1. **Healing and Inclusion**

2-5 Luke 8:26-39

6. The context: Gerasenes (Picture of the Byzentine church located at top of hill)

7. – East side of the Sea of Galillee

– part of the Decapolis (10 Greek speaking cities)

* The 7 nations listed in Joshua 3
* Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites.

8.

* There may well be some Jews – Not far from there is a town called Gadera – The Gadites you may remember were a tribe of Israelites who did not cross the river Jordan but took up land on the East side. Of course, Israel the ancient nation and the 10 tribes were exiled long ago. If there are Jews here, they may not be the original Gadites.
* It is probable that any Jews living here are Hellenised (we know that there were a branch in Jerusalem the Hellenists)
* Greek/ Roman colonists – These cities had been formed by waves of immigration from the death of Alexander the Great in 323bc – through to the Roman conquest in 63bc

**Event Retell**

9. Jesus arrives and in his presence the evil spirits react. They react with fear and awe. They know the score. They know who Jesus is.

10. This man had somehow given himself over to these demons – Trauma, witchcraft, idolatry, lies about self and the world, serious sin, mental illness, drugs may give access to someone’s life. Whatever the reason his life is a complete mess –

11. What is your name? – legion

What we know is that not far away from this place was a Roman Fort. A legion 4200 infantry 300 cavalry.

A lot. Spoke of power and the futility of being asked to be removed.

12. Don’t send us to the Abyss

 – speak to this.

13. So swine flew

Why – This was a demonstration of Jesus authority over evil and it demonstrates the destructive nature of demons – they throw themselves into the water and drown.

14. This alarms the people herding the pigs.

Why were the people so afraid?

The Pigs represented income and food for the foreseeable future.

They were probably raising the pigs not only to eat but to supply the local garrison of Romans. They may well have been afraid of the Roman reprisal.

If they were Jews then they may well have been afraid in the way shamed people are – don’t judge me Jesus. Now go away.

Maybe they were in fact gentiles and afraid of angering local deities? Pigs were used as part of pagan sacrifices and rituals.

Maybe it is what R.C. Sproul says, “When the holy One is manifest in the midst of unholy people, the only appropriate response is dread.”

Maybe it is some combination of some or all of these?

The lesson is clear however. Jesus has authority whatever nation he is in. Authority of demons and whatever small g gods the people of the nations worship.

15. The healed man now right of mind wants to go with Jesus but Jesus gives him a job. Go home and tell what God has done for you.

 Mark tells us he went about the Decapolis.

Why important because of feeding the 4000

The lesson is clear

16. Everyone is included even the gentiles

Romans 9:25-26

17. Refer to Galatians 3:23-29

Radical inclusion

Part of the promise to Abraham

The excluded being included – not just honorable white males

It is easy to lose the significance 2000 years with the march of the kingdom of God across the world

Still we keep finding ways to exclude the homeless, mentally ill, the demonically afflicted, the children, the immigrant, the addicted, the indigenous, powerless; poor; imprisoned; naked; hungry and thirsty….

It leads to a question? Are there people I believe are outside the grace of God? Gays? Who?

18. When will we learn? Well everyday I need to be reminded that but by the grace of God there goes I and that when I look at one of these I am looking into the eyes of Jesus. Matthew 25:36-41 Jesus encourages us to see Jesus in the naked, poor, hungry, thirsty and imprisoned.

This is practicing the presence of people. Everyone I meet is a child of the living God.

19. God loves us as you we are but too much to leave us that way.

Reflect