

The Second Sunday after Pentecost
 Year of the Lord 2019
 Luke 8

**“Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine;
 Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day!”
 “Let me see my Savior’s face; let me all HIS beauties trace!
 Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to
 Thee!”**

Luke 8:26–39 26Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27When 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. 28When 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.” 29For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time 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 desert.) 30Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. 31And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. 32Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. 33Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

34When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. 35Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and 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. 36And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. 37Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. 38The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39“Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

In the Name of Jesus:

We're half-a-year away from the shepherds, watching their flock by night; the herald of the Lord stands by them, 'And they were sore afraid!' 'Fear not! For behold, I bring you good tidings; tidings of great joy; which shall be for all peoples! For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, Which is Christ, the Lord! And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.'

Our Savior, our Christ, our Lord, Jesus, does...not...go...off...THEME, my dear ones! Since this whole demoniac and pigs event ended with the other Gerasenes 'seized with great fear,' Jesus got back into the manger. Well; it's wood—a boat! But as easy-breezy as the Spirit He has GAINED for you and me! 'So, He got into the boat....'

He is a terror to our lords and masters, the demons. He WILL...NOT, be a terror for those whose flesh He now shares. He CAN...NOT! The Spirit of Jesus DOES...NOT...KNOW...HOW to frighten the siblings of Jesus and the children of God; not now!

But, the text ALSO says that THAT MAN fell down and confronted Him with what a torment He was! Was it the man; was it the Army of devils in him? Jesus sifts it all out! With finality, when they crucified Him.

³³ And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. (Luke 23 ESV)

Doctor Martin Luther taught the Church—NOT that we are swine, but more like donkeys or mules. We are born with the devil riding us; and he rides us off the cliff and into the abyss; unless the Spirit of Jesus knocks the devil outta the saddle and rides us instead.

There is but One Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life. A Roman legion has 4 or 5 thousand, or so, gifted and energetic soldiers. Ready to raze Jerusalem to the ground; or to execute

three criminals on a Friday morning. What was in THEIR saddle? How many? Nevertheless, ‘Father! Here are OUR new recruits for a Kingdom this world cannot fathom! Pardon THESE; and now we’ve got four in My Kingdom; and things are starting to roll!’

Which is why Jesus ‘sent away’ the man from whom He had cast out the Legion of darkness! Not because there was anything WRONG with the man. But because that man was right there, with the ‘other Gerasenes;’ for whom Jesus full-blast in battle with hell was just too much. ‘I gotta go! But YOU! You; you go right ahead and tell them what God has done for you.’

Ha! Ha!

“And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much JESUS had done for him.”

God? Jesus? As the Athanasian Creed teaches us: He is God and Man; one ‘altogether!’

Man or demon? NOT ‘one altogether!’ Praise the Lord! YOU and I do NOT need worry about the distinction between US’N and the devils who so easily-breezily make their home with us! The Spirit of Jesus resides in us where His Word is, His Washing, His people, His Gospel: in us, with the demons, DESPITE the demons! And the saddle is, finally, sized only for ONE! Like the manger; and the swaddling clothes.

The Spirit teaches US that distinction too, my dear ones! Who’s the last person you called a ‘pig?’ Grunted at; turned up YOUR snout at: ‘Oh, the way she LIVES! Can you believe what THAT GUY DOES?!’

Those whose flesh God shares now—without fear!—are NOT swine, my dear ones! They just act like it; now and then.

The Gerasenes! Who are they? Across the pond from Galilee!

OK. Who was HE? He would not keep his clothes on; he had the most sick obsessions with death and the grave; and whatever bridles or reins you put on that animal, they were all too much for him—hindering his ‘progress,’ his ‘freedom,’ his ‘CHOICE!’ And so, powered by hell, he burst every chain.

Oh! Gerasenes are Americans! Or at least the legion-demon-filled variety. Clothing optional; rules of any kind labeled bigotry and outdated; at home only with the graves we dig for ourselves, the monuments we pile up, as if the only thing that lasts about a man is the boasts he can etch in stone about himself.

And what are we to tell our fellow Americans? That they are swine? We have been Baptized at the authority of the One FILLED with The One Spirit, the Promise of the Father!

IF...my brothers and sisters---if...if...IF we come to our right senses, dress as befits those saved from a world of sin but still in it—not tormented by the Commandments, but helped! Even if, now and then, they put the terror into us!

IF.....you and I become the happy abode of the Father’s pledge, won for us by the Crucified and Risen Savior, Christ the Lord---

Then what we are to tell our fellow Gerasenes, Americans, children of Adam all: is how much GOD has accomplished! God?! Well, Jesus! ‘With might of ours can naught be done; soon were our loss effected. But for us fights the Valiant One! Whom God Himself elected? Who is this? Jesus Christ it is! And there’s...none...other...God!’

THERE’S good check on what you hear from pastor’s weekly book-report on the Bible; and on the witness we make to our conscience, our family, our circle, our town: does it leave anyone in terror? Then all we’ve done is the Law work, the condemnation work; which MAY need doing now and then. But which can only, finally, drive the herd off the cliff!

Does the witness take away the fear? Then the Holy Spirit has been pleased to reign in us, and raise us to reign with Christ.

‘Tell everyone how much God has done for you!’ We have His Spirit with us, for certain, my dear ones! Even OUR witness can make the distinction between the evil that drives poor men, and those poor men themselves, in the Name of Jesus!