

The Mind of Christ - Lesson 109

June 4, 2021

Welcome to another edition of “**The Mind of Christ**”. We are making our way through the life of Christ; everything Jesus did and said so that we can understand how He thinks. If we can understand how He thinks, perhaps we can become *like Him*. We are following A. T. Robertson’s “Harmony of the Gospels” and he has divided up the life of Christ into sections.

We are on **Section 65** and the title of this section is “**In Crossing The Lake Jesus Stills the Tempest**”. Our reading will come from **Matthew 8:18, 23-27**. Let’s read that first, and then we’ll read the accounts in Mark and in Luke. We’re reading from the New American Standard Bible because it is a very literal translation of the Bible and it’s a very excellent study Bible, so I would commend it to you. Before I forget, if you are joining us for the first time, you can go to our website at <https://www.centralsarasota.org/> where you can find links to all the things we have been doing for at least, over a year. You can find the links to The Mind of Christ studies that we’ve been doing every week. Let’s begin to read:

Matthew 8:18, 23-27

¹⁸ “Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, and He gave orders to depart to the other side.” Then starting in verse 23 the Bible says,

²³ “When He got into the boat His disciples followed Him. ²⁴ And behold, there arose a *great storm* in the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but He Himself was asleep. ²⁵ And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing!” ²⁶ He said to them, “Why are you timid, you men of little faith?” Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm. ²⁷ The men Marveled saying, “What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”

Over in **Mark 4:35-41** is the same story but slightly different words.

³⁵ And on that day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us go over to the other side.” ³⁶ And leaving the multitude, they took Him along with them just as He was in the boat; and the other boats were with Him. ³⁷ And there arose a *fierce gale* of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. ³⁸ And He Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they awoke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” ³⁹ And being aroused, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. ⁴⁰ And He said to them, “Why are so timid? How is it that you have no faith?”

⁴¹ And they became very much afraid and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

In **Luke 8:22-25** we have the account again, the same story but slightly different words.

²² Now it came about on one of those days that He and His disciples got into a boat, and He said to them, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.” And they launched out. ²³ But as they were sailing along He fell asleep; and a fierce gale of wind descended upon the lake, and they began to be swamped and to be in danger. ²⁴ And they came to Him and they woke Him up, saying, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” Being aroused He rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm. ²⁵ And He said to them, “Where is your faith?” And they were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, “Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?”

As you can see, the stories are the same event but there are different wordings in each one of them. It is likely Matthew is the only one of these three who was actually in the boat with Him. Matthew says, was the crossing was the occasion when Jesus saw a crowd around Him. So, when the crowd began to gather around Him, that's when He suggested they go across the lake. They must have been pressing in too much. But in **Matthew 13:2**, if the crossing actually follows the parable section, He was already *in* a boat because He had been teaching, remember, 'from a boat' and so it is possible that He was already *in* the boat when the crowd was pressing in. Maybe the crowd was beginning to get into the water; maybe they were actually walking into the water.

Mark says, 'On that day, when evening had come', so it's getting dark after a long day of teaching from the boat 'pulpit'. He used the boat as a pulpit.

Luke says, 'Now it came about on 'one of those days' that He and His disciples got into a boat'. There is no real context here so Luke is just descriptive, and I'm sure he's less descriptive and perhaps less aware of the immediate context of the story. As a side note, it's interesting to me that a Scribe comes to Jesus offering to 'follow Jesus wherever he goes.' This is interesting to compare with **Matthew 13:52** about ... "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple ..." A. T. Robertson contextually connects the two ... Just a side note.

All agree that Jesus directs His disciples to 'go to the other side'. Assuming He was near Capernaum, where would the "other side" be? Perhaps Gattera, on the south east side. This is what Robertson says. This would be the longest route across this lake. It would be several miles for them to make this passage.

