

Seeing Jesus: Ruling All
Luke 7:20, 8:22-39
Sermon Outline

Introduction: Life tends to marginalize Jesus, diminishing our faith. God knows this, and so he did a series of remarkable signs through Jesus and saw that they were remembered and recorded for our benefit. Two of them are the stilling of the storm and the deliverance of the Gerasene demoniac.

I) The first story: Jesus' authority over nature

vv. 22-25

A) The power of the threat.

- Terrifying, even for fishermen
- Nature gets us in the end: *Genesis 3:17-19*

B) The authority of Jesus over the threat

- He sleeps
- He does not pray; he rebukes

C) Meaning

II) The second story: Jesus' authority over super-nature

vv. 26-39

A) The power of the threat

- A man utterly ravaged by evil, utterly uncontrollable
- A condition so long standing that all hope had given out

B) The authority of Jesus over the threat

- Demons can only beg
- The deliverance itself: the pigs and the man

C) Meaning

III) How do we increase our faith?

A) Shift the focus of our fears to Jesus

v. 25: And they were afraid... 'Who is this that he commands even the winds...?'

v. 35: Then the people went out to see...and they were afraid

B) Wonder at the gracious way of Jesus with people

Demons possess to control and ravage; Jesus 'possesses' to liberate

v. 35: ...sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind

C) Don't push Jesus away

v. 37...They asked Jesus to depart...So he got into the boat and returned

Wondrous text

Scary text

Conclusion: Don't despair. Jesus knows the weakness of our hearts. Be warned by the Gerasenes but draw your hope from the demoniac. Pray with hope: "Hold tightly to me—bring me safely home."

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Life tends to marginalize Jesus—whether it is the message of the culture in which we live 24/7, or a ‘perfect storm’ of circumstances at a personal level, or the things that we permit to obsess us. What things tend to push Jesus to the margins of your life?
- 2) Look carefully at the description of the storm in vv. 23-24. What were its features and effects? What sorts of ‘storms’ in your life does this one bring to mind?
- 3) The first story reminds us, quite literally, that ‘nature is going to get us in the end.’ Read Genesis 3:17-19 (below) and reflect on the hostility of nature in your own experience.

¹⁷ And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

- 4) Note how Jesus relates to the storm in both verse 23 and verse 24. Reflect on the following statement: “The fact that life is pressing in upon us right now is not for the reason that we are tempted to think. It is not that ‘life’ is in charge—that its hostility or indifference rules us. It is rather that for some reason we cannot at present discern, Jesus is permitting it to be hostile towards us.”
- 5) Detail the ravages of evil upon the life of the Gerasene demoniac—its duration, power, effects, etc. Have you ever despaired in the face of uncontrollable evil? What were the circumstances?
- 6) Detail the evidence of Jesus’ authority over the evil in this story and then reflect on the following statement: “We do not know why Jesus permits evil to persist. But we do know this. He is implacably opposed to it and he has all the power necessary to annihilate it.”
- 7) List all the occasions in which fear is spoken of in both stories. How does the object of fear shift in each story? Fear is an expression of worship: it is the act by which we set our deepest attention upon something. Our task is to shift the object of our fear from the circumstances that assail us to the person of Jesus, who is sovereign over those circumstances. How can we work at that task?
- 8) The most wonderful and frightening verse in the text is v 37, where, at the request of the Gerasenes, Jesus leaves. Why is it wondrous (in your answer compare Jesus’ way with people to the way of demons with people)? Why is it frightening?
- 9) Reflect on the following: “Like water that recedes beyond the horizon to gather into a massive tsunami, Jesus has, at our insistence, receded from the horizons of our culture. But make no mistake, the tsunami is gathering.” Do you believe this? What evidence is there in your life that you do?
- 10) We should be warned by the Gerasenes’ story but draw our hope from that of the demoniac. Jesus knows the weakness of our hearts. He knows that if we were left to ourselves we would push him away and perish. The cross of Jesus has washed away our sin and the Spirit of Jesus has laid hold of our hearts. Spend some time in prayer—appealing to Jesus to hold tightly to you, thanking him for forgiving you for the times you have pushed him away.