

Today we will be continuing with looking at the demonic of the Gadarenes. And what I'm hoping we'll do today is just fill that out a bit more. Last week we looked at the demonic and we looked at the meaning of the cutting of himself with those stones and his crying out. And we looked basically at the torment that that man was in and we saw how that that reflected our natural minds. So today we're going look a little bit more at that and how the Lord delivers us from unclean lusts.

## Readings

### Mark Chapter 5: 1-20

*Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.*

*When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "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." For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!" Then He asked him, "What is your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name is Legion; for we are many." Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.*

*Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them." And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea. So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine. Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.*

*And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marvelled.*

## **Divine Providence 147**

*It will also be briefly stated how the Lord casts out lusts of evil, which beset the internal man from birth, and how He bestows in their place affections of good when a man as of himself removes evils as sins. It was shown before that man has a natural mind, a spiritual mind and a celestial mind; and that he is in the natural mind alone, as long as he is in the lusts of evil and their delight; and that during this time the spiritual mind is closed. But as soon as he, after self-examination, acknowledges evils to be sins against God because they are contrary to Divine laws, and therefore desires to desist from them, the Lord opens the spiritual mind, and enters into the natural mind through affections for truth and good; and He also enters into the rational, and from it disposes in order the things that are contrary to order below it in the natural. This appears to man as a combat and, with those who have indulged much in the delights of evil, as temptation; for there arises grief in the mind (animus) when the order of its thoughts is inverted. Now since the combat is against the things that are in the man himself and that he feels as his own, and no one can fight against himself unless from an interior self and from freedom there, it follows that the internal man then fights against the external, and fights from freedom and forces the external to obedience. This, then, is compelling oneself; and it is clear that this is not contrary to liberty and rationality, but is in accordance with them.*

## **Sermon**

Looking at the story of the Gadarene demonic once again today what we're going to focus on is three areas. We're going to focus on the conversation that this man had with Jesus, along with the demons that were possessing him. We're also going to look at the meaning of the casting of these demons into the swine. And finally, we will have a look at the refusal of Jesus to allow this

man when he begged him to go with him. We're going to look at those things in relation to our inner lives.

Notice that the first response to the presence of the Lord by this demonic was that

seeing Jesus a far off, he ran and worshiped him.

What is it that sees Jesus? It is what is human in the man or what is potentially human in our natural minds. The word for man we have come across before and looked at in our journey through Mark's gospel. And it is the word *anthropos*. And if you recall, it literally means *human faced*. We have also spoken about the meaning of the *faces of God* which are love, mercy, compassion, and goodness. And these attributes are also the face of that which is truly human. The love, mercy, compassion and goodness are embodied in the face of God in human form, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. Human beings are created to mirror these attributes in their interactions with one another. So we see here that the *anthropos*, the human form of the natural mind in our story, is out of order for, it reflects not the faces of heaven but the faces of the hells.

What we see here is that those faculties that should be in service to loving the Lord and loving our neighbour have become possessed by every unclean lust, putting us in a position of being controlled or driven by the very things we want to eradicate from our lives. The Lord's presence in us, if we are serious about our spiritual development, brings about significant disruption within our inner lives. This disruption, as we heard in our reading from the Divine Providence, is what spiritual temptation is all about. If we are to be delivered from the unclean lusts that plague us, that come out of our natural wills, then we must come to see that they do in fact separate us from the Lord. This is why Jesus, in relation to the demonic, is described as being *a far off*. It speaks of the realisation that we all must have that as far as those things in us go that fight against what the Lord is trying to do we are in fact in a state of separation. We also spoke in the past about the fact that this separation is what the sin or evil is all about - it's about being separated from the source of love. It's only when we have this realization that these things in fact do separate us from the Lord, that we will be motivated to try and close the gap.