Mark adds that there were "other boats" with Him. So were they all in one boat? If so, there would have been at least thirteen men in the boat. Or did others follow Him as well ... other disciples, perhaps? **Mark** says they took Him "along with them"; like Jesus 'hitched' a ride, I guess you might say. So, it seems to be:

1. At night
2. After a long day of teaching
3. With a small fleet of boats carrying disciples
4. Crossing from North to South East

This sets the stage for the events that follow.

Matthew says 'He gave orders to go to the other side'. **Mark** and **Luke** quote Him saying, "let us go over to the other side" and **Luke** adds 'other side of the lake'. **Matthew** says that He '*commanded*' them. This is from (2753) *keleuo*, (κελευω) meaning to order, or to give a direct command. In **Matthew 14:19** Jesus ordered the multitudes to recline on the grass (And ordering the crowds to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish...). In **Matthew 14:28** (Peter responded and said to Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.") I don't want to make too much of it here but it seems that Jesus is seen as One who is in charge; in authority. But **Matthew** adds that when He got into the boat, *they followed*. He commanded and led, and they followed.

Mark says they "took Him along" with them. **Luke** merely says He and his disciples got into the boat and they launched out. There are no contradictions; but it's interesting the way the different writers paint the picture.

Luke says that they were “sailing” along. The word here for “sail”, if I can put it into a transliteration it would be “pleonton” (4126 to pass). The sail was up and a fierce gale (as it’s called) took over. It’s a storm, a tempest, maybe even a squall that came up, a driving wind and rain. **Matthew** uses the word “seismos” (4578 σεισμος) meaning gale; it could even mean an earthquake, commotion, it’s something seismic as a tempest or even a tornado. So that word is not very specific as to the type of activity.

It says that the waves were **breaching** over the boat; it was filling up with water. **Matthew** says the boat was “covered with the waves”. **Luke** says that they were beginning to be swamped and to be in danger. The situation was getting desperate, in other words. Some of the disciples were experienced seamen, fishermen, and accustomed to these storms. I would imagine the sail came down quickly so as to not be ripped. Remember, there were other boats filled with disciples going across the lake.

Matthew says, “**but He Himself was asleep.**” **Mark** says, “**He was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.**” The stern is the back of the boat. **Luke** says “**He fell asleep**”. He was obviously tired from the day. This shows His humanity. We surmise that the sleep was ‘deep’ since He was not disturbed by the storm.

But **what follows here is to be looked at carefully** in light of our walk through the world and the things that cause stress and fear; Jesus’ reaction to the situation as opposed to the disciples’ reaction to the situation. **Matthew** says, “Save us, Lord. We are perishing.” **Mark** says, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” **Luke** says, “Master. Master. we are perishing!” **Well, there are three different appeals here: “Master”, “Teacher” and “Lord”.** Three different designations for Jesus and **all of them are accurate.** And perhaps there were different disciples who were using different designations for Him on this occasion.

And there are three different appeals! One is “Save us!” The second is “Do You not care?” Then there is finally a statement of fact, “We’re perishing!” So it recognizes, all of these statements recognize His power. They question perhaps His goodness, and they also are facing the fact that they are in peril. The fact that they recognize His power but they perhaps question His goodness is a tension that is in their statements. In other words, **if** You are truly powerful, do you *care* enough ... are you *good* enough ... to *save* us on this occasion?

This is a common condition. **We are perishing.** The idea of perishing is (622) “apollumi” (απολλυμι) meaning here is ‘to destroy fully’, ‘to die’, and ‘to bring to naught’. **They thought the boat would be swamped and that they would be washed into the lake and drown.** It would be the “end” of them, and the end of Jesus’ ministry, if they were actually thinking that! Were they even thinking in terms of this being the end of this ministry ... or were they simply thinking this is the end of our life?

The story illustrates a couple of things about human nature. When a person or a group are faced with a life and death threat:

1. A tension is created between power and goodness.
2. Our focus goes to self-preservation, away from the more important agendas at play ... in this case, the plan of God to save the world through Jesus and the message of the apostles.

