

SERMON FOR JUNE 19, 2022

TEXT: LUKE 8: 26-39

THEME: A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION

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." 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:

I had an appointment with my dentist a couple of weeks ago for a teeth cleaning and a check up. As I was waiting in the dental chair for the procedures to begin, my eyes were drawn to a television screen hanging from the ceiling to my left. There on the screen were before and after pictures of people who had had dental issues but had these issues fixed by my dentist. The difference in the pictures, in the before and after of what the patient's teeth looked like were startling, people who had missing and crooked teeth before were transformed into having a beautiful smile. It was by all accounts
A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION.

We see other examples of radical transformations on television all of the time. Radical transformations of people losing significant weight, of people regaining hair on the top of their heads, even homes are transformed on

television into beautiful palaces. We are no strangers to things and people who undergo RADICAL TRANSFORMATION.

What we have in our text for today is an incident where one person has A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION, and this transformation not only changes his life but also the lives of those around him.

Luke records that Jesus and His disciples sailed around the Sea of Galilee to a place called the Gerasenes, a region inhabited by Gentiles. The populace was considered unclean and not worthy of being called the people of God. The Jews had little to do with these people. Jesus' boat landed ashore and as soon as He stepped on land a demon possessed man confronted Him. This man who had the demons had them for a very long time, and he would be considered the worst of the unclean. He was a grotesque sight. In order to keep this man from hurting himself and others, he was usually in chains and other types of restraints. The whole region lived in fear of this man. He came to Jesus wearing no clothes, which was how he was normally dressed, or undressed, as the case may be. No one wanted anything to do with this fellow, so he made his home in a cemetery, living among the tombs. He was one who would be considered socially dead, one living among the dead.

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. ³⁰ Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him.³¹ And they, that is, the demons in the man, begged Jesus not to command them to depart into the abyss. Now there happened to be a large herd of pigs, considered by the Jews to be unclean, nearby feeding on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them be cast into the pigs.

Now in a strange twist, the demons are allowed to go into the pigs, freeing this man from his demons, and now this formerly demon possessed man now has the opportunity to live a changed life, without chains, restraints, he is considered healed and normal and allowed to reenter society. This, you would think, would be cause for a celebration. But think again.

The herd of pigs runs down the hill into a lake. Pigs can't swim, so this herd now is destroyed. When the herdsman saw what had happened, they ran and told the people of the region. When the people saw what had taken place, that this demon possessed man was now healed, sitting in his right mind with all of his clothes on, they didn't rejoice. They were not interested in the RADICAL TRANSFORMATION. Instead, all they saw was the destruction of the herd of pigs. They thought having Jesus around would be bad for business. So they all asked Jesus to leave. So Jesus got into the boat and returned to the other side. But this man, who was now gifted by Jesus with a new lease on

life, he was thankful. When Jesus left he begged Jesus to stay with him, but Jesus sent him away, telling him, "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And that man went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

This man had undergone A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION. He who once was dead and lived among the dead, who was considered unclean and an outcast, is now granted new life by Jesus and is given a new lease on life. This transformation was not as a result of anything that he could do. He had nothing. He was like a dead man walking, no friends, no relationships, no clothes, no income, nothing he could call his own. He had a cemetery plot as his bed and a tombstone for his pillow. He was tormented night and day by the demonic. He couldn't get any respite from his pitiful condition. He was not just a prisoner in chains, but a prisoner to the demonic. If his life ended in death, he would die with no hope for the present or the future.

So how was this man's life transformed? By Jesus. Jesus came into the region, a region that no Jew would enter because the people who lived there were considered unclean. Jesus went there deliberately because His mission was all about bringing the Kingdom of God to sinners in need of salvation. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, the Jew as well as the Gentile, the outcast and the sick, those on the outside looking in. Jesus came to save sinners, by

His perfect life, innocent suffering, bloody death, and victorious resurrection. Jesus came to do battle, not with the sinner, but with sin, Satan, and death, giving victory to everyone who would believe in Him.

To show this, this demon possessed man was cleansed, the legion of demons that possessed him were cast into a herd of pigs, the unclean demons cast into the unclean animals, all to show Jesus power over sin and the demonic. This sinner was saved by grace, and received a new life all on account of Jesus, He underwent a RADICAL TRANSFORMATION, and now was given a new life to live to tell others what Jesus had done for him. This formerly demon possessed man became the first evangelist to the Gentiles, and spent the remainder of his life going throughout the Ten Cities, known as the Decapolis, telling others what Jesus had done for him.

You too have undergone A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION! Once you were lost and condemned, an enemy of God, all of your good deeds were considered as filthy garments before the Lord. But Jesus has come to cleanse you, He loves you, and He forgives you of all of your sins. Jesus has exchanged your sin tattered life with the holy white robes of righteousness, In your Baptism, God has washed away all of your sins in the rosy red blood of Jesus shed on the cross for you. He continues to forgive you of all of your sins when you receive the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Lord's Supper. Jesus loves you,

He lives for you, and He now sends you out with the words that He shared with the formerly demon possessed man: “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.”

Just as this underwent RADICAL TRANSFORMATION, so have you, all so that you can do what he did with his new life, giving thanks and praise to Jesus, proclaiming to others how much Jesus has done for you!

Amen