

And they were afraid

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[0 : 0 0] Now as we continue in worship, would you turn with me to the chapter we partly read in Luke, chapter 8, and verse 35, and particularly the close of the verse, let me read verse 35.

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.

And they were afraid, these words, and they were afraid. In the passage we read together, we see our Lord at the heart of two great storms.

First, the storm at sea, and next a storm in a man's personality, in a man's nature, the gathering.

He was master of the situation in each case. But the strange thing, that the reaction to his wonderful power was fear.

[1 : 1 7] And particularly as it's strange, that the reaction to that wonderful case of healing and restoration in this instance was, they were afraid.

And the fear spread until they begged Jesus to leave their district.

If they had been afraid when the man was a raving mediag, it were understandable. But with reason restored, sitting in peace and sanity, it seems difficult to understand.

May I just tell you that this is a very common attitude to vital living religion.

Men are afraid of it. Men are afraid of it. They want to leave it alone. And they put as far a distance between it and themselves as they can.

[2 : 3 0] Now let us try to understand what that fear is. What did it arise from? Take this case then. Well first of all, I think they were afraid of a power that changes lives.

Men don't like radical changes. They are disturbed. A psalmist quickly puts it. Because they have no changes, they fear not God.

They are living on the dead levels. And their changes are disturbing. And manifestly, they were in the presence of such a power.

No. A power that was new to them. A power that operated in a human life as never before.

Several attempts had been made to deal with this demented man. Mark says that his friends tried to tame him.

[3 : 5 2] But they failed. Then they tried to chain him. But the chains were broken. And Christ then set about to change him.

The first two are human methods. The method of education is to tame human nature.

Often throw over a muckle of superficial culture. To tame our nature.

And the method of detention is to change. To put human nature in fetish. But this is the divine method.

To change. And Christ did change him. And that was obvious to everybody.

- [4 : 55] And it was terribly disconcerting. They were afraid. There was patently a change of mind in this man.
- He was now in his right mind. His mental derangement was gone. The frenzy subsided. Reason was restored. Unenthroned. The look of terror was gone. The madman's hunted look.
- Gave place to peace. Patently. A change of mind. But there was also a change in character obviously.
- His appearance had dramatically changed. Once he was naked. Bound with fetters. Dishevelled and destructive.
- [6 : 03] Now he's clothed. At peace and rest. Is that you say? Worth mentioning? Oh yes.
- I remember when out in Africa. At a native meeting.
- I saw two young men entering the service. And I was struck by their clothing. And their.
- I would say. Immaculate appearance. The old red blanket was gone. The trinkets. On neck and hands and ankles.
- Were gone. And there were. I would say. Beautifully clothed. Two young men. And I asked the missionary. What is two young men?
- [7 : 02] And he said. Oh they were converted three weeks ago. And what a transformation. In three weeks. You see.
- The normalcy of Christian character. Is part. Of the restoration that Christ makes. And I do put it to you. That clothing.
- Is a key to character. And that a lot of the. Erratic clothing of today. Is a sign. Of a sense of deficiency.
- Something to make up for. But when men. Find. Peace and restoration. They don't need.
- These helps. To self assertiveness. They are clothed. And there was also a change in his. Environment. And we are all keen on environment now.
- [8 : 04] Once he abode among the tombs. As if he. Belonged to the dead. Rather than to the living. Gone to.
- The grave. Before his time. Buried. Half alive. Entombed. With the breath. Still in his body.
- That was his old habitat. His old environment. That was his outlook. Now. Now. He is sitting. At the feet of Jesus.
- What a change of environment. And at the feet of Jesus. You know. Many and very diverse characters. Find a sitting place.
- A haven. And a resting place. We can think of a few. Can't we. Mary of Bethany. Sat at the feet of Jesus.
- [9 : 07] A drag in his way. The woman. Known as a city sinner. Sat there. With a heart. Overflowing.
- With gratitude. To her saviour. Chorus. Chorus. The ruler of the Jews. Sat there. An earnest. Suppliant.
- Seeking the master's health. In his domestic crisis. And then. They are joined by the gathering maniac. Atrophy of grace.
- What wonderful. Diverse characters. And they are all at home. At the feet of Jesus. There they all find.
- A resting place. A place of refuge. And so the gathering. Gave every evidence. That he was restored.

