

Return to thine own house

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[0 : 00] Luke's Gospel, chapter 8. And if we read at verse 38, the 38th verse, Now the man out of whom the devils were departed, besought him that he might be with him.

But Jesus sent him away saying, Return to thine own house and show how great things God hath done unto thee.

Return to thine own house and show how great things God hath done unto thee.

Now friends, I'm pretty sure that most of you, if not all of you, would agree with me when I say this, that very often when we read God's Word, the Bible, and when we read such a passage as we have read tonight about this man living in a cemetery, running around naked, and so on.

And when we read about the wonderful experience he had when he came into contact with Jesus, no doubt many of us say, Well, it certainly is a very interesting thing, a wonderful thing that happened to him.

[1 : 44] We would all agree with that. But I wonder how many of us, as we read this passage, are not simply reading about a man who was possessed by a devil and who had a wonderful, marvelous miracle imposed upon him, but that actually when we read this passage, we're not looking at an isolated story.

We're looking in a mirror. And in that mirror, we see something of our own selves and something of our own life.

You say to me, How at that? You admit, perhaps, Well, I don't profess to be perfect in any way. I'm an ordinary person with my thoughts.

But I don't live in a cemetery. I don't run around naked and all the rest of it. And yet, as we look at this passage, perhaps, as we look at it briefly, we may find ourselves ultimately not looking at the particular case of this odd man.

But we are seeing something of ourselves. Well, let us, first of all, look at the misery that controlled this man.

[3 : 32] In verse 29, For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of him. For oft times he had caught him, and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters.

Here a man imprisoned, bound with fetters. What about us?

How many of us are bound with what? Some habit. Tied to what? To some sin.

The powers that are imprecise. How many people in your experience, apart from yourself, have you heard saying this?

I have in my ministry. I love myself, but somehow or other I just can't help it. I haven't the power to break that habit.

[4 : 37] I haven't the strength to turn away from that sin. The powers that imprison him.

What's holding you about tonight? Is there some habit in your life? Is there some weakness in your character?

Is there some sin that you permit yourself to do? Many of us know that experience. And we vow we'll never do it again.

But we can't break the habit. And we hate ourselves and we despise ourselves, but we're captive, we're bound, we're held. Is there any brother or sister here tonight?

Is there something that holds you? Is it a habit? Is it some sin? Look in the mirror of God's word and ask yourself honestly, every one of us, am I imprisoned by some habit, some weakness, sin?

[6 : 07] And then the second thing I want us to notice as we look at this passage, not only the power that imprisoned him, but the condition that shamed him.

He ran around naked. my dear friend, have you ever felt ashamed for what you've done? Has there been a day in your experience when you've looked at yourself and you've said something like this,

why in all the world did I do it?

Why was it so weak? Why did I give in? If I'd only my life to live again, but I can't. if I could only blow out that day.

He said, one of us here, but as we look back, we're not ashamed of what we've done. And maybe even more ashamed of what we failed to do.

I do not believe there's a single person here tonight, but you would have to confess, I'm one of them, something like this, if I had my life to live again, I wouldn't do it.

[7 : 33] If I could only take back those years, what I might do, but I didn't. You all know from your earliest days the story in the Bible of the prodigal son.

I remember, brethren, I was about 17 at the time. I went to church twice every Sabbath because my father was an elder and brought up to do it, but I was sort of a bit resentful, but I went out of respect to them.

And this night I went to church and the minister read the parable of the prodigal son. And in my weakness and folly I said something to myself when he read it, oh there'll be nothing new tonight, the same old thing.

And then the minister gave out his text. Do you know what it was? It was two phrases and the first was this, and when he came to himself and then he missed a few verses, he arose and came to his father.

And that minister seemed to point at me and he said, you'll never come to God until you come to yourself first.

[9 : 03] And when you come to yourself, as every converted person in this church would tell you, you can nothing but shame for what we've done and failed to do.

And then there's a third element that comes out here. Not only the powers that imprisoned him, not only the condition that shamed him, but the environment that encircled him where he lived, in a graveyard, in a cemetery.

What an environment! environment! My dear friends, what environment do you live in? What are you surrounded by?

Are the spiritual things of God pushed out of your area to the cult, to the matter? or are you living in an environment where God is no place and the things of God have no meaning?

For the spiritual factors, the spiritual things of life never take any place. the environment that encircled him.

