



Table Talk

By Rev. Timothy J. Swenson • ILT Dean of Chapel

The Second Sunday after Pentecost

June 19, 2022

LUKE 8:26-39

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*"Then all the people...asked him
to depart from them..." Vs. 37*



The people went out to see. They found the demoniac, clothed and in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus (vs. 35). This man familiar to them for his demoniac wildness, strength, nakedness, and tomb-dwelling... this man sat peaceably engaging in discourse with Jesus. The people, now confronted with a transformation beyond their understanding or even beyond their imagining... they were afraid. Confronted by this scene, the result of the divine and holy at work, they could only respond like Peter standing waist-deep in fish (Lk. 5:1-11) in saying, "Depart from me... Depart from us..."

Great fear grasped hold of the people of Gerasenes. The immediacy of the divine and holy and the consequences of that immediacy struck them with fear... fear that this immediate divine and holy would turn its attention upon them, judge them either communally or individually, and then transform them into something quite different than what they now were. The immediacy of the divine and holy can do that... even now... even now when the presence of the supernatural has been relegated to myth, to the ridiculous, or to the entertainment of those who enjoy being frightened... even now when the immediacy of the divine and holy has been translated as the "loss of the transcendent."

Some, wrongly, attribute this supposed loss of the transcendent to Martin Luther who claimed the immediacy of knowing no other God than the baby who nursed from Mary's lap. This is the meaning of Immanuel—God with us. God is indeed with us, coming so deep into creation as to be an infant, helpless and powerless... coming so deep into creation that, as Luther would claim, his skin smokes. Luther has not presided over the loss of transcendence. Instead, he confronts us with the distinction between what we humans desire as a transcendent God and what God does with his transcendence. God, whose power, glory, and being, transcend the sun, moon, stars, and all creation... God puts all his transcendence into his immanence. God's infinity fills that baby's finite being. Does not this transcendence in imminence strike you with fear just as it did Peter and the Gerasenes? The God of infinite being, power, and glory... the Lord of Creation and Savior of the World is being handed over to you in the whisper of a word, a simple splash of water, and the bread (Christ's body) and the wine (Christ's blood)... imminent things yet transcendent beyond measure.

Table Talk: Discuss both the reality of our fear and the biblical phrase, "Fear not!"

Pray: Father in heaven, come close to me in your Son. Amen



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26 Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27 When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me. 29 For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) 30 Jesus then asked him, What is your name? And he said, Legion, for many demons had entered him. 31 And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. 32 Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. 33 Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

34 When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. 35 Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. 36 And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. 37 Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. 38 The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you. And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.



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