

Title: AN EXCEPTIONAL HEALING, LUKE 8:26 – 39
(Chatham, NJ; 06/23/13, AM) [Pc – Topical]

Theme: Of the many healings Jesus performed the healing of the demon-possessed man is one of the exceptional ones for several reasons.

Purpose: To bring to light the exceptional details of this healing, and to encourage the congregation to incorporate the things that have generated great faith for many.

Introduction:

1. Jesus travels to near-Gentile territory, Luke 8:26, a place where Jewish culture might have been influenced by Gentiles. (Mark 5 – The Decapolis)
2. A herd of swine would not be totally out of place here.
3. Both Luke and Mark describe this healing with great detail and drama.
4. Numerous things stand out.

I. Exceptional because Jesus commands demons

A. Demons recognize and fear him

1. He calls him, “Son of the Most High God”
2. He begs for mercy
3. There are many demons, “Legion”
4. They don’t want to go to the “abyss,” an abode of darkness and imprisonment
5. Jesus has the authority to send them
6. Mark 2:24-25 portrays Jesus the same way

B. Jesus empowers our warfare

1. Only one night prior to this Jesus had calmed a storm on the sea
2. His power over physical forces is expanded to power over spiritual ones
3. He has the authority to forgive sins
4. Is control over the lives of humanity far behind?
5. We are the only ones who resist
6. God has exalted Jesus above all rule and powers, etc. Ephesians 1:20-21
7. He is our rider on a white horse, Revelation 19
8. There is no doubt that he has conquered the forces of evil; there remains some doubt about whether he has conquered every human heart

II. Exceptional because he enters a region likely to influence the Gentiles

A. The Gospel to the Gentiles?

1. One of only several times he comes close to Gentile territory
2. However, several Gentiles have demonstrated faith: the woman from Tyre, the centurion
3. The man becomes a living witness to Christ, 8:38-39
4. Jesus knew the disciples would eventually go to “all nations”
5. This is an exceptional event because he begins that mission

B. He does it with flair

1. Mass suicide of a herd of pigs?
2. Whoever heard of such a thing?
3. Imagine this from the viewpoint of the herdsman: you see the boat, the demon-possessed man, and suddenly the pigs rush into the water
4. Did they have an explanation for this? Do you?
5. It would have made the evening news in the Decapolis
6. Reporters would have been crawling all over this scene
7. What might they have asked the man who was healed?

8. At the very least this got a lot of people's attention

III. This changed man frightened everyone

A. His condition

1. Lived among the tombs, 27
2. Wore no clothes, 27
3. He had inhuman strength, Mark 5:4
4. Socially he had been consigned to the role of the neighborhood "crazy"
5. Children were told to avoid him; some probably made fun of him (the "zombie" from my neighborhood)

B. His change

1. People don't know what to do with a person when they change, even if for the better
2. They saw him, "Dressed and in his right mind"
3. How could this happen? What power can do this? Would there be demonic reprisals? How do we relate to a man we've shunned for years?
4. Are we sure he has really been changed? (Remember how people reacted to Saul of Tarsus)
5. They reacted irrationally, with fear, 37
6. They asked Jesus to leave

Conclusions:

1. The most exceptional thing: the man proclaimed how much Jesus had done for him.
2. Mark says, "Everyone marveled."
3. He doesn't engage in what one author called intellectual thumb-sucking; he doesn't agonize over the past or say how badly he had been treated or how he had been victimized or how everyone owed him an apology, etc., etc., etc.
4. He moves on; he is grateful; God has delivered him; he has a new life.
5. We stand in awe of him, and we rejoice that God has given us the same exceptional vision, a choice to live a new life and not dwell, stew, or live in the past.
6. Rejoice in God; he has done great things for us.