[10 : 37] And very often, brethren, in our experience, as every believer will tell you this, we discover, oh, maybe we avoid the greater sins, and maybe there's no one here ever takes dope, maybe here no one ever drinks, no one here ever steals or imprison him like that.

But when we look around us, we know that in the environment of which we are, God has no place.

And then, the fourth thing that I want to look at in the misery that control this man, not only the powers that imprison him, not only the condition that shamed him, not only the environment in which he lived, but look at verse 28.

When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, what am I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of God, God, most high, I beseech thee, torment me not.

The inward conflict, the voice of Christ and the voice of the world, the conflict, leave me. That's what he said.

[12 : 10] Verse 28, as I've read, what am I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of God? I beseech thee, torment me not. Do you see the conflict? The call of God, the call of Christ and the other voice saying, forget it, put it behind you, don't bother about that.

And many times in our experience, we have that inward conflict. I wonder if there's a man, a woman of this church, a young person tonight, different. I said, have you that conflict?

The call of Christ and the voice of the world, not yet, put it off, some more convenient season. And when you hear from this very Pope or your minister or any other one telling you, that God tells us, behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.

You know that God is speaking, God says, be ye also ready for in such an hour as you know not the Son of Man come up. There's an inward conflict.

Will you give in? Will you carry on? Will you put it off to a more convenient season? And so we see in this man, the conflict, the voice of Christ and the voice of the devil that controlled him?

[13 : 44] Put it off! Turn me not! And so let us pause for a moment. Are we looking at a man in the Bible living in a cemetery?

Are you looking at yourself? God let us now go on to the second point. We were looking at the condition that controlled this man.

Let us now look at the miracle that transformed the man. Verse 35 life. Then they went out to see what was done and came to Jesus and found the man out of whom the devils were departed sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind.

What a transformation! Sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind. My dear friends, the man was transformed.

He was a different person. No longer running around naked. Sitting in his right mind. A miracle! And my dear friends, that's what happens.

[15 : 07] And in the mercy of God, that miracle can happen to you and me. For if any man be in Christ Jesus, he's a new creature.

Former things have passed away. All things have become new. He was delivered from the powers that had controlled him.

A man inwardly changed. I said this morning when I was preaching that I discovered sometimes it can be helpful if you can make mention in your preaching some real things that happen.

I'll mention very very quickly I'll cut it very short many years ago in the city of Edinburgh we were at an open air meeting one of our students was with me now a minister in the church Kenneth Caman we're a young woman from King Yossi a student she had been converted recently I said Lorna will you give your testimony and she said I've never spoken before I said well maybe you'll say a wee word and Lorna gave her testimony at the open air meeting at the mound and Kenneth came and saw this man standing listening very intently to her and he spoke to him and after quite a conversation he brought the man to me and I'll cut it short Kenneth came with me and I took the man into my car he told us he had been a chartered accountant he had embezzled considerable amount of money he had been in prison his wife and family had left him he was a week out prison he was living in a lodging house down in

Edinburgh and nothing to do and he went just for nothing he went to walk that night just to pass the time and he was passing the mound when he saw the crowd and stopped and he was listening to Lorna when Kenneth spoke to him he told us this we tried to tell him about the gospel and he turned to me I'll never forget it he says you told me that no matter how terrible my sin was and I told you what I done that Jesus Christ could forgive me didn't you you told me that he died on the cross and by his death it's made possible for every sin I committed to be forgiven didn't you I said yes he said I think you actually said something about the blood of Jesus Christ God son cleanser from all sin that my filthy heart could be made whiter than snow didn't you I said yes well he said if every sin

[18 : 04] I committed and I told you what my life was was forgiven tonight and if my heart was made whiter than snow if every stain was washed away as you said it could be it would be no use at all and I said why because he said the first half dollar I got tomorrow morning I would be back in a pub and it would be the same old story and I turned to him and I said my friend I'm sorry I didn't tell you the whole truth for the saviour who can forgive you is a saviour who can change you for if any man be in Christ Jesus he's a new creature and you can become a different man and he turned and he said is that right he kept up with him and by the grace of God he became a different man reunited to his wife and family every sabbath night the mound giving his witness listen brethren this man here sitting in his right mind at the feet of

