

06/22/25 - Luke 8:22-39 - "The Disruptive Presence of Christ"

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Date: 22 June 2025

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[0 : 00] Please turn with me to Luke chapter 8, verses 22-39. And they ceased, and there was a calm.

He said to them, Where is your faith? And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and water? And they obey him. Then they sailed to the country of Gerasenes, which is opposite of Galilee. When Jesus had stepped out onto land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs.

When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me. For he had commanded the unclean spirits to come out of the man. For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.

[1 : 23] Jesus then asked him, What is your name? And he said, Legion, for many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these.

So he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned. When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country.

Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.

And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear.

So he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to your home and declare how much God has done for you.

[2 : 27] And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him. This is God's word. Thanks be to God. If you are new with us, we are in the Gospel of Luke.

And it will be very beneficial if you have your Bible open to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 8, what was just read. We have Bibles available in most of the chairs.

And feel free, if you actually don't own a copy of the Bible, go ahead and take that one home. And we would love for you to have your own copy of that. And basically what we go through is just verse by verse and passage by passage to have God speak to us according to His word.

And one man who did this very prominently, very well, is James S. Stewart. He's the great Scottish professor and preacher of New Testament at the University of Edinburgh.

And he once wrote in his 1946 classic, preaching classic to his students, titled Heralds of God. He says, Christianity is not vague, theistic emotion.

[3 : 46] It is the entrance of a force into history that awakened the world like a thousand trumpets. Christianity is not vague, theistic emotion.

It is the entrance of a force into history that awakened the world like a thousand trumpets.

What a line. I want this guy teaching me. Stewart was not interested in what's very common in churches today.

Soft, sentimental, faith, squishy, fluffy Jesus, right? That warmed hearts but left lives unchanged. He was calling the church back to something explosive. Something that came in like a thousand trumpets.

[4 : 57] Not poetry, but power. Not inspiration, but transformation.

Vague, theistic emotion. Think about that phrase. This is what most people settle for. Nice sounding morals.

Vague spirituality, not to step on your toes too much. And a God that somehow we can control. But Stewart reminds us that true Christianity is not merely believed.

It crashes into the world. Crashes into the world. Turning over tables and turning the world upside down.

That is Christianity. Christianity. If you think back in the Roman Empire, which the text was very directed to, and whom Jesus was confronting, Christianity didn't whisper its way into Rome.

[6 : 09] It trumpeted its way in. And the trumpet is utterly disruptive. That same trumpet blast echoes through Luke chapter 8, where Jesus speaks into these two storms today.

One storm being outside and one storm being within. And he silences both with a sovereign, authoritative command.

And what's God's chosen instrument for this trumpeted transformation? Presence of Jesus and his word.

The presence of Jesus and his word. Spoken word. Spirit filled. We're divine, authoritative word.

And so, as I echo these words today in our assembly, I'm not here to embellish the text, to add to it. I'm not here to edit it. Surely not here to take away from it and dilute it of what Jesus said. I'm simply a herald echoing the same authoritative message for us today.

[7 : 31] And the result of that word, if you truly hear today, your world will be turned upside down.

Your world potentially can be turned upside down if you hear today.

It will disrupt you. So, as we enter into these two consecutive stories, each revealing Jesus Christ's absolute power, one over the storm outside and the other within, and then we'll close on the aftermath.

We have three sections today. What I believe we'll see towards the end, something to reinforce throughout this week, is that the one who calms the seas also calms the soul.

The sermon title today is The Disruptive Presence of Christ. And as we go into our time, let's pray for the Holy Spirit to help us right now to understand His Word, to heed His Word.

And let's be so daring today to ask God, through His Holy Spirit, to disrupt our lives. Let's pray.

[8 : 52] Lord, we thank You for the text today. We know that You desire to speak to us according to Your Word, not opinion, not sentimental fluffiness, but the sharp Word of power that transforms lives, that comes in like a thousand trumpets.

Help us to heed that today. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. The first section today is the storm that tested their faith.

And we see this from verse 22 through 25. It begins with a peaceful scene.

