announcements:

1. Baby Shower Committee Members: Ladies, if you would like to help with planning and setting up the baby showers please see Julie Moffat or Stephany Alexander.
2. Next week's baby shower: All ladies and young ladies are invited to a baby shower on Sat., March 1, 11am-1pm, to celebrate Nick and Angela Gouwens's baby girl. Please bring an appetizer or dessert to the shower.
3. Life Groups today for the Mitchells, Cariyadils, Klikas', and the Reids will take place after the service. All visitors are invited to join us!
4. Last week we received a cash offer of \$300,000 for our 7020 Barrington Road property. This is only the church facility, not the parsonage. Please direct any questions you may have to any of the elders. We are planning on having a congregational vote via paper ballot next Sunday, March 2 after the morning service. Please be in prayer for this important possibility.

 Open your Bible to **Matthew 8:28-34**. We are continuing in a series through the Sermon on the Mount entitled: “King of kings.” This morning we are looking a message entitled: “A Rescuing God.”

Today we are going to learn that “Jesus possesses absolute authority in the world and warrants absolute allegiance from the world.”¹ Last week we saw that Jesus has absolute authority over nature. He is the Creator and sustainer of all things. Today we are going to see that Jesus decisively overthrews the powers of the supernatural world (of darkness and demons).

¹ David Platt.

What we are going to find out today is that we are great sinners and we need a great Savior.

Reading of Holy Scripture

Matthew 8:28–34, "And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. 29 And behold, they cried out, “What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?” 30 Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. 31 And the demons begged him, saying, “If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs.” 32 And he said to them, “Go.” So they came out and went into the pigs, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters. 33 The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, especially what had happened to the demon-possessed men. 34 And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region."

Outline

Today are going to see Christ in His glorious power and authority in two ways:

- Jesus controls the powers of **nature** (Matt. 8:23-27).
- Jesus overthrows the powers of **darkness** (Matt. 8:28-34).

I. **God rescues us out of the darkest places in life (Matt. 8:28-29).**

Now Morning

After the miraculous stilling of the storm, Jesus and His disciples continued across the Sea of Galilee **to the other side**. By now it was daylight and the group of boats (see Mark 4:36) landed in **the country of the Gadarenes**.

Two Demon Possessed Men

Matthew 8:28, "And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way."

Mark says of one of the men, in **Mark 5:3-5**, "Who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: 4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him. 5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones."

Jesus' Power to Change People

If we knew more about the power of Christ to change, we'd be maniacs in evangelism. Christ prefers the most hopeless cases to show how easily He can change a life.

Mark 5:9, Jesus asked one of these demoniacs, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many."

Jesus has the power to change lives! To prove this, The Apostle Matthew wants us to zero in on the man who is known as Legion, the man who was possessed with demons. A Roman legion was 6000 men. Here is a man with 6000 devils. You need to keep in mind the context of this particular Scripture. We have just studied in the 4th chapter about Jesus calming a storm on the sea. Now, the Lord is going to calm a storm in a human heart. It's a miracle when Jesus calms a storm on the sea. It is a far greater miracle when Jesus calms the storm in the heart and the life of an individual.

No One Could Help These Men

Here is a man that no one could help. His family couldn't help him. He could not help himself. But when he saw Christ, he found someone greater than all.

Mark 5:5, “And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.”

Spiritually Blind

Like all men, these men were blind spiritually, and they could do nothing to help themselves. John Newton was once asked about his hymn, *Amazing Grace*, “What do you mean you were once blind and can now see?” Newton said this:

“Men by nature are stark blind with respect to [Gospel] light; by grace the eyes of the understanding are opened....Neither education, endeavors, nor arguments, can open the eyes of the blind. It is God alone, who at first caused light to shine out of darkness, who can shine into our hearts...”

—John Newton

Demon-possessed simply means to be demonized, to be under the control of a demonic spirit, without regard to the kind or degree of control. Demonization may be defined as a condition in which one or more demons gains control over a human being. **Luke 8:27** says of this man: “For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs.”

Normally, people who are influenced by the evil one are not so obvious. C. S. Lewis said in his book *The Screwtape Letters*, “Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one--the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.”

The Demons Speak, Trembling

Matthew 8:29, “And behold, they cried out, “What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?”

Mark reports that one of the men “ran up and bowed down before Him” (5:6). The term carries the idea of profound awe and respect. Demons hate and loathe everything about God, yet they are powerless to do anything but bow down before Him. They give an account to God. Every knee will bow.

Christ Has Come to Overthrow the Powers of Darkness

Remember **1 John 3:8**, “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.”

Demons are Accountable

The demons acknowledged that they knew there was a divinely appointed **time**, not yet come, when He would indeed judge them and punish them with eternal damnation. Their eschatology, like the rest of their theology, was factually correct. As James tells us, “the demons also believe, and tremble” (**James 2:19**). They shudder because their belief is that of recognition but not acceptance, and they fully realize the consequence of rejecting God.

