LESSON 13

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

JUNE28 2025

Scripture Story: Luke 8:26-39.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 34; 35.

"used-to-bes" and "has-beens"



Photo by Terrill Thomas

flashlight

"With authority He bade the unclean spirits come out of them. His words penetrated the darkened minds of the unfortunate men. They realized dimly that One was near who could save them from the tormenting demons. They fell at the Saviour's feet to worship Him; but when their lips were opened to entreat His mercy, the demons spoke through them" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 337).

keytext

"The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return home and tell how much God has done for you.' So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him."

(Luke 8:38, 39, NIV)

what do you think?

Indicate where you are on the continuum below.

The personal stories that others tell about Christ that inspire me the most tend to be:

Dramatic Conversions Lifelong Learning

1 2 3 4 5 6

Why do think that some believers who have grown up in Christ feel as if their experience is not as amazing because it is not as dramatic? Explain what is powerful about both types of experiences.

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did you know?

The broader region where this event took place is called Decapolis (Ten Cities). These cities are: Damascus, Dion, Gadara, Gerasa, Hippos, Canatha, Pella, Philadelphia, Raphana, and Scythopolis. Some towns you might remember, such as Damascus, the place where Saul (before he became Paul) was going to arrest a rapidly growing Christian movement. It is likely that this "has-been" or "used-to-be" demoniac spread the word about Christ so effectively that the believers in that part of Galilee grew like wildfire. It just goes to show how one person's story can change everything.

INTO THE STORY

"They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!' For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

"Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?'

" 'Legion,' he replied, because many demons had gone into him. And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

"A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission. When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

"When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left.

"The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return home and tell how much God has done for you.' So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him."

(Luke 8:26-39, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

As you read this story, *underline* the key words or phrases that you think shape the meaning of this event.

Read the context of this event (the events that lead up to this story) and describe the attitudes and experiences of Christ and the disciples as they face another frightening moment.

Circle some of the key words and phrases that describe the demoniac before and after meeting Christ. What do these details say about the nature of Christ's kingdom and the nature of Satan's world?

Based on what you observe in this story, how do demons respond to the presence of Jesus? How do you think the disciples and other witnesses of events such as this relate to Jesus' power?

How do you explain the reaction of the villagers to this event? How do you compare their reaction to Jesus with other stories where people received Jesus with adoration? What does this say about their previous knowledge of Christ?

Why do you think the man healed of the demons so desperately wanted to stay with Jesus and get in the boat with Him? How does Jesus respond, and why do you think Jesus urged Him to share what He had witnessed?

punch lines

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete" **(1 John 1:1-4, ESV).**

"He is your praise and He is your God, who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen" **(Deuteronomy 10:21, NASB).**

"Come and listen, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what he did for me. For I cried out to him for help, praising him as I spoke. If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But God did listen! He paid attention to my prayer" **(Psalm 66:16-19, NLT).**

" 'Come see a man who knew all about the things I did, who knows me inside and out. Do you think this could be the Messiah?' And they went out to see for themselves" **(John 4:29, 30, *The Message*).**

"They don't belong to the world, just as I don't belong to the world. Make them ready for your service through your truth; your teaching is truth. I have sent them into the world, just as you sent me into the world" **(John 17:16-18, NCV).**

further insight

"'Lord, save us: we perish.' Never did a soul utter that cry unheeded."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 335

"It is in working to spread the good news of salvation that we are brought near to the Saviour."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 339

Sabbath

Read 1 John 1:1-4.

Read and respond to the voting question in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. So often we think because we were not once demon-possessed or drug addicts that what God has done in our lives is not real, or as real as what He did in others who have had dramatic conversions. Think of heroes of faith in Scripture who were born into it, as well as those who had dramatic circumstances surround their conversion. In today's reading, what is required for you to have a testimony about what God has done for you? Also, contemplate this thought: "Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit . . . we are given the power to live a holy life" (The Experience of Salvation, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 10).

Sunday

Read Matthew 28:18.

Read the *Into the Story* portion and use the questions in the *Out of the Story* section to guide your study. This week's lesson portrays the power of Christ over the demons. Some may seem unreachable, but Christ has shown how no one is so far gone that He cannot save them. What part did you connect with, and what was God's message to you in this story? What is God's message to you in this text?

Monday

Read Luke 8:38, 39.

The *Key Text* this week comes from Luke 8:38, 39. "The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return home and tell how much God has done for you.' So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him" (NIV). What stories from the Bible or history portray one person sharing their testimony and having a great impact? If you could share your journey with Christ with three people this week, whom would you share it with? Why?

Tuesday

Read Proverbs 15:11.

Read the quote from *The Desire of Ages* in the *Flashlight* section and think about what it means for those people who seem to be beyond help. Note especially how Ellen White says: "His words penetrated the darkened minds of the unfortunate men. They realized dimly that One was near who could save them from the tormenting demons. They fell at the Saviour's feet to worship Him; but when their lips were opened to entreat His mercy, the demons spoke through them" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 337). Even when people spew out hatred, it is possible that there is still a part of their hearts untouched by evil that Christ sees and hears, and can restore. Whom do you know that seems so far away from God that they don't have any apparent desire to know the Lord? Begin praying for that small part hidden in the depths of their heart to grow and respond to God. What comfort can you draw from today's reading?

Wednesday

The *Punch Lines* in this week's lesson refer to the power of personal testimonies. Read them carefully and choose three passages that speak to you personally. Think of the various ways a person can tell their story to someone else. Perhaps it is in a song, in a letter they write, or in doing acts of kindness that prompt an onlooker's curiosity. Everyone who has experienced the mercy of Christ has a story. Whose story in the Bible do you resonate with the most? Why?

Thursday

Read Psalm 71:17, 18.

Demon possession is a real and undeniable problem around the world. In some parts of the world it manifests itself differently, but is still very real. The victory over such a problem depicts everyone's victory over sin by the grace and mercy of Christ. Again, everyone who becomes a believer, whether it is in a dramatic moment or over the course of a lifetime, has a rich, powerful story of faith to share with someone else. Everyone's story matters, and everyone's story is necessary. What is your story? One way to begin writing out your testimony is to consider three parts: (1) my life before I met Christ (or before I truly understood what He has done for me); (2) an event or experience that was a pivotal point in my decision to follow Christ; and (3) what my life is like as a result. Write out your testimony and stick it in your Bible so you have it to refer to, but also as a reminder of your journey with Christ. Make today's reading your personal prayer.

Friday

Read 1 John 1:1-3.

Reflect on moments in your life when you had the opportunity to share who Christ is to you. How did you respond? What might you do differently given the opportunity today. It is common that those who pray fervently for an opportunity to share their story with someone else are the ones who consistently share with others. How do you identify with today's reading?

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this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 34; 35.

* A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.