Jesus wants to make it across Galilee. He decides to get in a boat. He says, let's go across to the other side. And now, about this time, they've been getting chased and ran down by crowds.

The day is running thin. And they cast off from the shore. And you could imagine the calm, the still, the glassy, undisturbed waters that lay ahead of them.

[10 : 18] The sound of the flapping sail in the wind. And if I'm putting you to sleep right now, thinking about that, that might just be the point.

The disciples exhale. Finally, they get away from the crowd and Jesus decides to take a nap. Peaceful. He curls up in the stern on a cushion and falls fast asleep.

And then, who would have thought, without warning, a sudden storm came swooping in in Galilee. And Luke calls this, in Greek, a hurricane of wind. Matthew uses seismos, meaning an earthquake. earthquake. This was an earthquake of a storm. They felt creation shaking underneath that boat. It was as if the sea was convulsing beneath them.

[11 : 30] And if you could imagine, I don't know if you've watched any cool action-packed storm movies on open water. I can't remember offhand which one I'm thinking of, but I see the waves just towering over the boat and just wondering if this one's going to throw you over.

And these mountains of waves around, the boat dipping and then climbing. And they're in serious danger here.

Literal danger. As Luke records, they were drowning. The boat was going down. And Jesus has taken a nap.

No melatonin needed. While the boat shudders and panic spreads, Jesus is sleeping deeply amid the storm.

Unshaken by it. Untouched by it. And it should be interesting to us in verse 24, the storm couldn't wake him, but unbelief surely did.

[12:47] They went and woke him in verse 24 saying, Master, Master, we're dying. We're, this is it. You're taking a nap? Are you nuts?

Help us. Disciples woke him feeling that sense of desperate forgottenness in this storm.

Forgottenness in this storm.

Jesus rose in verse 24 and he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves and they rebuked the wind and the raging waves and they ceased like that.

And there was calm. Jesus rose, he spoke, and instantly the storm ceased. The wind stopped, the sea stilled.

Imagine standing on the shore saying, hey Harry, look at that. What just happened? It's sunny. I mean, imagine that.

[13:59] Silence fell and this was not gradual but immediate. Luke, also with Mark and with the Gospel of Matthew, they all testify to the suddenness of this calm.

The word Jesus used to rebuke here in the language is be muzzled, which reveals his authority over creation to muzzle even the wind and the waves.

the frantic disciples who have been gradually coming to faith in Jesus realized at the instance of this immediate change around them.

This isn't merely any teacher that's in this boat. A disruptive presence and a disruptive word.

Jesus asked in verse 25 the one million dollar question. Where is your faith?

[15:12] This isn't out of condemnation in its context, but it's to awaken memory, conviction, to remind them of something.

These men had seen his power, they've seen his compassion, they've seen his miracles, but in the midst of panic they forgot.

How many of us today are being asked this million dollar question? where is your faith?

Perhaps you're in such a storm, maybe it's a relationship that's falling apart, could be with a friend, or maybe even your own spouse, as your marriage is just kind of crumbling.

Maybe it's a storm of career unraveling, all of a sudden your boss goes nuts and he decides to fire you. Maybe it's your body failing in pain or disease or maybe a soul drowning.

[16:39] the point is you didn't ask for it and you can't calm it. And all the while doesn't it feel like Jesus is sleeping?

I don't want you to miss this. Jesus Christ initiated this trip. Their peril that they sensed was authored by Jesus.

The one who can rebuke the wind can send the wind. And he knew what was coming. This is heaven's choreography to reveal Jesus Christ and produce faith.

This wasn't a detour. This wasn't an accident. Well, I didn't see that one coming from Paul Wetzel. No, this was a divine appointment.

You see, the one who slept in the boat is the one watching our every breath. He knows the waves of chaos in your lives.

[18:08] He knows the pain of our broken hearts. And he can feel the beat of our anxious hearts. Don't forget, church, that God sanctifies us through his ordained affliction.

salvation. He sanctifies us through it. And we often panic and forget. Fear causes us to freak out and completely evacuate everything that we once believed, evacuate our theology.