Now, I don't know if they had been with Him long enough to understand how critical it was that Jesus not die by drowning in a lake, and it was critical that the apostles not die by drowning in a lake. *They had a work to do!*

It is no concern that there are three different statements recorded as probably all were shouting to Jesus in the confusion of the night. All kinds of things were being said to get Jesus' attention. ***One, at least, wondered why Jesus wasn't just as caught up in the chaos and drama as they were. How could He sleep at a time like this?***

Why does their drama have to become ***His drama***, especially because He knows:

1. He can and will calm the storm.
2. They cannot possibly perish on that sea that night. God has a bigger plan that will supersede anything that is happening that night.

But the struggle of the apostles is classic. ***If God is powerful, and they believe He was or is powerful, then does He really care? Why does God sleep while we are perishing?*** Obviously, ***what seems like danger to us*** is not so dangerous to God. He doesn't get nearly as excited as we do in the same situation.

The three accounts report Jesus' words just a little differently. **Matthew** says, ***“Why are you timid, you men of little faith?”*** **Mark** says, ***“Why are you so timid? How is it you have no faith?”*** **Luke** simply says, ***“Where is your faith?”*** Also, **Matthew** records that He rebuked the storm **after** He said it. **Mark** and **Luke** have Him rebuking the storm first and then speaking to the apostles.

The idea of **timid** (1169) is from “deilos” (δειλος). It means fearful or cowardly. **Revelation 21:8** says that these (the cowardly) will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. In **2 Timothy 1:7** it says, “for God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and of love and discipline. So, what causes us to be so timid? The easy answer in this context is ***fear of death***, but that ***is*** the point. What is the full context, and if they had understood it, would they have had a different reaction? See Hebrews 2 about the fear of death. ***When we ride the rides at the fair and we feel a sense of fear, it is mitigated by knowing that the ride is designed to thrill, and not to kill.*** What if the disciples had known this, and had sat back and enjoyed the ride? If Jonah had known the outcome he would have rode out the storm in the fish. So many stories in the Bible are about people in different circumstances whose outcomes are good, ***but the person going through it just can't see it, or just does not trust God in the midst of it.***

Would it have been reasonable for the disciples to know this storm could not be the end of the story, or of Jesus' story? Maybe, but they displayed timidity up to and including the resurrection and beyond, until the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them. Is fear or timidity ever appropriate for a Christian; other than ‘fear of God’? Is it like worry and anxiety, natural but not appropriate; like sexual urges natural but to be managed in view of faith? Running away, turning back, looking back, failing to face even the most terrifying of prospects in order to advance the Kingdom of heaven; we certainly are tested to see what our faith is made of (James 1, or the story of Abraham and Isaac ... the testing of Abraham's faith). What is my test right now, and how am I doing? What's ***your*** test right now and how are ***you*** doing?

There are three remarks about the faith of the disciples; first of all; *little* faith, *no* faith and *missing* faith. Could Jesus have been addressing different ones? Could the gospel writer have been selective in which statement he recorded based on the perspective of the apostles? **Matthew** says “little”, **Mark** says “no” and **Luke** says “missing”. I’m not sure how significant this is, but I do believe the fact that Jesus focused on their “faith” is significant. *Faith is such a key in times of crisis*. A crisis is always about a sense of *helplessness* or *powerlessness*.

In these times we have a huge need to trust someone or something. Trust is essentially, believing the person you are trusting, and that he is able to do something to make me okay to return me to homeostasis. But for this to actually work I have to understand a very basic truth. I am more than ‘this worldly’ or ‘human’. *I am a spiritual being having a human experience; not a human being having a spiritual experience*. So, true homeostasis in life is not being ‘okay’ or ‘perfect’ physically, financially or even emotionally. Though God knows we need these things to be okay.

Spiritually, we need to understand **3 John verse 2**, “Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.” Soul here (5590) is the word “*psuche*” (ψυχη). It means breath, spirit, vitality; not unique to man. This is not “pneuma” (πνευμα), but there does seem to be a link between body and spirit in “*psuche*”. When this link prospers, there can be a sense of well-being that takes place in both regions; body and spirit, the temporal and the eternal. We are integrated beings. We have to live and function in the real world of storms that arouse the nerves and the brains and the physical sensors.

