

Ascension Lutheran Church

Pastor Godkin's Sermon for the week of June 19, 2010

Clothed and Made Right Through Jesus (Luke 8:26-38)

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father
Amen. Our text is from the 8th chapter of the Gospe

and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
According to St. Luke:

"The man from whom the demon had gone begged that
Jesus send Him away, saying, 'Return to your home,
done for you.' And he went away, proclaiming throug
Jesus had done for Him."

He might be with Him, but
and declare how much God has
done throughout the whole city how much

This is the text.

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, in 1973 there
was an imagination of the masses. There was a hysteria sur
rounding this particular film. It was a horror film that
had grossed almost half a billion
dollars. People's reaction to it was virtually unprece
dented. Some had heart attacks
and some vomited in the aisles of the theatre. The movie
was called "The Exorcist". It was
about a 13-year-old girl who had become demon-posses
sed. The masses were
mesmerized by this horror film.

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And why was that? Scary movies were nothing new. Bu
t perhaps the fascination for
many people with this story was the thought that this
demonic realm just might be a
mysterious and frightening reality. Demon possession
still happens today although we
don't perceive it oftentimes these days. But in the
time that the Lord Jesus Christ
walked on this earth, as we read in the Gospels, peo
ple were seemingly possessed by
demons left and right.

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When this event took place in Luke's Gospel the disci
ples had just escaped certain
ple were about to see Jesus exercise His
power and authority over a spiritual storm—the hu
ricane of demonic power over
man and His mercy are able even to restore that which h
umans have destroyed.

disciples had just escaped certain
of Galilee, they saw Jesus' power
ere about to see Jesus exercise His
ricane of demonic power over
Christ, but His power, His grace,
umans have destroyed.

Friends, the demon possessed man in our text is mor
e like us than we may realize. For
along time he had worn no clothes; he had not live
in a house; and even chains could
hold him. It says he lived among the tombs; he
experienced a living death of sorts.
We can only imagine this man's burden and defencele
ness and vulnerability.

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This similarity between him and us is not on the exte
rior; we all have clothes and homes
and a rather normal looking everyday people. But
as sinners, we too are troubled by
demons. Though we are not possessed by demons like
the poor man we are afflicted by
their influence. This man lived a life in isolation
from God and other people and our sin
essentially isolate us in much the same way. When
close our temper at that person
whom we see in traffic; when we indulge our lust
ful thoughts about the good looking
people on T.V.; when we carry around a burden of un
forgiveness, behind things such as

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these is ultimately rebellion against God. As it says, "Whoever does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love

But the Word of Christ is authoritative. Jesus' Word and they then had to ask Jesus' permission to enter tragic human conditions. Our merciful Saviour Christ better for the man. After exorcising the legion of Jesus' feet, clothed and in his right mind. He was

Now, Christ also transforms our experience. Through innocent suffering and death and resurrection, He and the devil. He brings us home to Him, He comes inside us and gives us His Holy Spirit. His Word begins

How does this happen? Through the preaching of Christ, the proclamation of the absolving Word, through Christ's Communion and through the Word and the Water in Holy

Like the man healed in the text, God gives us new clothes, as in Baptism He has clothed us with the robe of Christ's righteousness. Before his healing the man was out of his mind. He was unruly and raving mad. We tend to think of someone like this as being out of his mind, people in insane asylums and effectively lead us out of our right mind. Our rebellion away from the mind of Christ and our true identity

But through Christ's Word He transforms us and calls us back to our senses, back to the grace of repentance and the safety of His fold, He brings us home again by the ways, "Be transformed by the

This transformation, of course, is something we experience every day. Our growth as Christians is not constant. It is an up and down struggle. We are always working in progress and God's work of sculpting us in His image comes through our daily confession of sins and receiving His sweet forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ.

Christ has risen to transform our sorrow, our despair into hope. His last words to His disciples before ascending into heaven was, "Go and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and teach them to keep everything I have commanded you always, to the very end of the age." God will never leave or forsake you. He loves you and is with you always.

But sometimes we have questions for God: "How do we understand, so many things we can't explain. Why does suffering and struggle in life?

The man who was healed in our text had questions. He wanted to go with Jesus, but he was in bondage. The man wanted to be free from spiritual bondage. The man wanted to be free from pain. He wanted to be free from the painful reminder of his former life.

ys in First John 4, "Anyone who does not love God, whom he has not seen".

He brought the demons out of the man and the pigs. His authority changes everything. Jesus changed all things for the demons. It says the man was sitting at rest, restored to his Father's house.

His perfect life and through His death He saves us from the effects of sin, death, and the devil. He brings us home to Him, He comes inside us and expels the forces of darkness and gives us His Holy Spirit. His Word begins

Christ's authoritative Word, through Christ's Body and Blood in Holy Communion and through the Word and the Water in Holy Baptism.

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Jesus' answer was likely not one the man expected. He declared how much God had done for you. "God has done so much for you. Think of what a powerful testimony he would have for you. He would be to God's grace!

On this Father's Day, especially, we can ponder how much God has done for us. We can ponder the gift of fathers, their love and care for us, their love that is wonderful but really only a faint reflection of the greatest love of our Heavenly Father. As we grieve and feel the loss of our Christian brother, John, in our lives, we can also rejoice that by the great grace of Christ our Lord he is with our Heavenly Father in His heavenly home.

Friends, in this day and age we are so technologically advanced that it's almost too easy to explain away texts like today's. But it would be impossible to convince the formerly demon-possessed man that demons aren't real. I. For him, they were a very real danger to his very being. Then with the arrival of Christ, his demons were driven away, and he was restored to the Father.

As Christ came to you through Baptism and as He continues to come to you through His Word, He remains with you always. Hold onto Him by His grace for He drives away the darkness and He leads you in His path in the light of His Word. May His Word light your way today, and the next day, and always. For God lives to transform our isolation and desperation into the joy of being His children, even to the end of the age. Amen. The peace of God that surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

He said, "Return to your home, and do a special purpose for the man's life. Tell the people around him, what a

powerful witness he would be to God's grace!

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