



Luke 8:22-56 – Jesus Exercises His Authority Over All Realms

He [Jesus] said to them, “Where is your faith?” And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, “Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?” -- Luke 8:25

We continue this week to follow Jesus’ ministry in and around Galilee, the north country of Israel. We know His ministry consisted of teaching about the kingdom—which He did authoritatively (Matthew 7:28-29)—but He also continuously displayed His authority. But notice how the lessons now are all for the Twelve specifically, not the crowds generally as when He began. Jesus prepares His own for the tasks ahead with intentionality and by His authority. We will study now the various realms over which that authority extended with four challenging incidents which appear to have occurred on the same day.

The first challenge (**Read Luke 8:22-25**) demonstrates His command over nature. As also told in Matthew 8 and Mark 4, Jesus embarks on a short voyage by boat across the Sea of Galilee. Mark’s gospel lets us know that Jesus directs the trip by saying “Let us go to the other side.” To Jews living in Capernaum, “the other side” is the area of the Decapolis, or Ten Cities, originally built by Alexander the Great and rebuilt around 65 B.C. by the Romans, and considered by the Jews as the most unclean place in the region. In other words, it was very unusual for the fishermen of the group to actually cross the sea and land on that side due to the pagan culture rampant there. But when Jesus said, “Let’s go”, they went, but there would be an uneasiness in their minds. Jesus is not uneasy and quickly falls asleep! Then, an unusually severe storm breaks upon them. Some commentators speculate this may have been Satan’s attempt to thwart the journey, but there is also an interesting parallel here with the book of Jonah. In that story the prophet Jonah disobediently ran away from his mission to pagan Gentiles (people of Nineveh, near modern-day Mosul, Iraq) so the Lord sent a storm against his boat trip, *while Jonah slept* (see Jonah 1:4-6). The professional mariners feared that storm, as the professional fishermen of the disciples of Jesus in our text, and in both stories they thought the end was happening: they were going to perish in the sea. But Jonah, running away from God, is thrown overboard for their salvation; Jesus, always in the will of the Father, has a different approach.

Jesus only has to rise up and speak to the wind and waves: “Peace! Be still” (Mark 4:39) and the storm ceased. This really freaks out the disciples, even after all the signs and wonders Jesus has already showed them. They

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are greatly afraid. What kind of man, indeed. To answer that, see Psalms 65:7, 89:9, and 93:4; but especially Psalm 107:23-32. This is a demonstration of the divine, of which all Jews should have recognized.

They make it safely with no further incident to the other side, only to be met by a wild man, even by the Decapolis' standards. **Read Luke 8:26-39.** This man is possessed by many more demons than was Mary Magdalene, which we discussed last week. The people had attempted to chain him, likely for his own protection, but the demonic control over him busted the physical bonds only to manifest as a lonely existence in the cemetery, running around naked. We see a human being, made in God's image, in bondage to demons—free from chains but enslaved to a total isolation from humanity.

Notice that after Jesus issues a command to depart, the demons, collectively named "Legion", identify Him by name and title: Jesus, the Son of the Most High God. They know exactly who He is, and they are afraid of Him. It is worth noting they make no attempt to justify themselves in His presence. Their very real concern centers on whether He would banish them to "the abyss" but Jesus instead allows them to enter into a herd of pigs, who immediately commit herd suicide in the water! What is the abyss? From the Greek "*abyssos*", the realm of the dead, we see it is something of a holding place for demons and a variety of awful entities, released upon the world in Revelation 9 as part of God's judgment on the world. But for the people of the Gerasenes, all they know is a herd of pigs are gone and the wild man is healed and restored. This freaks them out and they are greatly afraid, asking Jesus to depart. They see His work but reject Him! Notice Jesus' instruction to the healed man: Go and tell what God has done for you. He is the first witness to the lost people of the Decapolis.

Our last section (**Read Luke 8:40-56**) displays Jesus' authority over our bodies and souls as we are challenged by illness and death. A 12-year-old daughter of the synagogue leader Jairus is fatally ill and he humbly asks Jesus' help. As He heads toward Jairus' house we see a woman, suffering a discharge of blood for 12 years (with no help from physicians, Dr. Luke points out) desperately touches Jesus' garment. The point of this account is her condition means she is ceremonially unclean and unable to participate in worship and shunned by society. She is ill and isolated. She knows Jesus is the answer but is perhaps too ashamed and conditioned to avoid others to approach His face. Jesus perceives when the healing power leaves Him, however, and she can no longer hide. She is terrified but confesses why she touched Him and the healing. Jesus graciously commends her faith and she leaves restored with His peace.

Then the news comes that Jairus' daughter has passed from life. Not dissuaded, Jesus assures them, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well." Upon arriving, He takes His inner circle of Peter, James, and John, and the girl's parents into the house. In that culture, weeping and mourning is very loud and expressive. Jesus tells the mourners to stop their weeping as the girl is not dead but sleeping. Their response is a laugh of derision—He must not know what He is speaking about. But calling to her He commands the girl to arise and she does. Note Jesus tells the parents not to tell, in contrast to the man delivered from Legion. Thus, Jesus exercised His authority over: the natural world, the spiritual world, the human body, and over death. Praise the King!

Questions To Ponder Further: *Where is your faith? Or, put another way, in what do you trust? If your answer is anything other than the Lord Jesus Christ, may I earnestly encourage you to humble yourself before Him in repentance, and ask Him to take His lordship over you today? Ask Him to gift you with the faith to believe. Then, let's talk!*

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