

A Study in Luke 8:22–39

*Let Us Go Over — The Storm — Master, We Perish — The
Demoniac of Gadara*

We are reading Luke chapter 8, beginning at verse 22.

"Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him."

"And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs... And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him... And they came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind."

**He Went Into the Ship — and the Meaning of Contrary
Circumstances**

It came to pass on one of the days that he entered into a ship — himself and his disciples. Darby's translation puts the emphasis there: himself. It was his business. It was he who initiated this. He said, Let us go over to the other side of the lake. The disciples did not suggest it, and they did not go without him. It was his word that sent them, and his presence that went with them.

To avoid the contrary circumstances, any one of the disciples could simply have stayed on the shore. That is called the easy way out. But none of them did that. They went with him. And the point about contrary circumstances is precisely this: they bring out what we are. They reveal whether faith in the Lord's word is real or theoretical. In this world, with all kinds of experiences, going over to the other side is a matter of getting through things that reveal us to ourselves — and to us more of Him.

He fell asleep. A very human thing. Luke's Gospel is the Gospel of humanity — the Lord's genealogy traced through His mother's side back to Adam, the only Gospel to record Him as a boy of twelve, many notices of His human experience. As man, He slept. God was not asleep — He was God as well as man — but as man He slept. So the disciples found themselves in a storm with what appeared to be an unconscious companion. Elijah's mockery of the prophets of Baal on Carmel was in precisely this vein: peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked. For the worshippers of Baal, that was a devastating possibility. For the disciples of the Lord Jesus, it was no such thing. If the Lord is asleep, it makes no difference to the reality — He is there, He spoke the word that sent them, and nothing changes that.

Let Us Go Over — and Master, We Perish

Let us go over to the other side of the lake. What a gracious expression. He did not send them to the other side — He said let us go. He wanted to go with them. He wanted their company, their fellowship for the journey. And implied in the

word is a certainty: they would get over to the other side. That was the direction. That was the word.

Master, master, we perish. That was a statement of unbelief. Not an accurate assessment of the situation, but a statement of what their faith had failed to hold onto. They had heard let us go over, and when the wind came and the water filled the boat, they had let go of that word. Where is your faith? That was the question — and it refers back to verse 22, to the word He had spoken. Faith was in His word and in His person. The certainty that they were going over rested on what He had said, not on the state of the weather.

The connection with John 11 is instructive. When Lazarus was ill, the first thing the Lord said was: This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. And then He abode two days still in the same place. He gave a word to lay hold of, and then He allowed the circumstances to develop in a way that seemed to contradict it. That is exactly the structure of Luke 8: Let us go over (the word to lay hold of), and then the storm filling the boat (the circumstances that seemed to contradict it). Faith is a confidence in His word when the circumstances are saying otherwise.

The Lord's rebuke — Where is your faith? — was not harsh. It was an invitation to understand the proper order. The presence of the Lord, the word of the Lord, and then faith that rests in both. What the disciples had done was let the third thing displace the first two. The storm had occupied their attention so completely that they lost their grip on the word spoken and on the presence of the One who had spoken it. And the Lord had to put it right.

What Manner of Man Is This? — The Theme of Luke

He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water, and they ceased, and there was a calm. The disciples were afraid and wondered, saying to one another:

What manner of man is this? For he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him. They did not say, What manner of God is this? They said, What manner of man? This is exactly the theme of Luke's Gospel — the perfection of the Lord Jesus as man. He was God and man, that is true. But the question, What manner of man is this? is the right question for this Gospel to ask. He was the perfect man.

He did not command the wind to stop — He rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. They picked up His mind from that, and they obeyed. He did not need to spell out the command. The rebuke was sufficient. And there was in that a word for the disciples too — though not by direct command. Faith picks up His mind before the explicit command is given. The wind and the water were more responsive, in that moment, than the disciples had been.

The winds obeyed. The water obeyed. Then in the next scene, the demons obeyed. Three things that were contrary or hostile — storm, demoniac, and herd of swine — all subject to His word. A threefold cord. And against these, the disciples who had His word and His presence and His companionship — who should have been most responsive of all.

