This SAME Jesus at Gadara

2 Corinthians 5:17
Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

The Demoniac
- One day he snapped…
  - No one was sure exactly what caused it.
- There was so much going on in his life,
  - so many things had happened to him that,
- in retrospect, it was nearly impossible
  - to look back and pinpoint
    - the proverbial straw
      - that broke the camels back.
- But the fact remains, that one day
  - his life was dramatically changed.
    - Up until that day,
      - he held it all together,
    - he was the master
      - of an epic juggling act.
  - He put on the appearance of normality,
    - maintaining the façade on the outside
      - that led everyone to believe
        - that he led a picture perfect life.
- But he knew the truth.
  - He knew what no one else knew.
- He knew the fears that he lived with
  - and the doubts
    - that constantly haunted his mind.
- He knew the unimaginable pressure
  - that crushed his human spirit
    - until it finally broke his sanity.
- No one else knew.
  - No one else understood.
- After that fateful day
  - when he finally broke under the pressure,
    - his family and friends
      - were left alone
        - to try to cope
        - with this new reality.
- This man who had been a friend,
This SAME Jesus at Gadara
• and bondage of hell.

• They would never know
  o how his lack of self-control,
    ▪ how his inability to say no to his flesh,
  o had carried him deeper and deeper
    ▪ into the bondage of sin
      • until he reached the place
    ▪ where he could no longer
      • break free.

• They would never understand
  o how much he hated
    ▪ what he had become,
  o how much he loathed
    ▪ his own condition.

• And they would never understand
  o that he was powerless,
    ▪ in and of himself,
    • to change it.

• They would never understand
  o how much he yearned to be free
    ▪ and how hopeless
      • and full of despair
        o he really was.

• Sin had cost him everything.
  o His life,
  o his family,
  o his loved ones,
    ▪ everything was sacrificed
      • on the altar of carnal pleasure.

• The business he had inherited from his father,
  o the money he had loved with all of his being,
    ▪ the many fine things he had once owned…
      • everything was lost.
        o And there was no going back.

• After that fateful day when he finally snapped,
  o he was cut off from everyone
    ▪ and everything
      • that he had ever loved.

• He became the crazy man
  o who lived among the tombs at Gadara.
    ▪ The demoniac.

• The demon possessed,
• wild eyed,
  ▪ creature of the night
  ▪ who stalked the graveyard.

• This is what his passionate fits of self-indulgence
  o had gotten him.
    ▪ This is where his addictions
      ▪ had led him.

• He was the man that no earthly chains could bind.
  o Oh, they tried.
• The Bible says they wrapped him in chains
  o but the chains could not contain him.
• He was possessed with a demonic strength
  o that could break the shackles of iron
    ▪ from around his body
      ▪ like they were only strands
        o of rotten thread.
• The great irony was
  o that although he could snap
    ▪ the heaviest chains of iron
  o he was wrapped in chains
    ▪ of spiritual bondage
      ▪ that he had no power to break.

• Everyone was frightened of him.
  o No one cared for him any more.
• If ever he attempted
  o to venture back into civilization,
    ▪ back into the society
      ▪ that once had embraced him,
  o they came with their torches
    ▪ and their pitchforks to drive him away.
• They would chase him back into the hills,
  o back to the graveyard,
    ▪ where he lived among the dead
      ▪ because that’s all he was,
        o he was a walking dead man.

• And through the long nights
  o and insufferable days,
    ▪ he would vent his frustrations
      ▪ and his self-loathing.
• They could hear him in the city below,
  o wailing and sobbing
    ▪ as he cut himself
• with stones and glass.
• Yet no one understood
  o the hurt, pain, and torment
    ▪ that haunted his very soul.
• He hated them because of it.
  o He hated everything and everyone,
    ▪ but none so much as he hated himself.
• He hated what he had become.
  o He hated where he had ended up.
    ▪ He hated what his life had turned into.
• But he found himself powerless to stop it,
  o powerless to change it,
    ▪ powerless to alter the course of his life.

