

Luke 8:26-39 (Second Sunday after Pentecost—Series C)
“Report, Declare, Proclaim”
Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Enfield CT
June 19, 2022

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our text is the Gospel Reading from Luke 8:

²⁶And they sailed down to the region of the Gerasenes which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷And when He had gotten out on the land a man who was from the city met Him who was possessed by demons. For a long time he had not worn clothes and he did not live in a house, but among the tombs. ²⁸Now when he saw Jesus, after he cried out, he fell down before Him and with a loud voice said, “Leave me alone, Jesus, Son of God the Most High. I beg of you, do not torment me.” ²⁹For Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For many times it had violently seized him and he would be bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, but breaking through the chains, he would be driven by the demon into the wilderness. ³⁰And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had gone into him. ³¹And they begged Him that He might not command them to go away into the abyss. ³²Now there was a large herd of pigs feeding on the hill and they begged Him that He might allow them to enter these. And He gave them permission. ³³And when the demons had come out from the man, they entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. ³⁴Now when the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and reported it in the city and in the country. ³⁵When they came out to see what had happened, they came to Jesus and they found the man from whom the demons had come out, clothed and in his right mind, sitting at Jesus’ feet, and they were afraid. ³⁶And those who saw it reported how the man who had the demons was saved. ³⁷And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to go away from them because they were seized by great fear. So, He got into the boat and He began to return. ³⁸And the man from whom the demons had gone out begged to be with Him, but He send him away saying, ³⁹“Return to your house and declare how much God has done for you.” And he went away throughout the whole city proclaiming how much Jesus had done for him.

Welcome to the Season after Pentecost, the long green season, the non-festival half of the Church Year. During this season, the work of God in His Church is emphasized. Green is the color of healthy growth. The Epistle and Gospel readings are primarily a *lectio continua*, a continuous reading through Luke and the epistles beginning with Galatians 3 and 4 today.

What healthy growth through the Word does the Lord provide for us this morning as we interact with the Gospel text of Luke 8? There is the story of the power of Jesus who is not only true Man but also at the same time true God. Jesus the Son of God and Son of Man

gives salvation to a Gentile man by releasing him from the reign and rule of the devil. That's what Jesus came to do as He brought the reign and rule of God crashing into the devil's kingdom. Mark's Gospel especially highlights this aspect of our Lord's ministry as Jesus overturns the consequences of sin and death by His mighty Word and casts out demons, just as He did that day in the country of the Gerasenes. In his famous Reformation hymn, *A Mighty Fortress*, Luther identifies the devil as the one holding people captive through sin and death. He calls him "the old evil foe" and "this world's prince" who "now means deadly woe. Deep guile and great might / Are his dread arms in fight; / On earth is not his equal." In stanza three we are warned that the devils fill all the world eager to devour us.

In reality, we are born into enemy territory. We are not only conceived and born with sin (Psalm 51), but we also begin our days under the devil's reign and rule. How's that for your not-so-pleasant thought for the day? Listen to how this truth is confessed in the Baptism Address: "The Word of God also teaches that we are all conceived and born sinful and are under the power of the devil. . . . We would be lost forever unless delivered from sin, death, and everlasting condemnation."

That deliverance from Satan, sin, death, and everlasting condemnation comes through the in-breaking of God's reign and rule at the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. We would be lost forever and under the devil's power if God's reign and rule did not come to us, if Christ did not claim us as His own. "But the Father of all mercy and grace has sent His Son Jesus Christ, who atoned for the sin of the whole world, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

Jesus Christ took on human flesh and was made man so that He might come and release all of His creation from the power of Satan, sin, and death. The in-breaking of God's reign and rule is seen as Jesus defeats Satan at every turn—in the wilderness as He was tempted, in the casting out of demons, in the release of people from their illnesses and diseases and even in the raising of some from the dead. "Jesus has come! Now see bonds rent asunder! Fetters of death now dissolve, disappear." (*LSB* 533, stanza 2).

The man with many demons is healed. The text uses the word "saved." Again, Satan and his demonic forces are defeated and ousted at Jesus' Word, "Get out!" It is the presence and Word of Jesus that wields this power over demons and the devil. It is the presence of Jesus and His Word that has power over sin and grants full forgiveness and removes guilt because Jesus has purchased and won that forgiveness for all people with His crimson blood. In His crucifixion and resurrection, the Lord Jesus has stomped on the head of that ancient snake, the devil, and brought the reign and rule of God into our midst through His Word, thereby freely granting to us the forgiveness of all our sins and the new life of faith.

