

A Sound Mind

Teaching Tips

April 17, 2016

Bible Study Guide 7

Words You Should Know


A. Devils ([Luke 8:27](#) ff.) *daimonion* (Gk.)—Evil spirits; messengers and ministers of the devil. 

B. Command (29, 31) *paraggello* (Gk.)—To order or charge.

Teacher Preparation

Unifying Principle—Thinking Clearly. Sometimes when people suffer from an emotional or physical disorder, they might behave abnormally and even be a threat to themselves or others. Who can clear their minds and give them something to praise? Jesus once healed a man possessed by demons, then told him to go home and tell everyone how much God had done for him.

A. Pray for your class and clarity about the lesson.

B. Study [Luke 8:26–39](#) and underline key words in the text. Use a Bible Dictionary to find their theological definitions. 

C. Prepare the companion lesson in the *Precepts For Living*® Personal Study Guide.

O—Open the Lesson

A. Ask a volunteer to open the class with prayer including the Aim for Change.

B. Have a volunteer read the In Focus story. Discuss.

P—Present the Scriptures

A. Ask for a volunteer to read the Focal Verses.

B. Examine the verses, using Words You Should Know; The People, Places, and Times; Background; and More Light on the Text sections.

E—Explore the Meaning

A. Answer the Search the Scriptures questions.

B. Summarize the Discuss the Meaning, Lesson in Our Society, and Make It Happen sections and connect them with today's theme.

N—Next Steps for Application

- A. Summarize the lesson.
- B. Remind students to read and meditate on their Daily Bible Readings.
- C. Solicit prayer requests and close in prayer.

Worship Guide

For the Superintendent or Teacher

Theme: A Sound Mind

Song: “Have Thine Own Way, Lord”

Devotional Reading: [Philippians 2:1–11](#)



Bible Background • [LUKE 8:26–39](#)



Printed Text • [LUKE 8:26–36](#) | Devotional Reading • [PHILIPPIANS 2:1–11](#)



Aim for Change



By the end of the lesson, we will: KNOW the details of Jesus’ healing the Gerasene man from his demons; EMPATHIZE with those who have great troubles and to remember their times of trial; and START, support, promote, or work in a church counseling program.

In Focus

Elizabeth was at the church entrance ushering while her mother, Ruth, sat in the last pew. As soon as Pastor Caven stood up to preach, Ruth started screaming and waving her fists in the air. The congregation ignored Elizabeth’s mother screaming because they knew she had severe dementia. However, several visitors were startled, and stared at Ruth. Elizabeth quickly unfolded her mother’s favorite quilt and wrapped her in it. This handmade quilt belonged to Elizabeth’s grandmother and brought comfort to her mother. She immediately quieted.

After the worship service ended, one of the visitors greeted Elizabeth. “My name is Christine. I really enjoyed the worship service,” the visitor said. “I hope you come back to visit us again,” Elizabeth replied. “I wanted to let you know I understand how it is to care for a loved one. My father lives with me and exhibits some of the same behavior. I thank God for the help I get because otherwise I would be exhausted. Do you have help with your mother?” “No, it’s just me.” “Maybe your church can ask for volunteers to sit with your mother. Next week when I visit, we can talk to Pastor Caven about it. You are not the only one who is going through this.” Christine hugged Elizabeth before she departed.

Those in the church should be especially sensitive toward those who are caring for loved ones with mental disorders. What are some of the attitudes that keep people from seeking professional counseling?

Keep in Mind

“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” (Luke 8:35).



Focal Verses

KJV

Luke 8:26 And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.



27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

29 (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

32 And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked .

34 When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

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.

36 They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

NLT

Luke 8:26 So they arrived in the region of the Gerasenes, across the lake from Galilee.



27 As Jesus was climbing out of the boat, a man who was possessed by demons came out to meet him. For a long time he had been homeless and naked, living in a cemetery outside the town.