The demons knew they were not destined for judgment the Last Day, and they therefore wondered why Christ now had dealings with them. It was much too early for their scheduled **time of torment**, and yet they sensed that Jesus was about to interrupt and destroy their present evil work. ²

II. God rescues us with the most **dynamic power (Matt. 8:30-32).**

Casting Out the Demons

Matthew 8:30-31, “Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. 31 And the demons begged him, saying, “If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs.””

Luke says “they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss” (**Luke 8:31**).³

The request of the demons seems bizarre, and we are not told why they asked to be sent **into the heard of swine**. Perhaps they thought the Lord had changed His timetable for judgment and would otherwise immediately throw them into the great abyss. Even inhabiting pigs would be immeasurably better than that. Because **swine** were the most unclean of all unclean animals to the Jews, perhaps the demons thought Jesus would not care if the demons took control of them. Or, by inhabiting and then destroying the pigs, perhaps they could cause the pigs’ owners and others in the area to turn against Jesus.

Whatever the reason, the demons knew that they were no longer allowed to inhabit these men’s bodies and harass them.

Dynamic Power

Look at the dynamic power of Christ. Remember the ministry of Christ is a glimpse of what we are going to see at His Second Coming. He has all authority to overthrow the powers of darkness!

Jesus Overthrows the Powers of Darkness

God has disarmed His enemies. **Colossians 2:13–15**, “you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”

² Ibid.

³ Boice, J. M. (2001). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 141). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Isaiah 54:17, “no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper...”

The Destruction of the Pigs / Protection of the Men

Matthew 8:32, “And he said to them, “Go.” So they came out and went into the pigs, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters.”

Many people wonder why Jesus would allow so many animals, even unclean pigs, to be destroyed just to cater to the bizarre request of a bunch of demons. Whatever the reason, the souls of the two possessed men were of infinitely greater value than the two thousand animals, and Jesus did not hesitate to permit such a relatively small sacrifice to be made on the men’s behalf.

Matthew’s purpose in reporting this story was to demonstrate Jesus’ authority and power over Satan and his forces.

Illustration: I heard about a little boy one time who had heard about the devil in Sunday School. He came home a little worried about the devil. He said, "Daddy, is the devil stronger than I am?" Daddy said, "Well, yes, son, I think he probably is." The little boy said, "Daddy, is the devil stronger than you are?" Daddy said, "Well, yes, son, I think he probably is." The little boy said, "Daddy, is the devil stronger than Jesus?" Daddy said, "Oh, no, son, the devil isn't stronger than Jesus." The little boy said, "Hot dog, I'm not scared of the devil."

Explanation: We must get it out of our minds that the devil and God are somehow equal. They are not! The devil is a little dog, a little runt in God’s sight. When you see the devil and God together in Scripture, the devil is always asking God for permission to do something. He asks God can he test Job. Jesus says to Peter, “Satan has asked permission of me to sift you like wheat”.

1. You cannot fight the devil! He is much more powerful than you. He can send 6000 demons to put you in bondage!
 - Anger, Shouting, Rage...
 - Fear, Anxiety
 - Addictions...
 - Pornography...
 - Marital conflict...
 - Jealousy and Bitterness toward others...

You say, “I wish I could stop this.” I want you to see by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, each one was changed. Only the Person and Work of Jesus Christ can change you. He and He alone can change you.

2. One thing that strikes me is that Jesus had preserved this man’s life even to this point. Those swine were immediately killed by the demons. They apparently did not have permission to kill this man.

Clothed and Sitting in His Right Mind

Mark 5:15, “And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.”

The pigs’ mass suicide proved that Jesus had indeed cast the demons out of the men. Further evidence, which the **herdsmen** and the others discovered when they returned to the scene, was that one of the men—and presumably the other as well—was clothed and sat in his right mind at Jesus’ feet (Luke 8:35; Mark 5:15).

Consider Jesus Perfect Record with Hopeless Cases

God is the God of hopeless cases.

Think about **Manasseh**. He worshipped all the host of heaven and served them and built high places, even put idols in the house of the Lord. He was cruel and offered his children to pass through the fire of the Moloch god—he closed his ears to his little one’s screams for mercy. He used witchcraft and used wizards. He did much to provoke the Lord to anger. His thirst for evil was limitless as he continued in his path of utterly ruining himself. But you will remember that one day the Lord dealt with Manasseh. He intervened dramatically in the life of Manasseh. He brought him to affliction to this scorner. Manasseh sought the Lord and humbled himself before God, and God answered him. One who seemed beyond redemption was rescued. Is there someone here you think you are beyond redemption? Someone in your life?

Let me tell you about **Rahab the Harlot**. She was not only a Gentile, but she was a home wrecker—a prostitute. Let’s not soften this one. Yet through faith she was received by our merciful God.