Faith operates in the regions beyond the “seen and the unseen”. Faith bridges the gap and intervenes in the nerves to create a sense of calm and peace and assurance, but faith has to be about real help; faith in a real God who does real things in real time in real circumstances. This is outside of ourselves but speaks profoundly to our hearts.

Well, Jesus addresses the disciple’s faith and He also addresses the sea and the storm. He commands hearts, and he commands circumstances. **Matthew** says, “Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea and it became perfectly calm.” **Mark** says, “Being aroused, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, ‘Hush. Be still.’ And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.” **Luke** says, “And being aroused, he rebuked the wind and the surging waves and they stopped and it became calm.”

Well, Jesus was aroused, He arose, He rebuked and He made – which makes a good sermon illustration on the road to change. First of all, you need to be aroused, then you need to arise, and then you need to rebuke. Until we are aroused from our sleep, we will not arise or get up to rebuke the threat. The primary word is rebuked in this sentence. (It’s 2008), “epitimao”, (επιτιμαω) and means to set a value upon, to assess a penalty, to allege as a crimination, to reprove, to chide or censure, to rebuke, to reprimand, to admonish strongly, or to enjoin strictly. This word is used **Matthew 19:13**, when the disciples rebuked the people bringing the little children coming to Jesus. It’s also used in **Luke 23:40** then thief rebuked his fellow thief for mocking Jesus on the cross. In **Matthew 12:16** He enjoined them strictly not to make known ‘who He was’. He warned them. In **Luke 17:3** “If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.” Perhaps a good sermon.

What needs rebuking? It is not for us to know how miracles are done. If thinking about what happens when a weather system which is very complicated can go from surging waves to perfect calm in a second is really amazing. Low or high pressure systems, currents, tides, fullness of the moon etc. all make it what it is. And when I was on the Sea of Galilee, it was very windy and the lake was rough. For a person to say a word like Mark said; He said “Hush, be still”, and the forces of nature immediately obey is amazing! To rebuke a person and they change is one thing; but to rebuke forces that have no free will is another. It seems Jesus did not even stop to think about what to do! He just did it! And did He seem at least a little aggravated by the disciples’ lack of faith?

The disciple’s response: **Matthew** said they marveled saying, “what kind of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?” **Mark** says “They became very much afraid with the statement”, and **Luke** says they were fearful and amazed saying, “Who then is this that He commands even the winds and the water to obey Him?” A mixture of wonder and fear is a natural and honest approach to the works of God. His actions should promote that within us. The commanding of nature which has ‘no will’ is not more persuasion, it is raw power. Nature has no volition. So, *how can something with no will ... obey?*

Obey (5219) is the word, “hupakouo” (υπακουω) means to hear under, to listen attentively, to heed, or to conform to a command of authority, to hearken, applying it to things or unclean spirits or children as in obeying parents’ or slaves obeying their masters or wives obeying their husbands, or to obey God, or to obey the gospel, or a spiritual leader, or to obey one’s passions leading to slavery. There are all kinds of senses in which this word “obey” is used in Scripture. It seems in the scheme of things, *the battle is for compliance, submission, control, or obedience*. Jesus is demonstrating that ultimate power and ability to bring about obedience is *within Him*. If He can gain obedience from the wind and the sea then ultimately He can do so *in us*, either through persuasion or through force. Thus, in **Philippians 2:10-11**, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. You may question whether voluntarily or by the force of God’s will ... it is going to happen. So *obedience does not have to be voluntary to be “obedience”*. Every power that enslaves, Jesus has easily overpowered, whether it’s nature or disease or death or evil spirits. He speaks and things happen. When will we learn that such is why one responds to Jesus and should be one of faith, believing He is greater and more powerful than death, disease, demons, destructive natural systems, despots, dispositions which will all bow before Jesus? All pay homage to Him. He overcomes and He brings everything under His feet ruling with an iron scepter.

