

# NOTES FROM STEVEN DRIVER'S SERMON 19th March 2023 am

## SERIES FROM LUKE'S GOSPEL "God's love for the lowest"

### Part 13 "How to find rest in chaos"

#### Scripture references from the ESV

**Luke 8:22-39** One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, <sup>23</sup> and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. <sup>24</sup> And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. <sup>25</sup> He 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?"

<sup>26</sup> Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes,<sup>[c]</sup> which is opposite Galilee. <sup>27</sup> When Jesus<sup>[d]</sup> had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. <sup>28</sup> 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." <sup>29</sup> For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) <sup>30</sup> Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. <sup>31</sup> And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. <sup>32</sup> Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. <sup>33</sup> Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

<sup>34</sup> When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. <sup>35</sup> Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. <sup>36</sup> And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed<sup>[e]</sup> man had been healed. <sup>37</sup> Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. <sup>38</sup> The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup> "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.

How has your week been? The most common response to this question is the word busy. You might be busy with school, friends, family, work or practical matters to do with your house. It might be any combination of these, needing a variety of different skills at any one time. Meetings at church can add to the pressure and life generally is stressful, even for those who are retired. Now, technology means there is often no escape from the things we are involved in.

**No matter what your situation is, it goes beyond busyness.**

**It is chaos**

However, our culture tries to prescribe solutions to this chaos. Books on how to organise our time are in the best-seller lists. If reading a book doesn't help, then we try to escape from it. We watch the latest on Netflix, YouTube videos or maybe read an escapist novel or go for a walk. We book holidays to get away from it all, in an effort to recharge our batteries and get ready for the next bout of chaos when we get home. We look for anything that will give us rest from this chaos.

Deep down, we know that none of this really works, though they are not bad things. We can enjoy holidays, going for walks and so on. Even organising our time better might help a bit. However, they are not the answer, because when we return to our normal daily life or let our new found organisation slip, the stresses and strains of life return too.

**We cannot control the chaos of life, and nor can we escape it.**

Since the fall of Adam and Eve, chaos has reigned, and the power of chaos is on display in the passage above.

Christ got into a boat with his disciples and a windstorm happened. This was no ordinary storm. Some of

his disciples were fishermen and used to storms, since they were a regular weather pattern in the area.

They would normally have known what to do, but this was different.

**On the boat, it was chaos and they were in real danger**

Since the Fall, all of creation has been corrupted and throughout the Bible, the Sea is commonly used as a picture of chaos.

- God used water in a worldwide flood to cleanse the world from evil. It must have seemed like chaos at the time.
- An enormous body of water - the Red Sea - prevented Israel from escaping the Egyptians
- The burst banks of the Jordan made it impossible for God's people to cross to the Promised Land.
- Jonah was caught in a similar storm when he ran away from God. He had to be thrown overboard to save the sailors.

Finally, the depths of the sea are used as a picture of Hell. The place the demons were so afraid of - the abyss (v31 above) - was associated with the depths of the sea. Over the centuries, big bodies of water have brought major fear and denoted chaos.

The storm was a symbol of external chaos, but the demon possessed man demonstrated internal chaos (v26ff).

TV and newspapers give us a wrong view of the demonic. Demons are real and we need to look at what God says about them in his word. From this passage we can see that demons are dangerous.

The man had been cut off from everyone because of the demons that possessed him. Driven out into the desert, he was dangerous to anyone he met and had to be kept under guard. He was naked, and therefore shameful, so he had to live in the tombs. His life was a misery, defined by the chaos of evil which engulfed him.

We do not often see this today, and not to this extreme, but it can still happen.

Other causes would be looked for today, before reaching a diagnosis of demon possession.

However, this passage points clearly to the chaotic effect of the powers of evil on this world.

**This man was gripped by the powers of evil and as a result, chaos raged**

In our sin-filled world, we see the struggle with the powers of evil working itself out in life. The daily news tells of one event after another. These things affect us and those around us, causing pain and distress and bringing destruction.