Jesus his inward life transformed have you ever have you ever come and just before God says something like this Lord I see my sin thy word tells me that Jesus died and that by his death I could be forgiven Lord will you forgive me and Lord in thy mercy will you change me and by thy holy spirit make me a different man a different woman for thy word says if any man be in Christ Jesus he's a new creature and then I want you rest to notice something further not only was his inward life transformed but his outward conduct was transformed no longer running around naked sitting at the feet of

Jesus clothed in his right mind the world saw the difference and it's not only brethren that Jesus Christ by his grace and mercy can forgive us and change us but the world can see that we are different people did you ever hear this story I must admit I have told it many a time in preaching because it's meaningful to me about the great evangelist in Glasgow many years ago there were many it was in the Kelvin Hall it lasted a week there were thousands there and the last night of his

campaign one of the elders who was connected with the thing said to him there's a little girl would like to speak to you she said she won't be a moment and the evangelist said let her in and a little girl from Glasgow come in and she said this is the last service and no doubt there'll be a lot of people wanting to see you after

I want to keep you a minute sir she says and this was about 40 years ago she said sir will you take this and she handed him a bag of sweeties he said to her yes dear but why do you want to give me that she says because you given me a new what a life his wife and the family had left someone had coaxed that man to go on the first night to that campaign and he'd been converted and the little girl said you've given me a new daddy my dear friends Jesus Christ can do that for you and he can do it for me he can make us a different person and then the third thing we nearly finished what is it we saw that his inward life was transformed we saw that his outward conduct was transformed no longer running in a graveyard the old environment was changed completely what a difference no longer in a cemetery sinning of the fear of

Jesus and I want to say to any unconverted person here tonight and maybe especially to the young folk the devil tries to deceive us this that if you and I become a Christian you can say goodbye to happiness and pleasure the devil puts into our minds that the Christian life is a restricted forbidding thing it's a wall round up each one of us saying you can't do this and you mustn't do this and you're not allowed to do the next thing a restricted forbidding thing the biggest lie the devil put into the world I am calm says Christ that you may have life and that you might have it more abundantly and men and women any one of you here will tell you this that you discover the fullness no longer was this man at a graveyard seen at the feet of

[24 : 07] Jesus you all know that lovely little hymn oh happy day happy day when Jesus washed my sins away he taught me how to watch and pray to live rejoicing every day this done the great transactions done I am my Lord and he is mine he drew me and I followed on charmed to confess the voice divine brethren when you have Jesus Christ as your personal saviour and when the Holy Spirit has changed you and made you a new person the whole environment changes and there's one point I want to make it's this we unfortunately in the

Christian church there are many denominations many things separating us which shouldn't but I tell you this I've never met any Christian no matter what denomination he belongs to or she belongs to but we're all agreed in one thing many other things but one thing I've never heard any Christian arguing about and you know what it is we're all sorry we never came to know Jesus sooner the outward atmosphere is transformed and the final thing you'll be very patient I want to notice this we started by looking at the misery that controlled the man we saw now the miracle that transformed the man now notice finally just a word the mission entrusted to the man verse 38 now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him but Jesus sent him away saying return to thine own house and show how great things God have done unto thee it was a mission that surprised him the man said he wanted to go and Jesus says no return to thine own house can you imagine what the man would say what's the sense of me going everyone knew what I was they would say look what you've done what you've been and Jesus says no yes return to thine own house to the place where you're known and God will enable you to show the world what he's done for you and my dear friends have ever in the history of our land we needed men and women to return to their own atmosphere to the environment which they are of which they work are among the companions we need it today and God says to each one of us return to thine own house and show what great things God hath done for thee and just two things one thing further what happened did the man say there's no point of me doing that no he didn't he responded and notice what it says here in verse 39 return to thine own house and show how great things God had done for thee and he went his way and published throughout the whole city how great things

Jesus had done for him brethren we're living in an age you young people where you walk or the college you go to or the school you go to wherever you may be God needs your witness and he's saying tonight to some of you God I'm sure what great things God hath done for thee and it may be that there are people in this church tonight and it may be they're converted people but they've never come forward to witness at his table God needs us this is a message that he gives go and tell what God has done for thee and the man rose and he went forth and he told what God had done for him may God grant that we may hear his voice shall we pray oh Lord our gracious

God we just humbly ask that by thy mercy thou would bless our consideration of thy word tonight be with us guide us direct us and bless the witness of thy people in the precious name of Jesus Amen