But don't forget what God has already proven because sometimes God's silence is the backdrop of his most powerful work. in our lives.

You see, his disciples experienced his disruptive presence and disruptive word. But what was the intention of it?

To awaken their faith. To ask the million dollar question of Jesus. Jesus, some of us today need disrupted.

[19:26] Some of y'all are being disrupted right now. And I know it. I hurt along with you through it. The disciples were stunned at this, at the power of Christ's word.

And their fear shifts from the storm to Jesus himself. I'd be freaked out. Who is this, they say in verse 25?

Even the winds and the water obey him. And that's it. The Old Testament memories began to stir. Only God can still the seas. Psalm 107, Psalm 65, Psalm 89.

See, in their fear and amazement, they realized Jesus is Lord. Lord. And they realized the one in the boat is the one who created the sea.

[20 : 34] And with that, we move to the shore where we find another kind of storm that awaits. We see the storm that tormented a soul.

people. In verse 26 and 27, the storm that we see here unfolds as they land in the region of Gerasenes, a Gentile region.

It was symbolically unclean. Nobody goes there. And Jesus steps out of the boat, as Jesus does. Right? And then a figure emerged.

Now, I don't know what kind of scary movies you've seen or what kind of things you allow on your TV at home, but man, if this was put to a motion picture, I think it would be rated R.

This little golem-like creature, we'll say. comes out of the cave, wide eyed, naked, butt naked, filthy, scars all over his body, and some open wounds bleeding.

[22 : 04] this was a possessed and oppressed man. It's noted that he was screaming from the tombs.

Now, Luke actually reinforces a little bit of commentary in verse 29. He says, for many a time, it's the evil spirit that was oppressing this man had seized him, many times, seized him.

This man was kept under guard and bound with chains, in verse 29, chains and shackles, and he would break the bonds. He'd break chains, he was so possessed, and be driven by the demon into the deserts.

The demon empowered him, and what he thought was breaking free was actually only to oppress him further, to drive him into isolation in the desert.

You see, this man had been dehumanized by demons. No chains could hold him, and he was literally a walking spectacle of misery in this passage, a warning of evil's reality.

[23 : 31] What the disciples just saw around them, and the chaos and the storm that was in nature before they landed on the shore here, they now see in a person.

This person has a life of utter chaos and disarray. this man was a storm in human form. You know, Satan is an expert at evil, isn't he?

He degrades. You see in the passage, he isolates, takes you far into the desert. He destroys the image of God in mankind.

mankind. We see that even in June, as wonderful a month it is because it's my birthday month, but all of a sudden, I got rainbow flags surrounding, and so we got this sexual revolution today that's walking streets and causing almost the same destructive effect upon youth and children to dehumanize them, to mutilate their bodies in the promise that they will finally once be free.

It's a lie from the pit of hell. This isn't hate speech. It's the most loving thing that anyone out there can hear.

[25 : 07] This man was experiencing it. This man, in verse 28, rushes to Jesus Christ, and he falls at his feet. He says, what have you to do with me, Jesus, son of the most high God?

And just like the other times when a demon would address Jesus, this isn't his confession. This demon became a Christian, right? No. This was a power play with words.

To acknowledge title would be to have sort of mastery over that person in this culture. And the demons recognize, though, that their doom is coming.

And the storm within this man is about to meet the same command that calmed the sea. The demon is hopeless here. In verse 30, Jesus asked, what's your name?

And the reply came, legion. And this would be a chilling term that would evoke thousands of soldiers.

[26 : 18] A legion in the Roman Empire was about 6,000 soldiers. So this is a massive situation, a massive storm.

Whatever that storm was out on sea, double it in this guy. In other words, this man was overrun in darkness.

And yet, even that army of evil could not resist Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ continued with the dialogue.

In verse 31, the demons, the they, it turns plural here, and they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss.