Then Jesus Came

• That’s the way it was,
  o until the day that he encountered Jesus.
• He first saw Jesus from far off
  o and when he saw him
    ▪ he felt the tremor of fear
      • that ran through the legion of demons
        o that resided within him.
• Somewhere deep within
  o the vestiges of his lost humanity
    ▪ he recognized the presence of deity.
• Somewhere within the recesses of his mind
  o he understood that in Jesus Christ
    ▪ he had discovered one that was greater
      • than the darkness that bound him.
• In an instant,
  o the bright light of hope
    ▪ pierced the profound darkness
      • that had him bound.
• Something stirred within him.
  o Something was touched in him
    ▪ that hadn’t felt emotion
      • in a long, long time.
• For the first time
  o in an incredibly long time
    ▪ he felt the faintest glimmer of hope.
• For a fleeting instant
  o the thought ran through his troubled mind
    ▪ that he didn’t have to live this way anymore.
• He couldn’t break the chains
  o that held him captive,
    ▪ but here was one who could.

• All of a sudden he began to run.
  o He ran like a mad man obsessed.
    ▪ He ran with a singular purpose.
• He ran to where Jesus was
  o and threw himself at his feet
    ▪ to worship him.
• All the power in hell could not stop him
  o from running to Jesus
    ▪ and worshipping Him.

• Yet, even then, the struggle wasn’t over.
  o The demons fought for control.
• When he would have said words of praise,
  o the bile of hell rose in his mouth
    ▪ and cried out with an unclean voice,
      • "What have I to do with You,
        • Jesus, Son of the Most High God?
        • I implore you by God
        • that you do not torment me."

• Oh how he struggled within himself
  o to take control of himself
    ▪ and simply worship this Jesus.
• But, it was a lost battle
  o for he had long ago sold his soul.
• No doubt there was anguish on the inside
  o as he recognized that this special moment
    ▪ might escape him.
• This was his only chance to be set free
  o and the moment was quickly passing him by.

• But then it happened.
  o He heard a voice that spoke
    ▪ with heavenly authority.
• He felt a legion of demons tremble,
  o as the voice of the creator
    ▪ of heaven and earth said,
      • "Come out of this man, unclean spirits!"
  o The legions within him
  o attempted to reason with the master.
• Let us enter those swine on the hillside, the cried.
Then, in an instant,
  • it was spoken
    • and it was done.
      ○ And EVERYTHING changed!

• In a single moment his sanity returned.
  ○ In an instant, the life he had lost
    • was given back to him.
  ○ In a moment,
    • just one moment in the presence of Jesus,
      • everything changed!

This Same Jesus

• I come to this pulpit tonight to tell you,
  ○ this SAME Jesus is in this house tonight!
• If he can set the demoniac from Gadara free,
  ○ if he can break the chains
    • that had that man bound,
  ○ he can set you free tonight
    • from whatever it is
      • that has you bound.

• Jesus Christ is the same,
  ○ yesterday, today, and forever.
    • He has not changed.
  ○ Anything he ever did,
    • he can still do!
• He never encountered a life
  ○ That he couldn’t change.
• He never met bondage
  ○ That he couldn’t overcome.
• There’s never been a depression
  ○ that he couldn’t break through
    • or an addiction
      • that he couldn’t set you free from.
• Whatever you face,
  ○ whatever is going on in your life,
    • Jesus Christ is the answer.
• I’m here to tell you tonight
  ○ that he has not changed,
    • he’s still the same,
      • and he’s still in the business
        ○ of changing lives
          • and setting souls free.
New Creature

- Our scripture text declares tonight
  - that Jesus Christ has the power
    - to make your life brand new.
- If any man is in Christ, Paul said,
  - he is a new creature.
- Paul is saying that Jesus Christ,
  - the one who created heaven and earth,
    - has the power to create
      - a new man or new woman
        - in your life.
- I want you to understand what that means.
  - We aren’t talking about a remodeled life.
    - We aren’t talking about the old man
      - with a new outlook.
    - This isn’t a self-help program.
  - Jesus Christ can re-create you.
    - He can make you
      - a brand new person!
- This is not just a mending of broken pieces
  - or improving on less than perfect realities.
- What this means is if you are an addict now,
  - you don’t have to be an addict anymore.
- If you are in bondage now,
  - you don’t have to be in bondage anymore.
- If you are a slave to past mistakes and past failures,
  - you don’t have to remain a slave any longer.
    - We are talking about a brand new reality
      - in Jesus Christ.
- Old things are passed away.
  - Old things are the things that once limited you.
    - Old things are the things that once had you bound.
  - Old things are the bitter wounds that haunt your soul.
    - Old things are the deep and lasting hurts
      - that have crippled your life.
  - Old things are the anger,
    - the pain,
    - the rejection
      - that has held you back all of these years.
  - Old things are the ties that bind you
    - to the way things used to be.
• When Jesus steps in,
  o old things are passed away
    ▪ and all things are made new!
  o A new creature,
    ▪ a new man,
    ▪ a new life,
    ▪ new hope,
    ▪ new dreams,
    ▪ a new reality,
      ▪ that’s what Jesus creates in your life.
  o Where there was once chaos and disarray,
    ▪ all of a sudden there is new life
      ▪ and new purpose.
  o That’s what Jesus has always done
    ▪ and will always do
      ▪ for those that turn their lives over to him.
        o He gives new lives for old!