What about **Saul of Tarsus**? By his own admission he was the “chief of sinners”. He was a blasphemer of Christ, and he harmed Christians and sought to kill them. He was of the same blood thirsty crowd that put Jesus to death. He was there at Stephen’s stoning. Can one like this be saved? Even when he came to be saved, the Christians did not trust him because his reputation was one of a blood thirsty destroyer of anyone who believed in Christ. But Saul saw the light.

Jesus Triumphed Over the Powers of Demons

Listen, Jesus came to overthrow the powers of darkness. **Colossians 2:15** – as the Cross, Jesus “disarmed the [demonic] rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”

Remember Jesus’ commission to Paul was to: “turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God” (**Acts 26:18**).

III. God rescues us so that we might **rescue others (Matt. 8:33-34; Mark 5:18-20).**

Matthew 8:33–34, “The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, especially what had happened to the demon-possessed men. 34 And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.”

Mark 5:18–20, “As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. 19 And he did not permit him but said to him, ‘Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.’ 20 And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.”

Not Just Justified But Adopted, God Takes Off His Judicial Robe

Here is a man that wants to tell the world what Christ has done for him. Here is a man that is forgiven! But he’s not just forgiven, he is loved!

We often rejoice in the fact that God with His judicial robe on has pronounced us “righteous” and justified on the merits of His Son. We ought to praise Him for that. We often still think of God with His robe on. We are glad for justification. But God has done something more! God has pronounced us justified! But it’s as if He calls us into His inner chambers. He takes the robe off. He embraces us. He cusps your face with His hands and looks into your eyes. He says, “You are my child! I love you. I will never abandon you! You are clean. You are safe. You are forgiven, and you are MINE!” He’s not only justified us, He has adopted us as His own children. He is no longer our judge. He is our Father!

Don’t be surprised when the world won’t want to hear it! Mark 5:15–17, “And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. 16 And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. 17 And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region.”

The People Were Angry and Scared

The people of the **city** (probably Gadera) did not even give Jesus the reluctant reverence shown by the demons. They wanted COMFORT OF THEIR PIG INDUSTRY instead of **CHRIST**. They did not seem the least interested in finding out who He was or why He had come to their area. They wanted nothing to do with Him, and **entreated Him to depart from their region**. They had at first simply come out “to see what it was that had happened,” but when “they came to Jesus and observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had the ‘legion’; ... they became frightened” (Mark 5:14–15). They were not angry or resentful but scared.

Unholy People in the Presence of a Holy God

When unholy men come face-to-face with the holy God, they are terrified. Again we are reminded that when Isaiah “saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted,” he exclaimed, “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (Isa. 6:1, 5). After Peter witnessed Jesus’ miraculous provision of fish that nearly swamped two fishing boats, “he fell down at Jesus’ feet, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord’ ” (Luke 5:8).

God Calls the Demoniac to be a Missionary

When we are delivered, we’d like to rest with Jesus. **Mark 5:18**, “As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him.”

In verse 18 this man expresses his desire to go with Jesus. Isn't that what we all would like? We'd like to get saved and then experience the Second Coming. We'd love to immediately go to be in Heaven.

But Jesus would have His Name be famous. Look at what He tells this changed man. It's what he tells you too. **Mark 5:19** – “And he did not permit him but said to him, “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.””

A Different Response

In great contrast to the attitude of those people, one of the men who had been demon-possessed begged Jesus “that he might accompany Him” (**Mark 5:18**). He was so grateful to Jesus for deliverance and so drawn to Him in love and adoration that he could not bear to be separated from Him. But Jesus had other plans for the man, and “He did not let him, but He said to him, ‘Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you’ ” (**Mark 5:19**). Jesus sent the man back to his own people – quite probably the very people who had asked Jesus to leave-to testify to them of the Lord's love and mercy.

A Ten City Tour

The Scripture says in **Mark 5:20**-“ And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled”. Decapolis **meant the ten cities**. He turned those ten cities into ten bells where he rang out the praises of Jesus.

Can you imagine Dear old Legion's testimony? "Dear friends, you all know I was a wild man, but a few days ago I met a man named Jesus and he cast the devil out of me and filled me with His Spirit and he has called me to preach His gospel. The rest of my life I'm going to spend my days telling everybody what good things the Lord hath done for me."

Conclusion

Christ has power over disease, disaster, death, and even demons. Paul said in **Colossians 1:13–14**, “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Do you know that could happen to you this morning? You could go out of this building able to tell the world what Jesus has done for you.

You say, “I'd like to have my life changed”. “I wish the wife wouldn't nag me as much”. “If only I had a change of boss”. You think if you could change everything around you and then your life would be different.

You are mistaken. Change must come from within by meeting with Jesus and surrendering all to Him. I could take you out this morning and buy you the car of your dreams and you wouldn't be satisfied. You know why? Because the need you have in your life has nothing to do with external things. Your need is a spiritual renewal with Jesus Christ. He alone has the POWER!

Words of Napoleon Bonaparte

“I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne,

and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creation of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him.”