

Proper 7C – FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
June 20, a.D. 2010
Luke 8: 26 – 39

Who can believe such a story? There is so much in this narrative that goes beyond our busy daily routines of drive through coffee and fast food, that it leaves us with mouths gaping open and incredulous minds that cannot wrap themselves around it. Did it happen this way? Can this be true?

A demon-possessed man comes to Jesus who sends the many demons into a herd of swine that promptly runs off of a cliff into the sea and everyone in the city except one, asked Jesus to leave town because of what their eyes have just witnessed and the great fear that possessed their hearts.

Doesn't this story go way beyond daily thoughts of what's for supper and where's the extra money to offset the HST? What do demons, suicidal pigs and Jesus have to do with me? EVERYTHING! Not because I am at the center of everything but because everything in this narrative points to Jesus who is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last.

We are the ones confronted with the uncomfortable humbling that there is something greater and deeper than what our simple minds could ever understand. The culture we find ourselves in clashes with God as does the culture of each generation. But ours is so bold that it dismisses and ignores anything that doesn't make sense and doesn't fit in.

Are there demons? Do they exist? Is it safe to say that the demons we face are the ones inside that tell us we are never good enough? Is it too much to handle that many demons can take control of a person like a puppet on strings, driving him to live naked in a cemetery?

Can Jesus order these legions of demons into a herd of swine? Why should they listen to Him? Is it safe to say that our daily contact with pigs is the neatly wrapped pork in plastic in the supermarket meat department? Is it too much to handle that demons can take control of a herd of pigs and fatally drive them off a cliff?

There is something deeper here than stretching the limits of our imagination! If all this is true, then what if this same Jesus stands before us today? The contact we have

with Him is through his living words. His words have authority over legions of demons, pigs and over me. How could I ignore His words when powerful demons obey them? There is something greater than my little world, with my finite limits and self-centered thoughts? The same powerful Word that brought galaxies into being creating the cosmos, clashes with my puny world view. The same powerful Word that created every angelic being and all that is in the world, is the same Word of God that orders my daily life and cannot be broken.

If all this is true, then I too like the people in the city of the Gerasenes, must ask Jesus to leave, for it is too much to handle. This Jesus is scary. Powerful, unpredictable, and He could cause me to lose all that I have worked so hard to get in this life. This Jesus could take my herds away, everything I was counting on to live. This Jesus could humiliate me with my friends and family if I make it known that His words are over me. Is He worth it if He takes my good name and reputation away?

Repent. For you fail to see your uncleanness before a holy God. We make up excuses and build ourselves up with our own imaginary goodness and expect that God should honour our ways and our thoughts something which the demons wanted of Jesus. The demons know what Jesus means to them! He has destroyed them. They are no match for them. They know that their end is coming when they will be cast into the Abyss. They ask Jesus to postpone it for a while and let them have some fun with the pigs.

Pigs, gentiles and demons are all unclean. Do you think that you are cleaner, purer and holier? Do you think you can fool God with your secret thoughts and shameful deeds, the way you trick other people every day?

Our only hope is not in our own hands. We are powerless against the demonic forces that would have us commit suicide both spiritually and physically. The demons came to Jesus and knew they were overmatched. The demons thought they could prolong their joyride by going from the man into the herd of swine, but they still ended up going over the cliff into an abyss.

Jesus knows our weakness and how helpless we are. Still He loves us. He has broken the power of demons and He has saved you from yourself. He is greater than all, but his power is overcome by his love for you. He has taken your uncleanness and

washed you clean by his blood. He has covered your nakedness shame. He clothed you with his own holiness when He baptized you. And now he invites you to sit at His feet and hear his words. Powerful words. Words that declare you innocent and holy. Words that are no match for demons and words that drive the world away in fear. But they are words that declare you loved and cherished by the One True God who has done it all for you!