Three Questions

• There are only three questions
  o that need be answered tonight
    ▪ and I already know the answer
      ▪ to the first two.

• Question #1:
  o Is there anything in your past life
    ▪ that can stop you from becoming
      ▪ a new person in Jesus Christ?
        o The answer is no.
  o If a legion of demons
    ▪ couldn’t stop the demoniac
      ▪ from worshipping at the feet of Jesus,
  o then nothing in your life
    ▪ has the power to keep you away from Jesus.
  o All of the guilt and shame in the world
    ▪ can’t stop you from reaching Jesus.
  o All of the pain and bitterness in the world
    ▪ can’t hold you back from reaching him.
• Jesus is in this house tonight
  o and nothing can stop you
    ▪ from touching him!

• Question #2:
  o Can Jesus really change your life?
    ▪ The answer is an emphatic yes.
The Pentecostals of Lake City

This SAME Jesus at Gadara

- The same Jesus that stepped off the boat at Gadara
  - is in this house tonight
    - and he has not changed.
- If he did it then,
  - he can do it now.
- There is nothing in your life
  - that Jesus Christ cannot change.
- There is nothing in your life
  - that is not subject to the authority of his name.
- There is no sin
  - that cannot be covered
    - by the atoning power of his blood.
- There is nothing in your past
  - that the life changing power of the Holy Ghost
    - cannot make brand new.
- There is absolutely nothing
  - that Jesus cannot do
    - in this house tonight.

- That brings me to the third and final question:
  - Are you ready to change?
- The scripture is plain about the fact
  - that nothing can limit
    - the saving power of Jesus Christ
      - except the human will.
- You have to be willing to change.
  - You have to be ready
    - to lay your life on altar
      - and walk away a brand new person.
- Some folks are never set free
  - because they never reach the place
    - where they really want to be set free.

- Jesus Christ will not force you to change.
  - The sad reality is
    - that some folks never reach the place
      - where they are truly tired
        - of living in the bondage of sin.
  - Tonight, there is freedom in this house,
    - and anyone who wants to be set free
      - can, indeed be set free tonight
        - by the power of Jesus Christ.
- It starts at an altar of repentance.
  - It starts by bending your knees at an altar
    - and professing your desire to change.
CLOSE

- When Jesus and his disciples set sail for Gadara,
  - they were overtaken by a violent storm.
- Jesus had fallen asleep in the ship
  - and would have slept through the storm
    - but the disciples were so afraid
      - that they finally woke him up.
- After they awakened him,
  - he simply spoke to the storm
    - and it stopped.
- The Bible says that they marveled among themselves
  - and said, “What manner of man is this
    - that the wind and the seas obey him?”
  - At the sound of his voice,
    - at the command of the creator,
      - peace be still,
        - the storm died.
  - They were just beginning to realize
    - that this Jesus is a miracle worker.
  - He calms the storms
    - with just a word of peace.
- Although that was an amazing thing,
  - It was just the beginning
    - of what Jesus was going to do.
  - The storm was just the prelude.
    - It was just the faith builder.
- The real miracle happened for the demoniac.
  - It was there, among the tombs,
    - that they learned,
      - not only can he calm the storms on the outside,
        - Jesus has the power
          - to calm the storms on the inside.
- That, my friend,
  - was the real demonstration
    - of the power of Jesus Christ.
  - Not only the wind and the waves obey him,
    - He speaks peace into troubled lives!
- Jesus is still in the business
  - of bringing peace to troubled souls.
    - He is still in the business
      - of making old lives brand new.
• Tonight, Jesus is in this house,
  o I extend to you an invitation…
    ▪ Come.
      • Let him change your life, forever!