And this legion tumbled before Jesus, begging him not to cast them into the abyss. Gehenna, Hades, the pit, we might refer to it as hell, eternal demise, eternal damnation, punishment, forever. [27 : 30] Don't send us back. even demons hate hell. Looking for solutions.

Verse 32, now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these.

And so he gave them permission. Now, a herd of pigs, about 2,000 or so. This is a pretty significant livestock here.

They rushed off together in one accord. Down they went. 2,000 pigs.

Now, I've seen animals slaughtered, but that had to have been fairly messy, noisy, and probably as horrifying as the man in the tomb.

[28 : 37] And just as the immediate effect of the calmed waves, so too the herd of swine rushed off that cliff. They drowned in instant, dramatic, messy, and unforgettable moments.

And there's many implications because you might say, well, what the heck is that all about? Right? Well, perhaps it was judgment by the herd owners.

Maybe they were doing unclean business, things like that. Or maybe it was a sign for the man himself that his oppressors are truly gone in such a vivid display of death that they saw the blood, they saw a substitute off that cliff.

Either way, it was a display of the powerful presence and word of God. Jesus Christ's total authority.

And we see here in the 34th verse, we see the herd's men, they saw they ran the other way and they told.

[29 : 57] They saw, ran, and told. And then just as the disciples had just escaped the crowds, here they come once again. You just see almost a legion of a crowd coming over a hill to see what in the world 2,000 pigs.

And the people went out to see what happened in verse 35, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, closed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.

Verse 36, and those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed.

Now the man who was once terrorized, who once terrorized the city, now sits completely restored, clothed, calm, no Adderall needed, collected, clear-minded, at the feet of Jesus Christ.

He's not pacing anymore, he's not screaming, he's not cutting himself, he's not chained, he's listening, he's worshiping, he's whole.

This is important because there are no chains, church, that are so strong that Christ cannot break them. there's no minds that are so broken that he cannot renew them.

[31 : 48] This is the disruptive presence of Jesus and the disruptive power of his word. Maybe you're listening today and everything that this terrorized man is literally just an image of your life.

Maybe you feel like you are just too far gone, you're too enslaved to sin, you don't even know what you're doing in a church right now, starting to have a panic attack because something's going on right now, you're receiving a message that you knew you need to hear, but you don't want to hear it, but it's disrupting you like a thousand trumpets.

what is pressing your conscience of what you are waiting for to come to faith and come to life in Jesus Christ?

You might think your life is too messy, maybe too dark, maybe you're too far gone, maybe like some of our church members, you have the tattoos that just glorify Satan that you can't get off, but God doesn't care about your skin, he's after your heart.

Yet Jesus Christ saw this screaming, naked, bleeding man, he saw past all of that and saw a heart, Jesus saw him and crossed the storm to reach him, to set him free.

[33 : 26] What's your excuse today? You're too messed up. Are you kidding me? You're too far gone? What's your tomb you're hiding in?

What's your chains that are binding you? What secret sin or shame or addiction or bitterness have you decided that Jesus Christ can't reach?

Unbelief says, I'm too ruined, but grace says, I specialize in ruins. This is the good news of the gospel.

Your scars don't disqualify you, you become the proof that Jesus has touched your life. And he who calmed the chaos can calm your soul.

And he's calling you right now, today, to come to him by your faith, to trust in Jesus Christ, live for him.

[34 : 37] The third section, we see a storm. Well, the two storms leave this aftermath that reveals two sets of hearts.

Verse 37, then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them. What?

Jesus, get out of here! For they were seized with great fear. And so Jesus got into the boat and returned.

to say the least, this town was also stirring like the raging sea and the raging mind.

They created quite an aftermath. And rather than rejoicing, coming to faith, the church these days loves the word revival.

[35 : 42] Revival! Revival! Rather than doing all that, the townsmen were terrified. died. And yes, they acknowledged the healing. They could see the man who probably, his scars were probably still bleeding at this point.

They saw him restored. But they also saw their pigs gone. And with them, this town's livelihood was just thrown off a cliff.

I want you to be reminded, these are 2,000 pigs. That would take a townsman off. Why?