So, that is section 65 about the storm and the calming of the waves. I have another section here. It is not quite as long but I want to go ahead and cover it today. It is section 66, “Beyond the Lake Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demoniac”. So we will be looking at **Matthew 8:28-34**. Let’s read that:

Matthew 8:28-34

²⁸ And when He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so exceedingly violent that no one could pass by the road. ²⁹ And beyond, they cried out saying, “What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”

³⁰ And now there was at a distance a herd of many swine feeding. ³¹ And the demons began to entreat Him, saying, “If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.” ³² And He said to them, “Be gone!” And they came out and went into the swine, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters. ³³ And the herdsmen ran away, and went to the city and reported everything, including the incident of the demoniacs. ³⁴ And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they entreated Him to leave their region.

We also have the story in **Mark 5:1-20** and I don't think I'm going to read that one. It's also found in **Luke 8:26-39**. I'll be referring to the differences in the accounts but I'll let you read the account in **Mark 5:1-20 and Luke 8:26-39**.

Well, Mark and Luke are the most detailed, but focus on one man, while Matthew says that there were two men. The explanation seems to be that the one man who had a legion of demons was so notorious that he overshadowed the other who may have received deliverance first, and fled before Jesus encountered the second man. **However**, on second look, **Matthew** has them coming out together and described as violent and speaking together to Jesus unless they refer to the ‘demons’ and not to the men who are speaking. If this is the case, then one man may have been delivered first and fled before the other with ‘Legion’ was dealt with. Nevertheless, that's the three different accounts.

The names seem different. **Matthew** says the Gadarenes and **Mark** and **Luke** say the Gerasenes. Most believe the event took place in the Gergesa. In their day it would be Khersa (Gerasa) in the country of the Gergesenes. Gadara was about the largest and the best known city. So Gadarenes were people of a city in the country of the Gergesenes. Gergesa was a small village so you can see the confusion among the descriptive terms that describe this area where they were ... some a broader picture and some very focused.

The description of the man, the primary is the demoniac included:

1. He lived among the tombs
2. He was extremely violent
3. He was unable to be bound even with chains. He broke them to pieces.
4. No one was strong enough to subdue him.
5. He cried out night and day in the tombs and surrounding mountains. And I've been there. I have been in that area and seen where all of this took place.
6. He gashed himself with stones (self-mutilation).
7. He didn't wear clothing for a long time.
8. He didn't live in a house, certainly a very intimidating person comparable to one who is very mentally ill who may have violent tendencies.

Mark says that when the man saw Jesus, he ran up to Him and he bowed down before Him. The demons are described as having a knowledge of who Jesus is. They are often told to shut up and not tell. **James 2:19** says that the demons believe and tremble and they know that they are no match for Jesus' power, and they show fear-based respect for Jesus.

The Kingdom of Heaven is manifest in these confrontations with demonic powers as it is in the context of nature, sin, sickness, death and violent forceful humans or even Satan himself. **Luke** also says that the man fell before Jesus. He also cried out.

Can you imagine the fear in the disciples? They had a pretty stressful night with no sleep and now being confronted by a very violent demon-possessed pair with a reputation of crazy behavior. They were naked too and they were even near the graveyard. Can you imagine the scene? This is the stuff of Halloween movies.

The first question of the possessed was, **Matthew** says, “What do we have to do with you, Son of God?” **Mark** says, “What do I have to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? **Luke** says the same thing.

