



the Source

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...

It was the Comedian Flip Wilson back in the 70s who popularized the phrase, “*The devil made me do it.*” And in the 80s, demonic possession gained prominence among some evangelicals for a while. Even now, exorcism has made a comeback among Roman Catholics. I read recently that as a result, Catholics now have a shortage of exorcists.

We live in a scientific age where all things must be confirmed and measured by at least one of our five senses, and mostly we don’t know what to do with things that can’t be so confirmed.

Whether we want to accept this story in spiritual terms only or want to impose some sort of scientific/psychological explanation for what happened, there is, as always, something deeper here to be gleaned.

You can’t help but feel sorry for this poor soul living naked among the caves, while tormented by demons. When people tried to restrain him, a spirit would come over him and he would break the chains. When Jesus got out of the boat and approached him, the man recognized Jesus as the Son of God and begged not to be tortured.

The demons did not want to be sent to the Abyss, so Jesus assigned them to a herd of pigs, a reasonable thing for a Jew to do. The hog herders rushed to town and told the story. When the townspeople ran to check it out, they found the man clothed, in his right mind and having a discussion with Jesus. They had witnessed a metamorphosis.

When Jesus got back in the boat, the man wanted to go with him, but Jesus told him to go back home where he could tell the people what had happened. Two points...first, a genuine encounter with Jesus will leave you changed, whether you are demon possessed or just a regular sinner; secondly, when a metamorphosis takes place, the event needs to be told. So, Flip...the devil be damned; he’s not a laughing matter.

— Joe Grove, First Church member

A Family Affair

Discuss a time when your plans were changed because of something you could not control, like cold or rainy weather. How did each person handle the change in plans? Change can be a game cancelled due to lightning or a birthday party cancelled because of the flu. When fun activities change it can be upsetting.

Together, read Hebrews 13:8. The Lord is our constant. He doesn’t change, no matter where you are or what you are doing. He is with you at your game or at home with your family. When we must change our plans, look for something new and fun in the situation. Focus on what good things can happen. Perhaps a change in plans means your family gets to see a new movie all together or make one of your family’s favorite dinners. Perhaps you work on an unfinished project.

As a family, make a rainy day box. Inside, place a dvd, coloring books, crayons, a deck of cards, or other fun things to do if your plans get cancelled. Write down the Bible verse and put it inside, and next time you must cancel your plans, take out the box and remember that God is with you no matter what.

Dear Lord, we know you are with us even when we may be unhappy our plans were changed. You are the great planner. Amen.

— Tammy Parks, Elementary Coordinator

Monday: Luke 8:26-27

If you stepped out of your vehicle and came face to face with a naked man who lived in the cemetery you were visiting, how do you imagine you would respond?

- When you read someone is demon possessed, what do you imagine is going on?
- What would you expect to see?
- What do you even believe about this topic?

Tuesday: Luke 8:28

This demon-possessed man recognized Jesus to be the Son of God. His misconception was that Jesus was there to torture him.

- How do you think you would react if you suddenly found yourself in the presence of the true Son of God?
- Whether you were demon-possessed or just a regular sinner, how would you feel if you were suddenly in the presence of perfection itself?

Wednesday: Luke 8:29

The problem the man had was that he could do nothing about his condition. However, Christ could, and he ejected the thing that was troubling him.

- Assuming you are not demon-possessed but rather just a regular sinner and able to eject sinful things from your life, what would you eject first?
- Second etc.?

Thursday: Luke 8:30

Jesus asked him, “what is your name?” It was apparently a practice in Biblical times to rename people as life progressed with a name appropriate to their true nature. Remember, Jacob became Israel, Abram became Abraham, and Saul became Paul. In this story, the man said his name was Legion because he was possessed of many demons.

- Based on who you are, if your friends were to rename you, what would that name be?
- If you were to rename yourself, what would that name be?

Friday: Luke 8:38-39

Now in his right mind, the man wanted to travel with Jesus, but he was told to go home and tell his story.

- What is your story? Do you tell it?