**The Gospel of Luke**

**Lesson 20** Luke 8:19-39 Jesus’ Power Demonstrated!

**Questions:**

1. What important truth did you learn from the lecture and how does it apply to your life?
2. Read Wiersbe pages 107-110.
3. Why did the disciples fail the test of faith they faced while sailing to the opposite shore? What must we do to avoid failing such a test?
4. Read Luke 8:19-21. Jesus’ Mother and Brothers!
5. Read Mark 3:21 along with Matthew 13:53-57 and John 7:1-5. Did Jesus’ family members believe in him? Why do you think they had a difficult time believing?
6. Verse 21 states, “[Jesus] replied (to the someone who announced his family
wanted to see him), “My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s word
and put it into practice.”
7. What did Jesus mean?
8. Read John 1:12-13. How does one become a child of God, thus, a member
of Christ’s family?
9. How do we show that we belong to Christ and truly love Him (John 14:15, 21)?
10. Read Luke 8:22-25, Matthew 8:23-27 and Mark 4:35-41. Jesus Calms the Storm!

It is a fact that inland waters, especially fresh waters, possess a unique treachery. Fresh waters do not have the even rhythms of the great seas. Waves are often nonrhythmic and contradictory. Inland lakes are more vulnerable to geography because instead of surrounding land like the oceans are, they are surrounded by varying topography.

Thus, they are subject to quick temperature inversions and violent changes of weather. Also, their smaller size instills a false sense of safety.

Though the Sea of Galilee is only five miles wide and thirteen miles long, its perils are considerable, due to the unique geography. The sea itself is an incredible distance below sea level, and it is surrounded by imposing mountains gouged with deep ravines. These ravines serve as gigantic funnels that bring winds whirling down upon the lade without notice. These gales are often strengthened by a thermal buildup in the extremely low valley that sucks the cold air violently downward.

**The Crisis** (v. 22, 23)

Such or similar conditions were coming to a peak unbeknownst to the apostolic band when at the end of the day Jesus directed his disciples to sail to the other side of the lake (cf. Mark 4:35). It had been a long day of ministry that began with confrontations and continues amid the press of immense crowds. So as the shadows lengthened Jesus moved to the stern of the boat, where he wearily reclined and soon fell into a deep sleep. The disciples hoisted sail and began the five-mile trip across the lade followed by a flotilla of admirers in their boats.[[1]](#endnote-1)

1. Jesus and his newly appointed apostles set out from the territory of Galilee and were headed to the region of the Gerasenes (verse 26). Why do you think they were headed to this region on the other side of the lake (See Luke 4:42-43)?
2. Describe what happens as they were sailing across the lake?

It must have been a beautiful scene as they moved slowly across the calm sea with their patched sails backlit by the rising stars—when suddenly they were blasted with a terrific storm As Luke has it, “A windstorm [literally, “a hurricane of wind”][[2]](#endnote-2) came down on the lade, and they were filling with water and were in danger” (v. 23). Matthew uses the word *seismos* (literally, “earthquake”) to describe the storm (8:24). It was as though the lake was being shaken. As the ship reeled, dark mountains of water on port and starboard rose and washed over the boat. Anyone who has been in a storm and has felt the stern plunge like an elevator in the trough of a rising, welling mountain of green, and then shoot toward the sky like a monster roller coaster, can imagine their misery.[[3]](#endnote-3)

1. What additional details are included in Mark 4:35-41 that are not found in
the Luke account?
2. What did Jesus say to the wind? From the following texts, write down exactly
what God (Jesus) said and what was the result?
3. Genesis 1:3, 6, 9
4. Luke 5:10
5. John 11:43-44
6. What do you learn from this about the Word of God (Hebrews 1:3)?

**The Divine Storm**

Though the disciples had no way to know it during those terrible moments,halt miserable storm was a divinely appointed vehicle to teach them aboutGod and his power in their lives. This choreography of Heaven was essentialfor their spiritual development. This is a vital principle of spiritual life: Without difficulties, without trials, without stresses, and even failures, we wouldnever grow to be what we should become. Storms are part of the processof spiritual growth. Some experienced believers believe that every spiritual **t**ruth, everything that has enhanced their existence, has come through affliction. They are largely right, as these anonymous words express:

I asked the Lord that I might grow

In faith and love and every grace,

Might more of His salvation know,

And seek more earnestly His face.

'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,

And He I trust has answered prayer.

But it has been in such a way

As almost drove me to despair.[[4]](#endnote-4)

Storms are God's way of bringing us into deeper grace.

Without adversity, we would be insufferably self-centered, proud, flat-dimensioned,
empty people. This is why Ruth Graham has prayed for herself:

Dear God, let me soar in the face of the wind: up...through cold or the storm with wings

to endure. Let the silver rain wash all the dust from my wings. Let me soar as He soars…

let it lift me. Let it buffet and drive me, but, God, let it lift.[[5]](#endnote-5)

The storm was a spiritual step up for the disciples, though they did not know it. Perhaps such a storm is raging in your life. You are so buffeted that you wonder if you are going to make it. Perhaps a relationship is foundering and about to sink, or the buffeting may be stress in your job, or some terrible disease. Your storm may be an errant child. Whatever the trial, you think you may be drowning.