28 As soon as he saw Jesus, he shrieked and fell down in front of him. Then he screamed, “Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Please, I beg you, don’t torture me!”

29 For Jesus had already commanded the evil spirit to come out of him. This spirit had often taken control of the man. Even when he was placed under guard and put in chains and shackles, he simply broke them and rushed out into the wilderness, completely under the demon’s power.

30 “Jesus demanded, “What is your name?” “Legion,” he replied, for he was filled with many demons.

31 The demons kept begging Jesus not to send them into the bottomless pit.

32 There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby, and the demons begged him to let them enter into the pigs. So Jesus gave them permission.

33 Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd plunged down the steep hillside

into the lake and drowned.

34 When the herdsmen saw it, they fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran.

35 People rushed out to see what had happened. A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been freed from the demons. He was sitting at Jesus' feet, fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid.

36 Then those who had seen what happened told the others how the demon-possessed man had been healed.

The People, Places, and Times

Gerasenes. The Gospels vary in identifying this Gentile city. Mark says it is the region of the Gadarenes (5:1). In the King James version, Matthew calls the region the Gergesenes (8:28). Gadara was eight miles from the lake while Gerasa was thirty miles away. Both were cities in the Decapolis, which means "Ten Towns." We can say it is most likely a Gentile population who lived there, based on the presence of pig herds, which were considered unclean by Jews ([Leviticus 11:7](#)). There were a few Jewish residents, though.

Demoniac. A demoniac is someone possessed by a devil or demon. Sometimes demon possession causes people to have physical and mental ailments. Evil spirits can also cause some to act and speak in peculiar ways. Jesus made clear that demon possession is real. Every time Jesus encountered a demoniac, He spoke a word, commanding them to leave or release a person. They always obeyed because Jesus is Lord over all, including the natural and spiritual world.

Background

Many became Jesus' disciples, but out of the group, Jesus chose twelve to become His apostles ([Luke 6:12–16](#)). Not everybody could go out and represent Jesus to the world. But before Jesus could send the twelve out, they needed preparation. Jesus wanted to make sure they understood their mission and the difficulties ahead. He allowed them to share in experiences like hearing the Beatitudes, calming a storm, delivering a demoniac, healing a woman with an issue of blood, and raising Jairus' daughter from the dead ([Luke 6:17–9:6](#)).

Each of Jesus' encounters taught His apostles about His ministry and what would be required of them as they went into the world as His representatives. In [Luke 8:22–25](#), Jesus and the disciples were alone on a boat crossing the Sea of Galilee. A windstorm came and tossed the boat so much that the disciples thought they would perish, even though Jesus was with them. Jesus was sleeping in the lower part of the boat, so they woke Him up in a panic. Jesus rebuked the winds and sea, which calmed down. Jesus asked them, "Where is your faith?" They had seen Jesus perform miracles but still doubted. Jesus proved He has power and authority over nature. The disciples wondered who Jesus was that the wind and seas obeyed Him. Today in our lesson, the demons will reveal who Jesus is, thus answering the disciples' question.

At-A-Glance

1. The Encounter ([Luke 8:26–31](#))
2. The Deliverance (vv. 32–33)
3. The Proclamation (vv. 34–36)

In Depth

1. The Encounter (Luke 8:26–31)

The disciples and Jesus arrived safely on the other side of the Sea of Galilee in spite of the storm (Luke 8:22–25). The place they landed was called Gerasenes (Luke 8:26). As soon as Jesus stepped out of the boat, a demoniac man approached Him and screamed, “Why are you bothering me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Please, I beg you, don’t torture me! (Luke 8:28).” The demons recognized Jesus’ power over the spiritual world. The presence of Jesus as Messiah demonstrated the conflict between darkness and light. The demons were disturbed by His presence, as He represented the rule and reign of God, which opposes Satan.