- [10 : 04] In his right mind. In his right character. And in his right place. That's a naturalness. As I tried to say this morning.
- The naturalness. Of the supernatural. And their reaction was. They were afraid. If they had been afraid.
- When he was a raving maniac. It could be understood. But to be afraid. No. Ah yes. They felt.
- There was a power at work. That they could not control. That they could not understand. That they could not penetrate into.
- But it changed. Human lives. So completely. As our body. And in the presence of that. Men and women are still.
- [11 : 01] Afraid. That's why they gave the cold shoulder. To vital religion. It goes too far. But I would like to suggest.
- A second reason. For that fear. They were afraid. Of a power. That changes lives. By casting out devils.
- That are within. There was interference. With a man's inner life. Other. Others dealt.
- With his symptoms. His mad outburst. His wild frenzy. His unruly behavior.
- That they did their most. To curb that. But the real source of it all. Was within. They were only dealing with symptoms. Christ came.
- [12 : 02] To deal with the disease. It was a case. Of what the New Testament. Calls. Daemonic possession. We know very little.
- Of the activity. Of the spirit world. And we must be reserved. Very reserved. In explaining it.
- Very little. Of the malignant. Evil spirits. That crawl. Above the universe. Making human characters.
- Their prey. And making context. Where they can. Their mission. Being to thwart. And to oppose. The holy will of God.
- This man then. Was devil possessed. That was a root of his struggle. Evil spirits. From without.
- [13 : 02] Came in. And took over. Took over completely. First. To dethrone his reason. Reason it is.
- That makes us most like God. And in hatred. And in hatred. To God. They attacked. His reason first. The warfare.
- On the floor. Of his nature. Was too much. For him. He felt as if. There was. A legion. A regiment.
- Of the Roman army. Doing battle. Within him. And he was no match. For it. Not only did they destroy.
- His reason. Dethroned his reason. They destroyed his liberty. Freedom of justice. Is a divine gift. To us. They attack that.
- [14 : 05] They took over. And put his liberty in fetish. His self-command. His self-control. All was lost. The strictum.
- Of his manhood. Man was made. In the image of God. And he became. The special target.
- For malignant forces. From without. Hating God. They hated. The man. That bore his image. So you can see.
- The cause. For this. Conflict. Within. A legion of impulses. And appetites.

Desires. And drudges. And animosities. Ravaged. His inner being. Completely. Took control. We are men.

[15 : 06] They said. So the poor man. Felt. That there was. A battle. Being waged. On the floor. Of his own manhood. His nature.

Was torn. Lacerated. Hurt. Between. Conflicting. Forces of evil. And he feared.

When he sensed. That another power. Was coming in. Torment me not. He cried to Christ. I have enough. To contend with. Torment me not. But coming in it was.

And in it must be. If it was to meet. The desperate condition. That had its seat.

Deep in its nature. So vital religion. Works from within. In mind. And heart.

[16 : 01] Heart and spirit. You remember. Sturrock Kennedy's. Cry. Dear Lord. That loose.

Lassiduous face. That leers. In my own soul. Wilt thou not smash it with thy cross. And make me free and whole.

What man or woman. But. Must have felt that. These inner devils of greed. And lust.

And passion. And hatred. Are real. And only Jesus Christ. The son of God. Can deal with him. With him. And.

When his fellow men saw this. Recognized this. They were afraid. To have Christ. Enthroned within. And his spirit.

[17 : 01] Dominating every thought. And desire. And action. That is too. Too radical. It is like being born again. Like a resurrection from the dead.

Like being taken home. Alive from the tombs. You know the woman of Samaria.

Felt the same way. When she sensed. That Christ. Was interfering with her inner life. And that he was opening a well of pure water.

In the swamp of her nature. She drew back from it. She put every obstacle in his way. She dreaded.

This inner. Interference. With her woman. With her being. Friend. That is where. Vital religion.

[18 : 00] Meets. With human opposition. Fear. That it goes too deep. If it stayed on the surface. If it was only superficial.

It was only appearance. It could be put up with. But now. It claims. The heart. The mind. The spirit.

All. In the labor crash. And men are afraid of it. The spirit. The spirit. And the third reason I would like to give. Is.

That they were afraid of the power. That in casting out devils. Destroys. Valued possessions.

those pigs, what happened to them could not be so easily tolerated. The Jews were forbidden to stop pigs. The Samaritans were half Jews. And it is interesting to know that they chose the half that suited them best for the occasion. If there is anything that would give them greater standing, they claimed the Jewish side and then they repugned it. And the Samaritans took up the pig business.

[19 : 38] And they had what we call today a corner in port. And they made profit from this illicit gain. And now all was swallowed up by the sea. Not a trace of it left behind. So they prayed him to depart out of their coast.

What about a demented man being healed? That was nothing. That pig industry was not safe as long as he was in the district.

You will remember what John Oxenhan wrote. Rabbi, be gone. Thy powers bring loss to us and ours. Our ways are not as thine. Thou lovest man, we swine.

And then the departure, he puts it like this. Christ went sadly. He had vowed for them a sign of love and tenderness divine. They wanted swine.

What is why. Let us remind ourselves then that Christ when he enters our life destroys what ought not to be there. What is forbidden.