But in the midst of the fury and confusion, if you will ask God to meet you in your deepest distress, you can and will ride those afflictions to new heights. Such an act of trust will become an epiphany on the landscape of your life.[[6]](#endnote-6)

1. Read Isaiah 43:2 along 2 Corinthians 1:3-11.
2. What do you learn from the above two passages concerning the care and protection of God’s true children?
3. [Personal Questions] Have you recently been through a storm or perhaps are in one now? How did the Lord get you through this storm or are you still waiting for his deliverance? Do you feel His abiding presence with you?
4. Read Luke 8:26-39.

**Confrontation** (vv.26-29)

This encounter is pathetic and heart wrenching because the afflicted man was an actual human being. Our text says he “had demons"(v.27), but the literal translation is “demonized”—that is, under the influence of one or more evil spirits. Demonization can vary in degree of influence. Here it was extreme.

Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. When Jesus had stepped out on 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. (vv.26, 27)

**Gross Possession**

In verse 29 Luke describes the demon as an “unclean spirit. “Typically, those under the sway of demons descend to filthy living, both physically and morally. It is not at all incidental that the rise of occultism and Satanism in recent years has been accompanied by increasing drug abuse, pornography, and obscenity. This man lived “among the tombs,” rock-hewn caverns furnished with dead men's bones and carpeted with filth and vermin. The local townspeople had attempted to restrain him, but with terrifying herculean strength he had broken the fetters that bound him. He was uncontrollable and dangerous (cf.v.29).

According to Mark's account, his wretchedness worked from the inside out because at intervals during night and day he would let out a howl, then gash himself with jagged rocks in an obvious attempt to drive out the ten spirits (cf. Mark 5:5). This poor, naked man was a mass of bleeding lacerations, scabs, infections, and scar tissue, living in a delirium of pain and masochistic displeasure. The man was wild, naked, unkempt, and ill, and as a result all were against him. Little children fled at his approach.

In his lucid moments he surely realized how repulsive, unloved, and unwelcome he was. He was dehumanized, animalized, marginalized, and both frightening and fearful. What incredible misery![[7]](#endnote-7)

1. Demonic possession is a subject most people, including Christians, are not very comfortable discussing. Why do you think this is so?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 11:14, 15. What do you learn from this passage regarding the nature of Satanic influence and how do you see this ‘masquerade’ manifested today?

**Civilized Possession**

Of course, not all demonization is so blatantly gross. Second Corinthians 11:14,15 tells us: “Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So, it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Demon-controlled men and women can appear utterly conventional. They can even be spiritual leaders in the Christian community. I myself have known some whose bondage to evil was uncovered. At the same time, we must not foolishly think that human beings must be demonized in order to descend to the degradation of the Gerasene demoniac. Sin is endemic to the human situation. “Each person is tempted ... by his own desire” (James 1:14). We are all fully capable of evil and degeneration.

**Imago Dei**

Nevertheless, demons do drive men and women to the depths of degeneration. Why? Because Satan and his minions hate God, and they will attack him any way they can through his created beings. Humankind was created in the image of God— “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). Men and women bring glory to God by showing forth his image in their character and lives. Satan hates this and so seeks to distort and destroy the image of God in man. As the eminent New Testament scholar Werner Foerster explicitly says:

In most of the stories of possession, what is at issue is not merely sickness but a destruction and distortion of the divine likeness of man according to creation. The center of personality, the volitional and active ego, is inspired by alien powers which seek to ruin man.[[8]](#endnote-8)

Tertullian was right when he said, “The glory of God is a man fully alive, “and thus the degeneration of man—the distortion of the divine image through sin—is a direct attack on the glory of God We must recognize that anything that is degrading and animalizing to humans is in line with Satan's plan, be it an attitude, a habit, an addiction, a sexual practice, or a mental preoccupation.

As Christians, we must do everything we can, through Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, to allow the manifestation of the image of God in our lives. Kate B. Wilkinson’s prayer/hymn (1925) is an admirable yearning:

May the mind of Christ my Savior
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and pow'r controlling
All I do and say.

Confrontation on this occasion was inevitable. “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 spirit to come out of the man” (vv. 28, 29a). Jesus and his disciples beached the storm-battered boat, made it secure, and found themselves face-to-face with the disheveled man. The next thing they knew they were assaulted by the naked, screaming demoniac. First came his scream, then his falling at Jesus' feet, and third, his shouted question. The scream (probably more of a howl) made the disciples' skin crawl, and then he shouted at the top of his voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.” Behind this question was the popular belief that one could control or dominate another through the use of his/her name.[[9]](#endnote-9) The man did not use Jesus' name as a confession of his deity but in a frantic attempt to control him, followed by the urgent plea that Jesus does not harm him.[[10]](#endnote-10)

1. What do you learn about the power of God over Satan? How does this give you comfort? Do you need God’s comfort?
2. Ephesians 6:10-18. How do we arm ourselves for spiritual warfare? How are you doing with this?
1. Kent Hughes *Luke: That You May Know the Truth* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 304. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, quoted in Hughes, 304. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Hughes, 304. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Quoted in Harry Ironside, Lectures on the Book of Acts (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1975), p. 729. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Ruth Graham quoted in Kent Hughes, 305. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Hughes, 304-305. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Hughes, 312-313 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Morris as quoted in Hughes, 313. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. David Gooding as quoted in Hughes, 314. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Hughes, 313-314. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)