

Declare how much God has done for you

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Second Sunday after Pentecost) is Luke 8:26-39. Luke follows the calming of the storm with the second of Jesus' mighty acts that come after the parable of the sower. For Jesus' disciples this is reinforcing the pattern of Jesus' ministry of teaching and miracles.

Even though this episode takes place "opposite Galilee" and therefore outside of Galilee, Luke takes pains to describe its relation to Galilee. This could be a subtle indication of Jesus' mission to pagans, since this was non-Jewish territory.

Certainly there are details in the miracle that may sound strange to the ears of a modern hearer who has never encountered a person possessed by demons: the nakedness, the chains, the madness, the abyss, and the destruction of the pigs. But for the first-century hearer, and particularly a catechumen in the infancy of the church, this miracle of Jesus would further confirm that in Jesus, God is present working already now his mighty acts of salvation.

Demons often recognized Jesus' divinity before humans did. The demon pleads with Jesus not yet to begin the eternal torture that is the eternal destiny of the devil and his minions.

Now free of his possession, the man sits in the posture of a disciple. Clothed, rational, and enjoying the company of other people, this fellow has been fully restored. (TLSB)

Although the man wanted to follow Jesus, he was directed to make the miracle known in his own native territory. There was no danger here of interference with Jesus' ministry. The man, following the order of Christ, promptly became a missionary throughout the city and region, declaring what Jesus had done for him.

We, too, have experienced an exorcism. In our baptism service we hear the words: "Do you renounce the devil?" "Do you renounce all his works?" "Do you renounce all his ways?" By answers to these questions we declare that the devil has no power over us.

Through Jesus suffering, death and resurrection we are saved from all our wrong doings. Through God's saving Word we hear over and over again the Good News of our salvation. The Holy Spirit keeps us in the one true faith. And, Christ gives us his body and blood to continue to strengthen us in the faith into we were baptized. But God does not stop there, he also provides opportunities to witness to his mighty work. In fact, he even gives us very words we are to speak as he assures his disciples when speaks of their future life activities.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us to continue to value what you have done and keep doing in our lives. Give me the wisdom and very words to be a good witness for you. Amen