Truly, the reign and rule of God in the Lord Jesus Christ is present among us because Christ is present among us in His Word and Sacraments by the power of God the Holy Spirit, for "Christ's kingdom exists only with the Word and Sacraments."¹ As we pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," we know that His reign and rule comes among us "when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity" (*Small Catechism*). Martin Luther continues

¹ Paul Timothy McCain, ed., *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2005), 153.

his explanation in the *Large Catechism*, "We pray that [Christ's] name may be so praised through God's holy Word and a Christian life that we who have accepted it may abide and daily grow in it, and that it may gain approval and acceptance among other people. We pray that it may go forth with power throughout the world. We pray that many may find entrance into the kingdom of grace, be made partakers of redemption, and be led to it by the Holy Spirit, so that we may all together remain forever in the one kingdom now begun. . . . We pray that the kingdom may come to those who are not yet in it, and, by daily growth that it may come to us who have received it, both now and hereafter in eternal life. All this is nothing other than saying, 'Dear Father, we pray, give us first Your Word, so that the Gospel may be preached properly throughout the world. Second, may the Gospel be received in faith and work and live in us, so that through the Word and the Holy Spirit's power, Your kingdom may triumph among us. And we pray that the devil's kingdom be put down, so that he may have no right or power over us, until at last his power may be utterly destroyed.'"²

Not only, then, do we pray that God's reign and rule in Christ might come among us through the Word, Baptism, and Supper with forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation, but we also pray in the Lord's Prayer that the reign and rule of Christ would be what? Properly preached throughout the world so that it might be received by faith.

Look back into Luke 8. In the second half of the text, from verse 34 on, the idea of sharing information looms large. First, the herdsmen who saw Jesus cast out the demons and the possessed pigs run down the steep bank and drown **reported** it in the city and the

² Paul Timothy McCain, ed., *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2005), 414.

country. There were words spoken, telling other people about what had just happened. When folks came out from the city and came from the countryside to check things out, those who saw it **reported** how the man who had demons was saved. More telling! The man whom Jesus had saved wanted to be with Jesus, but Jesus had other plans for him. Can you guess what it was? "Return to your house and **declare** how much God has done for you." Tell the message! Report what God has done in bringing you salvation from the power of the devil. And St. Luke records that he did just that: He went away throughout the whole city **proclaiming** how much Jesus—God Himself—had done for him.

How much has God done for you in the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ? Can it even be measured? Jesus lived a perfect life for you according to God's Law, and you and me—sinners alike—get the credit for being righteous before God because Jesus was righteous for us. Jesus suffered the death and condemnation that should have been ours as He shed His holy, precious blood on the cross winning our forgiveness and everlasting life. Jesus, who lived, suffered, and died for you rose again for you so that you might live forever at the Day of Resurrection. Sin, Satan, and death are defeated. You have the victory of the Crucified and Risen Son of God because He brought God's reign and rule crashing into the devil's kingdom, rescuing you from the power of the devil in the waters of Holy Baptism and through the preaching of His Gospel Word.

And the reign and rule of Christ continues to disrupt the devil's kingdom. The Lord Christ sends all of His disciples—both you and me—into the world in our daily vocations and callings to **report**, to **declare**, to **proclaim** what our great God and Savior has done for us and for others! God loved the world! Jesus sends us by the power of the Spirit to make

disciples of “all nations”! And through the means of reporting, declaring, and proclaiming the Gospel Word, the devils are sent reeling from where they ought not to be. The Spirit uses the Word of Christ to create faith in Jesus in the hearts of those who hear. Satan is no longer welcome in that person. The devil no longer has power over him or her and can no longer accuse the believer of sin and guilt. For sin and guilt are removed by the blood of Christ.

Let the seed of the Lord’s Gospel Word of Christ Jesus crucified and raised for your forgiveness and new life take root in you by the power and grace of the Spirit, producing in each of you a confident faith. Jesus is the One sent from God to bring salvation to all people, and when you, the Church, proclaim His Words and deeds, the Son of God the Most High rolls back the reign of devils and brings in God’s reign and rule. **Report, declare, and proclaim** what God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—has done for you. Amen.