Well, the idea of “**Most High God**” has a very, very rich history. If we go back to the days of Melchizedek, he was a priest of the **Most High God (Genesis 14:18 and Hebrews 7:1)**. Then there was Balaam, the prophet who wanted to prophecy against Israel but he was not allowed to. He is one who hears God; who hears the **Most High God (Numbers 24:16)**. Then David was one who was anointed by the **Most High God**. Then there are various references in the Psalms ... Psalm 7, Psalm 46, Psalm 50, 57, 73, 78, and 107. All of these have references. In fact, I can tell you as I’m going through the Old Testament with a more detailed study of this, that the **Most High God** is found in many, many places in the Old Testament. It’s in the story of the three Hebrew children in **Daniel 3:26**. Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the **Most High God** in Daniel Chapter 4. Daniel acknowledged the **Most High God** in Chapter **5:18** and **21** of his book. Then in **Luke 1:32** regarding Jesus there is a reference to the **Most High God**. Mary was overshadowed by the power of acknowledged the **Most High God** in **Luke 1:35**; and even the servant girl in the book of Acts identified Paul as a servant of the **Most High God**. Now, note it has some connection with the gentiles; a designation of a supreme god as opposed to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The demons seem to ask Jesus, what is Your business with us? Why can’t You just leave us alone? These demons were not looking for any communication with Jesus. They did not doubt His power. They did not present any threat to Him. They knew that they were outgunned and that they could not intimidate Him.

The second question according to **Matthew** is, “Have You come here to torment us before the time?” **Mark** says, “I implore you by God, do not torment me.” It wasn’t really a question. **Luke** says, “I beg you. Do not torment me.”

There are two thoughts here. One, the demons are destined to be tormented. Number two, there is a designated time for this to happen. This idea of torment comes from a word (928) “basanizo” (βασανίζω). But it’s a word that applies to lapis. Lapis was a stone, “Lapis Lydian” or a touchstone. It was a stone that was used to help identify other stones. It means to examine, or to scrutinize, or to try either by words or by torture, to afflict torment, to be tossed, agitated by the waves.

It’s a stone found in Lydia which, when applied to metals, was thought to indicate any alloy mixed with them. It was used in the trial of metals. In a saying, certain stones which are somewhat rough, can be used to determine other metals such as gold by rubbing them together or marking; the softer stone which contains precious metals like gold, silver or copper etc. will leave a mark on the touchstone indicating it is there and the quality of the metal. Then the stone can be melted down separating out the metals.

It seems these demons did not want to go through such a stringent process. It was torture to them to be revealed and called out. They were used to being in control; they had a very strong reaction to Jesus and His power.

In **Mark 5:6-7**, Mark says, “⁶ Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; ⁷ and shouting with a loud voice, he said, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore (or adjure) You by God, do not torment me!” This is the demon that is adjuring Jesus by God. This term, (3726) adjure or implore is a term that is used to describe begging, and it’s associated with “horkos” (ορκος), an oath, that which is solemnly promised, a vow. It means to adjure, to conjure, it’s a strong appeal. It’s begging accompanied by an oath. In **Matthew 14:7-9** *Herod promised with an oath to give his daughter-in-law Salome whatever she wanted if she would dance for him.* In **Matthew 26:72** Peter swore an oath saying that ‘he did not know Jesus’. And again he denied it, with an oath: “I do not know the man.” This is the force of what this demon is asking Jesus. In **Acts 19:13** some Jews were trying to exorcise demons by invoking an oath by Jesus’ name. It didn’t work.

So, it seems to me that these demons were very bold to use the name of God in their oath to Jesus, but it also shows how desperate they were to avoid the coming torture.

It is used by God Himself in **Acts 2:30**, **Hebrews 6:16-17**, where it says that God swore an oath *by Himself*. So what is the nature of this torture that they wanted to avoid? **Luke 8:31** says, “And they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss. The word is found seven times in the New Testament ... here, and **Romans 10:7** used in contrast to Heaven, the extremes of which one might go to get Jesus which was unnecessary. We don’t need to go up to heaven, and we don’t need to go down to the abyss. Jesus has come of His own free will, but says ‘to bring Christ up from the dead’; the abyss is the place of the dead. The rest are found in the book of **Revelation**; **Revelation 9:11**, the angel of the *abyss* or Abaddon or Apollyon; **Revelation 11:7** the beast comes out of the *abyss* to make war with the two witnesses; in **Revelation 17:8** the beast who comes out of the *abyss* was, is not and about to come up out of it, and was to go to destruction; in **Revelation 20:1** the key to the *abyss* is with an angel; in **Revelation 20:3**, Satan is thrown in and shut up for 1,000 years so that he cannot deceive the nations. So the *abyss* seems to be some detention place making it impossible to roam freely. Now if it is true that Satan is in the *abyss* now so that he cannot deceive the nations, then he is running his operation, if you will, from prison. And I put a lot of question marks after that as to what is really going on with Satan.