The Demoniac — One Soul

They arrived at the country of the Gadarenes. And the entire voyage — the storm, the rebuke, the calm, the arrival — was for one soul. The Lord crossed the lake with His disciples and turned right around and went back. The purpose of the whole journey was this man. That is what the work of the Lord is like. Philip the evangelist, in the midst of great success in Samaria, was directed by the Spirit to go down to a desert road — because there was one Ethiopian man in a chariot who needed the word of God. One soul at a time. Even when many are converted on the same occasion, each one is saved one soul at a time. The Lord majors in quality.

The man that met Him wore no clothes and abode in the tombs. Both of these details carry weight. Clothes were instituted by God in Genesis 3 in connection with the fall and the entry of sin into the world. Even Adam and Eve made aprons of leaves — inadequate, but they recognized that something was needed. God then clothed them with coats of skin. The man without clothes is living as though the fall had not happened, as though there were no sin and no need of covering. It is the living of a falsehood — and Satan, who is the father of lies, was behind it.

He abode in the tombs — in the place where death reigns and is most in evidence. No house, no order, no fitting into any human arrangement. Death and disorder. That is the moral picture of the condition of a man under the power of the enemy of Christ and of man. The fine suit many people wear in the world conceals the same condition — underneath it, the same disorder, the same subjection to the power of the enemy, the same dwelling in the vicinity of death. What was exposed in this man was the reality that sin and Satan always produce, though normally hidden beneath a more respectable exterior.

Son of the Most High God — A Millennial Title

When he saw Jesus he cried out and fell down before him and with a loud voice said: What have I to do with thee, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? That title — Son of the Most High God — is a millennial title. Melchizedek was priest of the Most High God, coming out to meet Abraham after the slaughter of the kings. In Daniel, the Gentile king Nebuchadnezzar and then Belshazzar's court confess the God of the Jews as the Most High God. The Psalms celebrate the name of the Most High in connection with the coming kingdom. It is the name by which God is known as sovereign over all the earth in the day of the kingdom.

The works that the Lord did in His earthly ministry are described in Hebrews 6:5 as works of power of the age to come. Here was Jesus, Son of the Most High God — the millennial title — putting forth works of power that will characterize the

millennial age. It points forward to the day when Satan is bound for a thousand years and his hosts are cast into the abyss. This casting out of the demons is a token of that great coming deliverance. The name and the works belong together.

James says of the demons: they believe and tremble. They know who He is. They knew in Job's day, presenting themselves before Jehovah among the sons of God — they knew from whose presence they had fallen. Man does not tremble so readily before his Maker. But the demons tremble. And their testimony here — Son of the Most High God — is doctrinally accurate, even if dispensationally out of order (as when the Philippian damsel said of Paul and Silas: these men are servants of the Most High God). The enemy gets a thrust in wherever he can. But the truth of the title remains.

Sitting, Clothed, in His Right Mind — and the Contrast

When the people of the region came out and saw what had been done, they found the man sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. The three descriptions are the exact reversal of his former state. He had been naked — now clothed. He had been driven into the wilderness in frenzy — now in his right mind. He had been wandering restlessly among the tombs — now sitting. And at the feet of Jesus.

That is a beautiful expression. In Luke's Gospel, sitting at the feet of Jesus is the posture of the learner, the receiver of instruction, the one who has chosen the good part. Mary of Bethany sat at the feet of the Lord Jesus and heard His word. The delivered man sat at the feet of Jesus. The Lord's last word on the voyage had been Where is your faith? — faith in His word, faith in His presence, faith that let us go over meant they would get over. And here on the other side, the fruit of the voyage: one man sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, saved from the power of Legion.

The contrast with the disciples is sharp. The disciples had been driven — not by demons, but by their own unbelief — into crying out that they were perishing. The demoniac had been driven by the devil into the wilderness. The word to the disciples was let us go over — not driven, but led; not to the wilderness, but to the other side; not by the enemy, but in companionship with the Lord Himself. That is the difference between the life of faith and the life under the power of the enemy. In both cases there is a driving force. But one is Satan, and the other is the word and presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us go over unto the other side — and they found the man sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.