The demonic sees Jesus *a far off* and we are told that his response is to run to him, to worship him. The demonic's response is to reduce the degree of separation, the difference in state, for this is what separation or distance

means in the spiritual world. So here there is, on the part of the demonic, a realisation of separation due to this difference in state. Without this perception of separation there will be no effort on our part to close the gap between ourselves and the Lord. When you look at this conversation between the demonic and Jesus, we see that in the case of the demonic it is very difficult to get a sense of where the man ends and the demons begin. We'll look at this shortly but the Text intertwines the responses so that they are hardly distinguishable. Is it the man that is speaking? Is it the demonic that is speaking?

What causes the man to run to Jesus, to run and close this gap? Is it his perceived need of deliverance or perhaps these demons drive him realising that they're going have to secure some sort of deal in order to maintain their life, hoping for a reprieve. We're not told but given this situation it's probably a mixture of both. If we think about our own experience of temptation we can see this. There is a part of us that knows its need of the Lord, knows it needs to be delivered. And then there's that side of us also which seeks to maintain the delights and pleasures our selfishness can offer. And we'll do anything, anything to see that that stays in place.

This sense of being unable to distinguish between what belongs to the man and what belongs to the demonic legion within him contains a powerful picture that highlights a key New Church concept concerning the ability of hellish things to dominate a person's life. What I want you to do is listen to this passage from the Arcana Coelestia 6206 and it says this:

To take the subject further, it should be recognized that all evil flows in from hell and all good from the Lord by way of heaven. The reason however why evil becomes a person's own is that he believes and convinces himself that he thinks and practises it all by himself. In this way he makes it his own. But if he believed what is really so, it would not be evil but good from the Lord that became his own. For if he believed what is really so he would think, the instant evil flowed in, that it came from the evil spirits present with him; and since that was what he thought the angels could ward that evil off and repel it. For influx from angels takes place into what a person knows and believes, not what he does not know or believe.

The hellish legion within us are the selfish thoughts and intentions crying out for gratification, constantly. When we see that these things, if we see them as coming from us, then we, for all intensive purposes, see them not just arising from ourselves but actually believe them to be ourself. This is illustrated in the

lack of distinction between the demons within the man and the man himself and it is the cause of his torment. It is the cause of all our torment. Believing anger is ours, comes from us, causes us torment. It doesn't come from us. None of those things fears, anxieties, anger, envy, jealousies, none of those things come from us. They flow into us from the hells. They want us to believe that they come from us because if we believe they come from us, we will not be able to separate ourselves from them.

We all want to be more loving and understanding people but we find we are continually letting ourselves down and particularly with those who are closest to us. If we don't believe things as they really are ... those things which rise up and cut down our intention to be more loving and understanding. That these things are from the evils present with us, then we have this inability to separate. We can't cast ourselves out of ourselves. We have to be able to see the distinction between what's flowing in and what is us. You see the problem, the Arcana points out, is that our beliefs form the basis for influx, and false beliefs about the way things actually are limit the Lord's ability to operate for good within our lives.

Angelic influence, heavenly influx, clothes itself in the ideas or beliefs that we hold that are true and it uses these to ward off the advances of evil spirits. Evil spirits on the other hand, use false ideas to maintain their hold within our minds. True ideas about the reality of spiritual life are contained in the Word and these can be highlighted and drawn out through our understanding of what the Heavenly Doctrines teach. The demonic, in approaching Jesus, is said to run to him. This word *run* means to expend all one's strength to attain something and in this case, to be close to the Lord and to worship Him. This speaks of our approaching the Lord in His Word.

Jesus, remember, was carried here in a boat and this boat corresponds to the ideas we hold about the Lord and spiritual life, ideas we have acquired from the Word and from the teachings of this church. These serve as vessels in which the Lord himself can be present with us. The Lord coming out from the boat and then being seen far off by the demonic is our recognition or insight that the Divine is indeed in these things. The Divine is in the Word and in our understanding of the Heavenly Doctrines. The Lord is present there. The Lord being seen far off describes our own state when the spiritual sense of the Word is beginning to come into view.