The demons are also indicating that they know a time of torture is coming, but like us, they do not know when. Both in **Mark** and **Luke** there is an interesting indication. In **Mark 5:8** for He had been saying to him, “come out of the man, you unclean spirit”. In **Luke 8:29** it says, “For he had been commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man”. The picture I get is that Jesus, on entering the scene, is in the process of commanding the unclean spirits to come out, but it had not responded, and this is troubling. Was this like the story of the healing of the blind who was healed in stages (**Mark 8:22-25**)? Was this similar to the disciples experience with failing to exorcise a spirit from a child (**Mark 9:18-29**)? This spirit comes out by prayer and fasting.

Did Jesus inquire as to the name of the spirit because it was not working, and finding out that there were many spirits within him? Legion, it says. So when He found out there were many spirits, did Jesus increase His power to cast them out? Did Jesus cast out of the demons from the first man, but He needed more time to do so from the second man? I'm not sure any of these make sense to me, but I'm not sure why it is stated as it is, either.

But the next thing Jesus does is to ask about the name, "Legion, for we are many" the demon says. A body of soldiers with different numbers during the time of Augustus was maybe something like 6,826 men. That included 6,000 soldiers and 720 horsemen. Wow! Could there have been that many demons in one man? The previous references about a house swept clean and the demons bring seven more powerful than himself seemed nothing in comparison with how many demons were in this man. Jesus could have been up against as many as nearly 7,000 demons! Does this not give a new respect for Jesus' power? Why did so many indwell one man? If demons are the spirits of evil men then could this have been the residence of some evil city destroyed by God; perhaps even the men of Sodom and Gomorrah?

In **Mark 5:10** the demons' first request was 'not to be sent out of the country'. Well, why? What difference would it make to them? Did Satan want this large force here? Would they be in trouble with their boss if they departed out of the country, if Satan had commanded them to be there? But, to where? Did these demons come and go individually and indwell others? Were these demons Satan's base in the region to be present wherever Jesus went? There seems to be a lot of people possessed in places Jesus went – especially in Galilee.

The large herd of swine on the mountain was the focus of legion. So, animals can also be demon possessed. Does it affect swine the way it affected men? They drowned themselves in the lake. Now this presents other questions. Why would they beg to go into the pigs and then drown the pigs? When the pigs died, where did the demons go? Or did they drown the pigs. Did Jesus do it so that they would have to leave? **Mark** tells us that there were about 2,000 swine, enough for each pig to have three or four demons each! The text just says, "the demons entered the swine". It does not say the demons made them rush into the sea. Even if the pigs had not died that day, they were only a temporary solution because they were going to be slaughtered eventually for human consumption. They do not serve any other purpose. And this is all very curious, but what does it tell us about *the mind of Jesus*?

He's very powerful. He can be persuaded by demons when it doesn't countermand his purposes. He may have granted stupid request to show the demons that they had not really thought this thing through. The herdsmen go and they report this to the town. What a story this must have been! The townspeople came to see what happened and what did they see?

They saw the demoniac sitting in his right mind. And they saw the pigs floating in the lake. They saw the effects of Jesus' presence. Jesus puts people back together, but the townspeople had learned to live with a crazy man nearby. But many of them had lost their economic investment that day.

The desire to see Jesus depart from their region said that they valued 2,000 pigs more than they did one or two demon-possessed men. Again, Jesus is revealing priorities. The Pharisees value traditions above people. The Gadarenes valued money above people.

