

Sunday, June 19, 2022 – Second Sunday after Pentecost

Second Reading: Galatians 3:23-29

23-26 - Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.

The law as a disciplinarian, custodian, tutor, guardian. God's training wheels.

28-29 - There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

These verses are not teaching transgender ideology or gender fluidity. Rather they are teaching that when it comes to salvation only faith in Christ matters.

Gospel: Luke 8:26-39

This story is in all three of the synoptic Gospels and it occurred right after Jesus' calming of the storm on the Sea of Galilee, which I believe is significant.

This was the first time that Jesus was entering into Gentile territory (the presence of pigs confirms that). Satan wanted to stop Him. Satan tried to stop Him with a storm. When that did not work, Satan tried to stop Him with a demoniac.

When have you known Satan to try to hinder, disrupt, stop, and destroy the work of God?

26 - Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.

27 - As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs.

It only mentions Jesus as stepping out of the boat. The disciples might have been too spooked – by the storm, by being in Gentile territory, and by the demoniac.

When have you been most totally spooked? When have you been so spooked that you did not want to do the equivalent of following Jesus out of the boat?

28-29 - When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and 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"— for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man.

Mark 1: 24 – man in the synagogue in Capernaum with an unclean spirit – "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God."

Acts 16: 17 – slave girl in Philippi – "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation."

James 2: 19 – You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe-and shudder.

29 - Many times 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 wilds.

John 10: 10 – The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

1 Peter 5: 8 – Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour.

1 Kings 18: 28 – (The priests of Baal on Mount Carmel) cried aloud and, as was their custom, they cut themselves with swords and lanes until the blood gushed out over them.

30 - Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him.

Jesus was establishing His authority over the demon by commanding the demon to tell Jesus his name.

Many who have a ministry of exorcism have said that demons have resisted telling their name.

A legion was the largest military unit in the Roman army and was composed of over 5,000 men. By comparison, Mary Magdalene had only seven demons cast out of her – Luke 8:2.

31 - They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

They would be in deep trouble with Satan if they were to abandon their post and return to hell.

32-33 - Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

Many Bible scholars believe that these pigs were being raised to be sacrifices to idols.

So Jesus is showing that His power is not only greater than the Legion of demons, it is also greater than pagan gods.

34-36 - When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they 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. Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed.

37 - Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned.

Again, it only says that Jesus got back into the boat.

The people asked Jesus to leave, and He obliged them by leaving.

The tragedy is that not only did Jesus leave – at their request – but there is no record that He ever came back.

Do you know someone who told Jesus to leave – to leave him or her alone – and Jesus obliged and did what they requested?

38-39 - 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." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

Naturally this person would want to follow Jesus because of all that Jesus had done.

But Jesus told him to stay. He would be most effective in witnessing to people who had known him before he had been delivered.

Every one of us has certain people whom we would be most effective in witnessing to. Who are those people for you?