

The Gospel Project® for Adults

Daily Discipleship Guide ESV, Unit 24, Session 1

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Jesus Casts Out Demons

Session in a Sentence: Jesus demonstrated His authority over evil by driving demons out of a man.

Background Passage: Luke 8:26-39

The concept of superheroes has intrigued storytellers, comic-book readers, and moviegoers throughout the ages. In ancient Greek myths, Hercules and Achilles captivated the imagination with their strength and near-invincibility. Today we have an explosion of interest in superheroes thanks, in large part, to the popularity of movies that depict special people and teams taking on the greatest foes of the earth and the universe. You don't have to go far to find a child dressed up and pretending to have superpowers to fight the evils of the world. You might even find an adult wishing for superpowers to break up the monotony of the workday or to secure justice for the oppressed.

What superpower would you like to have, and what would you do with it?

Group Time

Point 1: The demons recognize the Son of God's authority (Luke 8:26-33).

26 Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. **27** 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. **28** 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." **29** For 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.) **30** Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. **31** And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. **32** Now 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. **33** Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

Based on this wild man's experience, demonic possession torments, wounds, endangers, and isolates its victims. To see this man in action would cause fear and revulsion in us; to witness him running toward us and screaming would send us running away in terror. But as much as we would have been afraid of the demon-possessed man, the man-possessing demon was even more afraid of Jesus.

Demons _____ God and seek to destroy His work. Though demons have power, they are _____ by God's control and can only act within the constraints of what God _____.

Why was the demon—or demons, as it turned out—afraid of Jesus and groveling at His feet? Because the "Legion" of demons inhabiting the man recognized Jesus' *identity* and *authority*. Jesus is the Son of the Most High God, and He Himself will cast all demons, including Satan, into hell for all eternity, once the time has come.

What will a faith response to the authority of Jesus look like, as opposed to the forced submission displayed by the demons?

Point 2: The people fear the Son of God’s authority (Luke 8:34-37).

34 When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. 35 Then 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. 36 And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. 37 Then 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.

The demons left the man, entered the pigs, and destroyed the whole herd, around two thousand pigs, according to Mark’s Gospel (Mark 5:13). Later, everyone in the region came out to see what had happened, and what they saw blew their minds and scared them to their core. They saw pig corpses bobbing in the Sea of Galilee, but that’s not what scared them. They heard about the herd going crazy and rushing into the sea, but that’s not what scared them. They saw a formerly wild and naked man sitting still and in clothes—this was the display of power and authority from Jesus that was too much for them.

How might the authority and power of Jesus cause fear in people today?

The Gentiles saw the peaceful fruit of a great miracle sitting at Jesus’ feet, so they asked Him to leave! What would have possessed them to make that choice? Jesus had just liberated a demon-possessed man; what more could He have done for them had they only believed? But since they had fear without faith, they rejected the miracle-worker in their midst. It seems they preferred their own slavery to sin and Satan over submission to the Savior.

What might you say to address someone’s fear of submitting to Jesus in faith?

Voices from the Church

“To fear the Lord is not to be scared of Him. It’s to adore Him. Worship Him. Honor Him. It’s to put Him in the right place in our thinking. The fear of the Lord is in many ways to honor the first commandment.”¹

–Trillia Newbell

Point 3: The man obeys the Son of God’s authority (Luke 8:38-39).

38 The 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.

As Jesus got back in the boat with His disciples to leave, He had a brief conversation with the man whom He had freed. Naturally, the man wanted to go with Jesus. He wanted to be with his Savior and learn from Him. He begged Jesus for this. This “begs” the question for us: How eager are we to be in the presence of our Savior? Do we seek Him out through the Scriptures and prayer? Do we join regularly with His body, the church? Or do we only seek Him when we think we need Him? Or worse, are we content merely to claim salvation and then move on with our lives independent of Jesus?

What is your level of desire to commune with the Savior, Jesus Christ?

No Desire

Eager Desire

New Identity of the Believer: When a person places faith in Christ, no longer is the person a _____ to sin, defined by past failures or present struggles. The old, sinful self is passed away and the new, _____

self is alive and progressing, becoming more and more like _____.

The man begged to go with Him, but Jesus said no. How could Jesus deny someone's desire to be with Him in the flesh? We don't know all the details, but we do know Jesus is faithful and true, so we can trust His decision. At least one major consideration was His mission on earth: to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). So while the man could not join Him on the road to the cross, Jesus sent the man home as an extension of His mission—"tell all that God has done for you"—and the man joyfully obeyed.

Why might we be reluctant to share our testimony of the gospel of Jesus in our lives?

My Mission

Because Jesus has set us free from sin and death, we recognize and embrace His authority over every area of our lives as we proclaim what Jesus has done for us.

- **How will you obey Jesus in faith because of His authority over all things physical and spiritual?**
- **What are some ways your group can help one another experience community instead of isolation in order to combat sin?**
- **With whom will you share your testimony of all that Jesus has done for you to save you from your sin?**

Voices from Church History

"The devil has no power over those who belong to the household of God, and cannot treat them as if they were his own."²
—Tertullian (c. 160-225)