I wonder if they pulled the pigs out, dressed them out for their meat, or would they have considered them unclean even by pagan standards. They may have been too freaked out to do that but did they leave them to decompose in the lake? That would be a smelly mess. Or did they bury them; that would be a task; or burn them? Jesus left a big mess for those people and yet a man or two sitting in their right mind and able to give glory to God. This puts the outcome into perspective.

Luke 8:37 tells us that the people were gripped with fear. Grippped, (4912) from “sunecho” (συνεχω) meaning to hold together, to compress, to arrest, compel, perplex even, to afflict, and to preoccupy. In **Acts 7:57** it means ‘to cover one’s ears’ or ‘a shut up and besieged city’ (**Luke 19:43**). In **2 Corinthians 5:14**, that we are “constrained” by the love of God or we’re “gripped” by love. Or it can mean to ‘be seized by a disease’ as in **Mark 4:24** and **Luke 4:38** and **Acts 28:8**. It is something that grabs a hold of you and won’t let go.

The word fear (5401) is “phobos” (φοβος). It is alarm, or fright, or terror. There was something more than economic concerns. *These folks did not know how to take Jesus*. He was very scary to them. They had learned to live with the demoniac. That’s fear. But this new fear was crazy to them. See how much the perspective was skewed; amazing that people can be more afraid of Jesus than they are the maniacs.

Peter said a similar thing in Luke 5. After the catch of fish, he said, “Get away from me because I am a sinful man!” Were they afraid because they knew that they were in the midst of Holiness? And it could have been a superstitious kind of fear. We fear what we do not understand.

Mark and **Luke** report that the response of this ‘had been’ demoniac was *he wanted to come with Jesus*. He was ready to get into the boat. I wonder if anyone brought him some clothes by now. *Who wouldn’t want to go with Jesus?* A man who had lived like he did was not concerned about where he was going to sleep or where he might be expected to go. He was stripped to nothing. Perhaps this is a good picture of how a person is prepared for discipleship.

Jesus did something out of character. He did not tell the man to keep the miracle quiet. He told him to go and tell. **Mark** says, “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.” **Luke** says, “Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you.”

Mark’s word here means “to announce” or “to bring word” or “to bring a message”. It’s a fairly common term. **Luke’s** word is a little different. It means “to relay it fully”, do describe, to show and tell, to lead through, to recount. There’s no significant difference between the two. One is just simply more specific than the other. **Mark** says that he proclaimed his story throughout the Decapolis ... the ten cities, and **Luke** says that the whole city heard the word. Everyone marveled at the story he told, and what a story he had.

What does this event tell us about Jesus and His mind?

First of all Jesus was fearless, it seems. He demonstrated it in the boat and in the graveyard.

Number two, Jesus was powerful. Just as the storm was no match, so in this story He was able to overpower this powerful human being and also 7,000 demons. No problem.

Number three, Jesus was aware of God's timing. It has time for Him to die, and it wasn't time to put the demons in the abyss.

The next thing we learn is Jesus seems indifferent to the economic impact of His decision to put the demons into the pigs. I'm not sure how to take this, but Jesus didn't seem to care that He destroyed the economy of that little region.

Next is Jesus was merciful to the man, or to the men, that He cast the demons out of.

Jesus was decisive in what to do. Jesus didn't have to think about it, He just did it and was decisive.

Also, Jesus understood the *spiritual war* that was there. He was not surprised by it.

By the way, **could this have led some to think about Him taking on the Romans' 7,000 troops? Maybe this helped to set Jesus up to be taken by force to become a king, because they heard the story;** that if He could take on 7,000 demons, Maybe He could take on a legion of Roman soldiers.

Well, that's that story! The next story will be section 67, "The Return and the Healing of Jairus' Daughter and the Woman Who Only Touched Christ's Garment". So that will be the next story that we will take on.

Thank you for joining us today. I know these two sections were a little bit long but we're trying to cover this material in a timely way. So, thank you for joining us. Go to our website at <https://www.centralsarasota.org/> and you will find a lot of our resources that are available to you.

God bless and take care.