The demonic said to worship Him. Now this describes bringing our natural lives under the authority of the Lord's Word. That is what worship is all about. It's

about how we live our lives. How we tend to the thoughts and affections that flow into us. This is what internal worship is about. If the Word is to be understood spiritually, then we need to be in the effort to work its principles into life. It is this effort that constitutes true worship to the Lord and it is described in the running or the striving of the demonic. This principle of application is what brings the demonic into contact with the Lord. And it is this effort that brings us into seeing the Lord in his Word. Of seeing it's inner sense and from this, our deliverance is secured, our deliverance from the lusts of the natural will.

When we approach the Word with humility and reverence so then it begins to speak into our life. And we can see this here as Jesus begins to question this man of the Gadarenes. Remember, the man is our understanding and it is this that is being applied to grasp the Lord's Word. The inner sense of the Word represented here by the person of Jesus, works continually to lift us up from those lower loves into the higher loves of heaven. The Lord's goal is our salvation and it is secured by means of his Word. By means of the Word He works to remove what is unclean, what stands in the way of love becoming a reality in our day to day lives. But he can only do this when we are in the effort to remove what we see as evils within us. This effort provides the basis for insight into the quality of our thoughts and our intentions and that insight comes from the Word. This process is captured in the Lord's questioning of the demonic, which represents the activity of the Word in our minds.

What is your name?

The question is the Word searching our being that we might discover the nature and quality of that which lies within and is the source of all that blocks heavenly loves from becoming the governing principles of our life, of our being. With the discovery of the name comes the discovery of the quality. Up until this point the Lord has directed his speech to the man. Now we see that a distinction is made between the man and that which possesses him. With the discovery of the name the pronoun shifts from the singular *he* and *him* to the plural *we* and *us*. This represents a vital shift in our consciousness. It is seeing things or beginning to see things as they really are. Something we all need to come into if we are to be delivered from those hellish things that rule us from the natural will. When we are able to see that the evils that arise from within us are in fact not us but are the activity of the hells within us, then and only then can they be cast out. This shift in belief concerning ourselves paves the way for heavenly influx into the new belief from which these evils can be resisted. This gives a new slant on the statement or principle we covered a few

weeks ago, namely that Satan cannot cast out Satan. That which is within and seen not as us, can be cast out of us. You can't, as I mentioned earlier, have yourself cast out of yourself.

Now what occurs is the strange bargaining or negotiation between the demons and the Lord. How we to understand this? Well we have to pay careful attention to the Text to see what is actually going on here. Listen to verses 9-13 as I read them and pay careful attention to the subtle shifts in the use of pronouns in this conversation.

Then He asked him(the man), "What is your name?" And he (the man) answered, saying, "My name is Legion; for we are many." Also he (the man) begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them." And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine.

We see that Jesus directs the question to the man. Then he asked him, "*What is your name?*" And we see that it is the man who is said to answer, saying, "*My name is Legion*". Here we see that the man has identified himself or sees himself as the evil but immediately following this is the man's statement indicating the shift in consciousness for he says, "*for we are many*". The realisation that we are not what we see flowing into us is a major shift in spiritual consciousness. Notice now, that is not the demons who initiate that negotiation but it's the man and strangely he does it on behalf of the legion. Listen to his statement.

*Also he, (that is the man), begged Him, (begged Jesus) earnestly that He would not send them (that is, the demons), out of the country.*

Surely we would expect the man to be glad to see the back of this demonic hoard, but not so. We are told that he begged him earnestly, that he would not send them out of the country. And we get a sense here of a real fear being expressed and as with all change, so fears and anxieties rise up. But in the case of such a fundamental spiritual change as this in a person's being, the new belief displacing the old has an immediate impact on those spirits who have enjoyed, for however long, the cover of a false perspective about life. These demons realise that they are about to be exposed and so there is within an increase in the levels of anxiety and fear that they generate. When we undergo change like this we feel this anxiety and this fear as our own. This is because

we are still in the process of having the new belief established, the new belief being that all life flows in. And so out of this fear we seek to limit the effects or what we perceive as the effects, the loss of our life even, we think this process will have on us. So we beg the Lord to limit this displacement.

But it is too late.