**Chaos reigns! We cannot control it and we cannot escape it.**

## So what is the answer?

Luke shows us that the answer is Jesus.

In the midst of the storm, Jesus is taking a nap (v23)! When the disciples woke him, he simply rebuked the wind and the waves and everything was calm. He was not at all concerned about the storm and the sea. He is the God who:

- Controlled the sea that was the flood in Noah's time
- Parted the Red Sea for the Israelites to pass through safely
- Did the same at the burst banks of the River Jordan
- Calmed the sea when Jonah was thrown into the water

**When Jesus speaks, the very atoms in creation stop at his command.**

**When Jesus speaks, chaos becomes order**

This was not a storm that just subsided. It was an instant calm, such is the power and authority of Jesus. The fight between Jesus and the powers of evil is a very uneven match! At the sight of Jesus, the demon-possessed man cried out and fell down. The demons knew exactly who Jesus is. They cowered in fear of him, naming him the Son of the most High God. They fled into the pigs, and thence into the lake all at the command of Jesus.

**When Jesus speaks, demons run! The chaotic powers of evil shrink at his name**

**Chaos becomes order**

This is the Jesus we need to fix our eyes on, because only he has power over the chaos that reigns in this world. We need to know that Jesus reigns over all the chaos that surrounds us and that we get caught up in.

What should our response be? It is simple to say, but hard to live out.

**We need to fix our eyes on Jesus.**

We do not know what chaos awaits us as we go into this coming week, but this is what you need to do.

**Fix your eyes on Jesus and then you will come to rightly fear him.**

When they saw what Jesus had done:

- The disciples were afraid (v25 above)

- The people who saw what happened with the demon-possessed man were afraid (v35,37 above)

In both instances, the power and authority of Jesus over the chaos of the world was seen. However, the difference lies in what that fear led to.

- For the latter group, it led to rejection of Jesus. The power of Jesus was just too much to handle.
- For the disciples and the man who was healed, it led to wonder and closer following. The disciples marvelled at who Jesus is, and the man begged to be allowed to be with Jesus.

The disciples and the man had an increased certainty that Jesus had ultimate authority.

In any storm, the disciples now knew they could rest with Jesus instead of being scared.

The man now knew that no power of Hell or work of evil could overcome Jesus.

There is chaos all around us. We will still be busy in our lives and there will still be evil in this land. However, we can look to Jesus and know that he is in control of all of it and we are secure with him. We do not need to rush around and try to fix every problem that comes our way.

### **We can rest in the power and authority of Jesus.**

Like the demon-possessed man, we were trapped by our own sin. When Jesus declared **'It is finished'** on the cross, we were set free from the power of sin. The power of sin and chaos has no hold on us. This truth points to the future.

**Revelation Ch 20: 1-10** (please read in your Bible) tells us that Satan and his forces will be defeated. They will be thrown into the abyss and then into the lake of burning sulphur. As a result, we read: **Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more (Rev 21:1).**

There may still be sea, but the evil chaos it represents will be gone. We have a certain hope that the chaos that surrounds us will come to an end.

### **Jesus has won this for us**

### **We live in a chaotic world but we can find true rest in Jesus.**

This is hard to do, because the world will constantly try to draw us away from this truth.

We need to call upon all the means of grace and constantly remind ourselves who Jesus is, delighting in him.

- Instead of using social media to escape, open up your Bible and just enjoy reading God's word
- Instead of just going for a walk, consciously use the time to admire God's creation, knowing that he has given all you can see for you to enjoy. Focus on his authority over everything.
- Instead of trying to control the chaos by setting up new ways to organise yourself, lift everything up to the Lord in prayer, knowing he holds it all in his hands.

That is why Jesus says to us:

**Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matt 11:28)**

**That is how we are to live this life under the authority of Jesus, applying a proper fear of  
Jesus**