Often we see people who are mentally impaired and try our best to avoid them, fearing what they might do to us. But Jesus did not avoid the man; He commanded the evil spirit to come out (Luke 8:29). He had compassion because the man had been tormented so long. We, too, need to have compassion on those suffering physical or mental ailments. God will direct us how to best help them.

2. The Deliverance (vv. 32–33)

The demons identified themselves as “Legion” (Luke 8:30). The size of a Roman legion varied over time between 4,500 to nearly 6,000 men. This signified that the man had many demons. The demons knew their ultimate fate would be the lake of fire (Revelation 20:1–3), so they asked to be cast into the herd of pigs. Maybe they thought they could escape God and their ultimate destiny at least for a while.

Jesus granted the demons’ request to leave the man and enter the herd of pigs. However, when the demons entered the pigs, they ran into the lake and died. This massacre revealed the demons’ true intentions: to destroy and abuse all life. Demons only have limited power; they cannot stand against the power of God nor Jesus’ authority.

3. The Proclamation (vv. 34–36)

When the pig shepherds saw this power, they told everyone in the area what they had witnessed. The crowds came to meet Jesus and see for themselves the man who once was demon-possessed, now sitting with Jesus in his right mind. The people were afraid and begged Him to leave (Luke 8:37); they feared Jesus’ power and were upset about losing a herd of pigs. If Jesus stayed, they feared they would experience greater financial losses. For them, money was much more important than ministering to the people. We cannot allow money and material possessions to take priority over helping people. Jesus always made ministering to the people His top priority.

Before Jesus left, He told the healed man “to go home and tell others all God had done for him” (Luke 8:39). The man did not completely obey Jesus’ directions; instead of telling all God had done, he went and told everyone what Jesus had done for him.

Search the Scriptures

1. Why did the demoniac man call Jesus “Son of the Most High God” (Luke 8:28)?
2. Give some examples of how the demons show or acknowledge Jesus’ authority.

Discuss the Meaning

Jesus showed compassion and healed the demon-possessed man. What can we do to help those who suffer from mental disorders? How does the power of God make a difference as we minister to those in need of counseling?

Lesson in Our Society

Many people suffer from mental and behavioral disorders. We often may think this is just limited to those we see in the streets talking to themselves and fighting invisible people. But this can include older people with dementia, as well

as children with Attention Deficit Disorder. What should we do about these people who are a part of our church congregations? God calls us to show more empathy and devise ways to minister to their needs.

Make It Happen

The most important way to support our friends and family members who have mental illness is to pray and show patience when they struggle with everyday tasks. In church, they may need assistance getting to their seat, finding the bathroom, or finding the Scripture in the Bible. Additionally, we can show support by being a part of those who start or support special counseling groups for those with exceptional needs.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do.

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned.

More Light on the Text

Luke 8:26–36

26 And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. 27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

This Scripture describes Jesus' encounter with a demoniac. Jesus reaches land in Gadarenes opposite Galilee. A man comes to him. He "had devils," meaning he was under the complete domination of demons. He has been under their control a "long time"; everyone in the towns by now had known about it. Luke accumulates details of the man's physical and psychological condition to probably point out that his healing will not be easy. He had previously lived in one of towns nearby, but now stays away from all social life. He could not wear clothes or live in a house, instead looking for the solitude of tombs (Luke 8:27), in the caves used as burial places. In Judaism, tombs would be unclean due to the proximity of corpses (Leviticus 22:4; Numbers 5:2), so it was understandable that the demons would prefer such a location since they were unclean spirits (Luke 8:29). The detail description also shows the destructive power of the demons. The demons' influence is not only manifested on the victim's spirit or personality, but also in his body.

The man throws himself at Jesus' feet, calls Him "Son of God most high," and begs Him not to torment him (Luke 8:28). The man speaks using the pronoun "I," but expressing the view of demons, shows he is totally under the control of demonic power.