The thing is about a new perspective is that once it begins to dawn, it is set in place and its impact cannot be halted. Once a new belief is truly accepted, we cannot go back to how we thought before. So the process must advance according to its proper order and the distinction between the man and the demons that possess him begins to grow wider. So with us, when we begin to see more clearly that the evils within originate, not from us, but from the hells the demons themselves now act, begging the Lord that they may enter the swine which is said to be feeding near the mountains.

We've looked at this concept of the mountain. We saw it last week. We saw it in the Lord when he called the twelve and we saw that the mountain represents the love. And in this case, these mountains spoken about here represent the loves of self and the world. These loves are the root from which every unclean affection and thought spring up. Swine correspond to unclean affections which can be seen in the fact that these swine are said to be grazing, feeding, taking their life from the side of the mountain, self love. Thus, they must represent affections that derive their life from the loves of self and the world.

What about these demons' entry into the swine? Well, this again is a progression in seeing the evils as separate from us. This is a reflection of an increasing consciousness of what it is in us that is unclean and where it is they come from. When this state is reached, the man or the understanding is no longer plagued by them for then they are able to be separated from us. With the releasing of the understanding through engaging in the Word and beginning to see its spiritual sense, we have an establishment within us of a better perspective. A new understanding of heavenly principles. And when this perspective begins to take hold, so then, there is no ground in us for these evils to maintain their hold. For, with the coming of a new understanding, the old is destroyed. So as these evils arise they are now able to be cast out back into the abyss of health where they belong, where they came from. This is illustrated through the swine running violently, headlong down the steep to be choked in the sea. They are cast out. And the man is free.



The establishment of this new understanding within us is beautifully described in verses 14 and 15 where it states,

so those who fed the swine fled and they told it in the city and in the country and they went out to see what it was that had happened. Then they came to Jesus and saw the one who had been demon possessed and had the legion sitting and clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.

To be clothed, spiritually speaking, is to have an understanding of truths, to have a perspective, a right perspective of life. So it is when the understanding has that perspective it is no longer insane but is able to sit with Jesus. But we noticed that it says that there were these others around and that they were afraid. The process is not yet complete for although the swine are destroyed there remains those who tended them And those others who are disturbed by what has occurred. Some of these are those who who drew their livelihood from them so they were attached to the swine and now they are left without a source of income, a source of sustenance. The unclean affections represented by the swine, their presence having been within us, have many other thoughts and affections related to them that remain. And the resulting disturbance is this residual aspect of these lusts, the residual feelings and thoughts that are associated with them which give rise to milder anxieties and fears within. And this fear, of course is expressed in verse 17 where it says

then they, (those who remained), began to plead with him to depart from their region

So we see that the Lord obliges. His presence as yet too great for this level of life, He enters once again back into the boat. And we will find this in our own experience. There are times when the Word comes alive and speaks powerfully to our hearts and while we desire for such a display of its power to be ever present with us, we are as yet incapable of holding it.

So we see that He enters a boat and from there, instruction is given. Remember what the boat corresponds to, from our knowledge and understanding of spiritual principles. So instruction is given, and the instruction is, is that we are to testify of the mercy and compassion that the Lord has shown to us.

It reads,

And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to

him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marvelled.

If Jesus coming out of the boat represents the opening of the internal sense of the Word, then his return corresponds to our return to a more external understanding of spiritual things. But now there is a difference. For now the power of the Word has been seen, has been felt, has been known. The power to bring healing and deliverance. And while the Lord can't remain with us in that form that brought the deliverance, his instructions to the demonic are an enduring lesson. Once having experienced the power of the Lord's Word in our lives, we need to reinforce the reality of it through testifying to the great things the Lord has done for us and how He has had compassion on us.

So it is that we began in the tombs and in those dead memories supporting our emotional dysfunction that seek to maintain their life through keeping things like anger, guilt, guilt, regret, self pity, fear, anxiety alive within us. And through his Word understood in the light of the Heavenly Doctrine, through the heavenly perspective these can give us, through that new understanding that awaits every member of the human race, we can be given new memories. New ideas about life into which the influx of heaven can flow. No longer do we have to dwell on former things. For behold, all things are made new and it is to these things that we are called to be His witnesses.

Amen.