Why would they be mad at that? Because his power was disruptive. He disrupted their economy, their business, their way of life.

life. This is really important in our day today. Jesus is so good. He is so good. But he is also not safe because he disrupts our lives in disarray.

[37 : 00] So many people are running to safe spaces these days. And running to Jesus is going to turn your world upside down. it will. But he is also good.

He is so good. And what he turns upside down is for your good and also for his glory.

How many here today have a tendency to cling to comforts rather than Jesus Christ? Maybe Jesus is disruptive in your life today.

Friends, beware of asking Jesus to leave your life because his presence is inconvenience. the most tragic moment in this passage actually wasn't the storms.

It wasn't Gollum coming out of the cave. It was Jesus turning away. It was Jesus returning in that boat.

[38 : 10] in verse 38 and 39, in the contrast of the town's plea, this man here sitting restored and changed by the grace of Jesus Christ, this man was grateful and his mission was clear.

He begged to go with Jesus. This is what grace does in our lives. When we talk about having faith in Jesus, it changes us.

We don't care about our old life anymore. We're not even concerned about it any longer. And we want to follow Jesus Christ. We want it.

We desire it. And this man was grateful. However, Jesus assigned him a much harder task.

he told him to go home. Return to the place of your pain. Testify to those who know you, truly know you, and that your life may be a testimony of the glory of God, of what Jesus Christ has done for you.

[39 : 34] This is a symbolic aspect of baptism that we just saw. That we are changed, come out of the water as new creatures, as grace, as God's grace changes our hearts.

Not that baptism saves, but baptism is a sign and a seal of what God does in our hearts. And that at the instant we believe, we are sealed with the promise of the Holy Spirit, given a new nature, new attitudes, new desires.

We want to follow Jesus. You see, he did it. This man, once tormented, he became the first Gentile missionary in this area, proclaiming throughout the city the power of Jesus Christ.

our stories, healing, forgiveness, restoration, our stories may be the exact thing that other people need to hear.

Don't miss those opportunities, church. Some of your greatest ministry will not be on a platform or a pulpit or a stage or anything, but in your neighborhood, in your living room, in your kitchen, in your workplace, at YSU's campus, to tell what God has done for you.

[41 : 18] And even to take that further, sometimes, not all the time, sometimes, your mission field is the place of your greatest pain.

Sometimes your mission field is the place of your greatest pain. This is the disruptive presence of Jesus Christ.

Jesus stepped up, he calmed the storm, Jesus stepped up to silence the demons, and guess what? He ultimately stepped up and took himself upon the cross.

He absorbed the ultimate storm, the full fury of sin, Satan, and death. And evil never leaves quietly. The image of the 2,000 bloody dead pigs are an image of that substitute upon the cross. This man was an image of the grace of Jesus Christ.

[42 : 29] Evil never leaves quietly, but Jesus Christ bore it away. And as Paul says, all creation groans for redemption, but Jesus Christ has secured the victory, and we long for that day, glorious day where all wrongs will be made right, and he will return to calm every storm for eternity.

Are you in a storm today? Is your soul tormented? Are you confused or disordered? Whether it's the storm outside or the storm within, Jesus Christ is Lord over both.

This is good news. Will you trust him, though, or will you ask him to leave? The promise of the Bible is that if we call on his name, if we call on him, he will calm your storm instantly.

If you submit to him, he will restore your soul. If you walk with him, he will give you a story that proclaims his power and his grace. So come to Christ.

He may not stop every storm immediately. Right? You don't come to Jesus because you want him to stop your storm. You come to Jesus because you want Jesus, the one who's amid the storm.

[43 : 57] This isn't the prosperity gospel. He may not stop every storm immediately, but he will definitely never leave you.

He will never forsake you in the storm of life. He will walk into the tombs for you. He will fight the evil that you can't.

And one day he will make all storms cease forever and ever. You see, the one who calms the seas also calms the storms. And he can do it by his powerful, disruptive presence and his powerful, disruptive word.

Praise God. Let's pray. Thank you,