29 (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) 30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. 31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. 32 And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

Verses 29 through 32 demonstrate the demoniac man's condition. Jesus ordered the demon to come out (Luke 8:29). To show the difficulty in healing the man, Luke explains that the man had been possessed for a long time ("had devils long time," Luke 8:27), which manifested itself with uncontrollable violence. The expression "oftentimes it

had caught him” ([Luke 8:29](#)) indicates that the sick man has successive seizures with intervals of calm, probably when he was chained.

Jesus cross-examines the demon, wanting to unmask all the demons implicated. The demon claims to be “legion” (Gk. *legeon*, **leh-gee-OWN**) because a plurality of evil spirits is involved ([Luke 8:30](#)), though the exact number is undetermined. The word “legion” refers to the principal unit of the Roman military in that time period, encompassing 3,000 to 6,000 soldiers. In mentioning that the demons are associated with the Roman military through name, Luke both criticizes the corruption of the empire and proclaims that Jesus’ power is greater than that of human might.

The demons themselves now speak, indicated by the use of plural in verse 31: “they besought him.” They beg Jesus not to send them into the deep, probably where they would be kept and judged (see [Revelation 9:1–2, 11; 11:7; 20:1–3](#)). This word “deep” (Gk. *abussos*, **ah-BOO-sahs**) means something bottomless, used in the Greek version of the Old Testament for the waters of the deep ([Genesis 1:2, Psalm 24:2, 33:7, 32:7](#)). The ancients believed that underneath the earth was a subterranean ocean supplying water to the world. In the New Testament, this word is used exclusively for the residence of demons, but not necessarily the place of eternal punishment.

The demons ask Jesus to let them enter a herd of pigs feeding nearby. The presence of pigs shows that the majority of people living in the region were non-Jews. The pigs are also representative of unclean animals, so they would be a fitting destination for unclean spirits. Jesus grants their request ([Luke 8:32](#)). His behavior is part of a continuing theme in the Gospel of Luke. He is not so much concerned with the demons’ destruction as much as the deliverance of those under bondage. The present time is for deliverance. The destruction of demons will soon be realized at the end of the age.

33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked. 34 When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country. 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. 36 They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

Verses 33 through 36 present the healing and the effect it produces. The demons leave the man and enter into the pigs; the pigs rush into the lake ([Luke 8:33](#)). The pig keepers run into “the city and in the country” to tell what had happened ([Luke 8:34](#)). People come from all over the area. They hear the testimony of the pig keepers and see for themselves the man healed; they are gripped by fear at the manifestation of divine presence and power ([Luke 8:35–36](#); cf. [1:12; 2:9; 5:8–10, 26](#)).

The story of the demoniac is a great illustration of what satanic forces can do to a human personality under their control: they bring the destruction of life. They “strive to overpower a man’s personality, and ultimately to break down his self-control, and to rob him, as they did the demoniac, of self-respect”. Thankfully, Jesus came to destroy the work of the devil ([1 John 3:8](#)). He has power over satanic forces; Satan and demons recognize Jesus’ authority and must obey Him ([Luke 8:29, 32](#)). We may not be necessarily in the same condition as this man, but we or people we live with are often prisoners of bad forces such as destructive habits or thoughts. We can trust Jesus to help fight bad thoughts and bad habits (see [Matthew 11:28](#)).

Say It Correctly

Gadarenes. ga-**DAH**-ri-nees.

Besought. bi-**SOT**.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Completeness in God
([Isaiah 61:1–7](#))



TUESDAY

Renewed Relationship
([Jeremiah 31:21, 31–35](#))



WEDNESDAY

Steadfast Love
([Psalm 119:41–48](#))



THURSDAY

Disciplined Freedom
([1 Corinthians 9:19–27](#))



FRIDAY

Freedom in the Spirit
([Romans 8:1–11](#))



SATURDAY

Christian Freedom
([Philippians 2:1–11](#))



SUNDAY

A Sound Mind
([Luke 8:26–36](#))