[21 : 17] You know instinctively. Even if you do live in this permissive age. You know that some things are wrong. They are tainted. To tear them away may be as painful as plucking out an eye or cutting off a hand.

It is the amputation of the deceased member. In order that the body may live. You remember that's what Zacchaeus the rich tax gatherer did when Christ entered his house.

It is a solemn moment. It is a solemn moment when Christ enters any home. But it is most solemn when he enters a rich man's home. So many things are patently wrong.

And Zacchaeus left it. And immediately he began the dismantling. He took it down at once. And he says, I will no longer possess that. I must let it go and make amends.

The forbidden is recognized. The forbidden is recognized. Is repudiated and is cast out when Christ enters you. Let us remind ourselves again that Christ when he enters your life destroys anything that may hinder your progress.

[22 : 55] It may be lawful. It may be lawful. But it is not expedient. It is one of those things that easily beset you. That trip you. That defeat your efforts in a spiritual way.

Now there are things that we recognize. Now there are things that we recognize as lawful. There is the liquor trade. But what peril. Oh what peril it brings.

Now there is the fame. The fame Mr. Loughlin Mackenzie of my native parish. Is said to have been approached on one occasion by a man in his congregation. And asked, I am thinking of taking a public house Mr. Loughlin. What advice would you give me?

Mr. Loughlin Mackenzie of my native parish. And Mr. Loughlin said, well if you are going to be a successful publican you will need three things. The tail of a dog. The face of a lion. And the snout of a peat.

What is it? Yes. You will need the tail of a dog to walk. And to invite as many as you can. Into your house. Into your premises. You need the face of a lion. To stand up to everything. That is confronting you there.

[24 : 36] And you need the face of a lion. And you need the face of a pig. And you need the snout of a pig. To swallow up anything that is put in front of you. Without asking any questions. And the man raised his hands to heaven and said. Minister. I have nothing to do with it. Lawful. But all perilous. Not expedient.

And when you are going to do with it. And when you become a Christian. You will recognize. That Christ will give no quarter. To what is to ruin and impair your soul.

But I would like to go further. But I would like to go further and say. That Christ. Demands. That you agree. To surrender. What he sees fit to demand of you.

It may be left with others. It may be left with others. But not with you. Ah that's difficult. His love is individual. Passionate. And it lays its tender touch on you and said. Not you. Others can have it. But not you.

That's what happened with a rich young ruler. His nature was sensitive. Tender. Moral. Beautiful.

[26 : 06] And Christ asked him. To sell out all he had. He put his hand on his capital. Why? Because that was the anchor. That kept him. Rooted.

In things that destroyed the soul. He had. He had. To party that. Others might not. But he had. It. You see. He offered him. Something else. But Christ. To the rich young ruler. Christ demands.

Were to demand him. Sell out. Sell out. The demand. The demand was too. Sweeping. An offer of treasure. In heaven. Ah that was too distant.

And the price of discipleship. Take up your cross. And follow me. It was too. It was too irksome. And costly. And the young man couldn't make it.

The anchor went too deep. He couldn't lift it. And he went away. So. And the sob. And the sob of that lost soul.

[27 : 26] Rings through the gospel story. To this day. He was rich. And he couldn't loose himself. From his fetish.

faith of the Holy Spirit. And he capsized and walking away. Uh! Most.

Put those money away. Anything that is tainted must be parted with. Anything that is perilous, recognizably perilous to your witness must be shunned.

But anything on which he puts his finger and says, that's not for you. You must accept his will. It's love that speaks.

He knows, he understands, and you must accept. His loving kindness. Now what shall we say? This.

[28 : 35] Vital religion causes man to change. To change so radically that men become afraid of them.

As we see the gathering, once a maniac, now wend his way to his old home, a new man, the first missionary of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.

Had their reason to be afraid. Yes. Yes. On their terms. Yes.

They were afraid. He was recognizably the same, but all so different. As I ventured to say again this morning, Christ does not destroy your individual personality, but he lifts it from the mire.

From chaos and futility and confusion. And as Christ's man, you are to let go anything that would mar your witness.

[29 : 57] That would fatter your service. That would confuse your message to man. And of that, you need not to be afraid.

We will compensate you ten thousandfold in this life and much more in the life to come.

But that is human reaction to the miracle of grace. They are afraid of it. Afraid of it.

Let us pray. Blessed Lord, we recognize the folly of our own hearts.

How superficial. How self-seeking and how self-wise we can be.

[30 : 59] When all our wisdom is but foolishness. And all our richness are swiftly racks. Blessed Savior, deal with us.

And when thou dost deal, thou wilt deal faithfully, lovingly, and savingly. We leave ourselves in thy gracious hand.

Thou shalt not feel us. Amen. . .