

## Luke 8:22 – 25

<sup>22</sup> Now on one of those days Jesus and his disciples got into a boat, and he said to them, 'Let us go over to the other side of the lake.' So they launched out. <sup>23</sup> But as they were sailing along he fell asleep; and a fierce gale of wind descended on the lake, and they began to be swamped and to be in danger. <sup>24</sup> They came to Jesus and woke him up, saying, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!' And he got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm. <sup>25</sup> And he said to them, 'Where is your faith?' They were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, 'Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?'

<sup>26</sup> Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. <sup>27</sup> And when he came out onto the land, he was met by a man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs. <sup>28</sup> Seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before him, and said in a loud voice, 'What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.' <sup>29</sup> For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, and yet he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert. <sup>30</sup> And Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Legion'; for many demons had entered him. <sup>31</sup> They were imploring him not to command them to go away into the abyss. <sup>32</sup> Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons implored him to permit them to enter the swine. And he gave them permission. <sup>33</sup> And the demons came out of the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. <sup>34</sup> When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported it in the city and out in the country. <sup>35</sup> The people went out to see what had happened; and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they became frightened. <sup>36</sup> Those who had seen it reported to them how the man who was demon-possessed had been made well. <sup>37</sup> And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked him to leave them, for they were gripped with great fear; and he got into a boat and returned. <sup>38</sup> But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging him that he might accompany him; but he sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup> 'Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you.' So he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

### Historical and Cultural Background

- *Jesus' new humanity*: Jesus just redefined our true family as our spiritual community (our true mother and brother and sisters) and as those who obey his word (Lk.8:1 – 21).
- *Calming the sea*: Any first century Jewish person knew that God alone commands the winds and the waves (Gen.1:1 – 10; Ex.14; Ps.18:16; 89:9; 104:3; 107:23 – 30; 135:6 – 7; Nah.1:4). In particular, Psalm 89 held that YHWH's covenant faithfulness to Israel and the Davidic kings is undergirded by His power shown over the *sea*: God had power over the chaotic sea and can bring life out of it (creation) or allow Israel to pass right through it (exodus), and Jesus is connecting this theme to himself.
- *Gerasa* was a region on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, populated by Gentiles
- *Tombs* were considered unclean by Jews, as were *pigs*
- *Legion* was a term for a unit in the Roman army

## Questions

1. Think about how the disciples experience these two events together. What emotions do they feel at various points? We're going to focus on the calming of the stormy sea story. But it helps to see what happened on the other side of the Sea. This is about Jesus expanding his mission.
2. Christians might interpret the calming of the stormy sea story as if storms = life problems, therefore Jesus calms life problems. I disagree. The Sea of Galilee = a physical obstacle related to the social obstacle of mission to the Gentiles. Therefore Jesus crosses barriers to engage others. He often brings us into storms that are related to crossing those barriers.
  - a. Like when my mom disowned me for living among Mexican immigrant families.
  - b. Illus: This is what we might be like when we resist Jesus:

A Crocodile became increasingly fond of the wallpaper in his bedroom. He stared at it for hours and hours. "Just look at all those neat and tidy rows of flowers and leaves," said the Crocodile. "They are like soldiers. There is not a single one that is out of place."

"My dear," said the Crocodile's wife, "you are spending too much time in bed. Come out into my garden where the air is fresh and the sun is bright and warm."

"Well, if you insist, for just a few minutes," said the Crocodile. He put on a pair of dark glasses to protect his eyes from the glare and went outside.

Mrs. Crocodile was proud of her garden. "Look at all the hollyhocks and the marigolds," she said. "Smell the roses and the lilies of the valley."

"Great heavens!" cried the Crocodile. "The flowers and leaves in this garden are growing in a terrible tangle! They are all scattered! They are messy and intertwined!" The Crocodile rushed back to his bedroom in a state of great distress. He was at once comforted by the sight of his wallpaper. "Ah," said the Crocodile. "Here is a garden that is ever so much better. How happy and secure these flowers make me feel." After that, the Crocodile seldom left his bed. He lay there, smiling at the walls. He turned a very pale and sickly shade of green.

*The Crocodile in the Bedroom* by Arnold Lobel, from *Fables* (HarperCollins, 1980)

3. When Jesus asks, 'Where is your faith?' in v.25, what is he expecting the disciples to have believed about him? That Jesus is ultimately on the side of life, and would have brought them through alive.
4. How should the disciples have known that Jesus is ultimately on the side of life? That Jesus would have brought them alive either way? From the healing of the centurion's servant and the raising of the widow's son.
5. Application: What barriers to Jesus' mission are you crossing or being invited by Jesus to cross?
6. Application: When Jesus brings us into storms as we follow him in mission, how much doubt vs. faith do you have? Does Jesus appear to be asleep to you? Uncaring or unconcerned?
7. Application: When you participate in Jesus' love for 'the other,' you get a much greater sense that Jesus is truly the God of the whole creation. How have you experienced this? How do you want to experience this?