

December 1, 2002 by Steve Brandon



The Authority of Jesus Christ - Over Demons

Matthew 8:28-34

1. Defiance (verses 28-32)

2. Resistance (verses 33-34)

Do you know anybody who knows a lot about the Bible and has experienced the life of the church, but doesn't want anything to do with Christianity? Perhaps you can think of a friend of your who grew up in church with you, singing the same Sunday School songs as you did and hearing the same lessons that you did. Everything that you experienced, your friend experienced as well. Yet, today, your friend is far from God and far from the church. Perhaps you can think of a friend whom you met at church and over the years, you grew to know and love this person. Together you experienced all of the blessings of Christ and the church. Yet, your friend has forsaken God and the church altogether. Perhaps this describes you. You come to Rock Valley Bible Church week in and week out, yet, on a practical level, you are very distant from God and know nothing of a saving relationship with Christ. You witness the tremendous love that the people here have for one another, but are left unchanged. And, if you were honest with yourself, you really don't want to have anything to do with Jesus.

I can think of many such people in my mind. On the one hand, this should come to us as a shocking thing! We can think of those who have once been enlightened to the joys of following Christ and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit as they share in the blessings of the church and have tasted the good works of God (Heb. 6:4-5). When we then see them reject it all, it comes as a shock to us. Our natural question becomes (like children are prone to inquire), "Why?" We ask, "Why is it that people can see and feel and taste of the glories of Jesus Christ and still reject Him? Why is it that people can clearly see and understand that there is a creator, and yet, still suppress the truth and believe the lie that we all simply evolved by chance? (Rom. 1:19-20). Why is it that those who have come so close to experiencing the joy of heaven on earth within the fellowship of the church can so easily walk away from it, and actually come to despise it?"

Our text this morning will give us two reasons why people reject Jesus, though they see Him and experience His power very clearly. We will see one reason demonstrated in the attitudes demonstrated in the demons that Jesus will cast out. We will see the other attitude demonstrated in the people of the city Jesus visited.

Matthew 8:28-34

(28). And when He had come to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs; they were so exceedingly violent that no one could pass by that road. (29) And behold, they cried out, saying, "What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" (30) Now there was at a distance from them a herd of many swine feeding. (31) And the demons began to entreat Him, saying, "If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine." (32) And He said to them, "Begone!" And they came out, and went into the swine, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters. (33) And the herdsmen ran away, and went to the city, and reported everything, including the incident of the demoniacs. (34) And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they entreated Him to depart from their region.

The first reason why people reject Jesus, though they see Him and experience His power so clearly is because of an attitude of ...

1. Defiance (verses 28-32)

Defiance describes an attitude of those who see the truth, know the truth, experience the truth, but fight it all the way. In these verses, it is the demons, who are defiant toward Jesus.

We begin this narrative with Jesus coming "to the other side," that is, the other side of the sea. He had embarked from Capernaum in the north-west of the sea of Galilee. He now arrives on the other side of the sea (i.e. the south-east). Matthew further explains with more detail that Jesus came "into the country of the Gadarenes." Exactly where Jesus went is filled with speculation. The speculation occurs because the parallel passages in both Mark and Luke say different things. In Mark and Luke we are told that Jesus came "into the country of the Gerasenes" (Mark 5:1; Luke 8:26). Some manuscripts even describe this region as "the country of the Gergesenes." They are merely different ways of describing the same place. Matthew is specific in identifying the specific city in which this took place: Gadera. Mark and Luke are more general, calling this location "the country of the Gerasenes." As members of the Decapolis (a united

The narrative continues in verse 28, "Two men who were demon possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs; they were so exceedingly violent that no one could pass by that road." We get the sense here that as soon as Jesus got out of His boat (having traveled through the night on his red-eye boat ride), He immediately encounters two men. Apparently, these two men knew somehow of Jesus coming into the region, for they had come "out of the tombs" to meet Jesus. When Jesus' boat landed, He didn't raid their party. Rather, they came from their dwelling places to raid Jesus' party.

We are told several things about these men.

1. They were demon-possessed (verse 28).

The Greek here is one word. They were "demonized." The sense is that demons came into them to reside in them. Thus, the demons were controlling these two men. We will see in verses 29 and 31 that when these men speak, it is these demons who are actually doing the talking. If you read Mark or Luke's account, you will find out that Jesus will ask one of these men, "What is your name?" To which the demons reply, "My name is Legion; for we are many" (Mark 5:9). This is an example of demon-possession. It is to be entirely controlled by evil spirits called demons.

Demon was a common phenomenon in the time of Jesus. Matthew has already mentioned this in Matthew 8:16, "They brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word." On several other occasion, Matthew will mention other demons. In Matthew 9:32-34, we will see a dumb man who was demon-possessed. The demon had so controlled this man that he prohibited him from speaking. However, when the demon was forced out of this man by Jesus, he was able to speak. We see a similar occurrence in Matthew 12:22-23, where there was a man, so controlled by a demon that he was unable to speak or to see! Yet, when Jesus cast this demon from the man, he "spoke and saw" (Matt. 12:22).

When a demon possesses an individual, the demon takes over the person's body. In the cases above, the demon shut down certain bodily functions. In Matthew 17:14-18, we see the demon forcing a boy to fall into fire and into water, thereby injuring him. When the demon came out of the boy, he was cured at once of this habit, which was forced upon him by the demon within him.

I don't believe that demon possession is so common today for us in America. Some would disagree, finding demon-possessed people all over the place and under every door. I haven't personally experienced anybody who has been demon-possessed. Yet, I have heard of missionaries, who have spend time in other countries come back and describe similar things as here described in Matthew with demon-possessed people. I believe that the difference is that our country has been blessed with much gospel light. Where there is much gospel light, there is less demonic activity. Yet, in countries where animism and spiritism abounds, so also does demon possession.

The next several descriptions of these men will give us an even greater picture of demon-possession.

2. They lived in the tombs (verse 28).

Though Matthew tells us only that they came from the tombs, we know from Mark and Luke that they actually lived among the tombs. They didn't live in a house, they lived in a graveyard near Gadera. Remember, these tombs were more like caves dug into the rock. In these caves they found shelter from the elements around them.

Demons and dead bodies go together. Even in our minds, we link these two things. When Halloween roles around, we are forced to think about demons and evil spirits. Often, in the decorations for Halloween, we see grave makers and tombstones. We often see dead bodies or skeletons. As they were demon possessed, it was natural for them to dwell among the tombs. We even admit this connection as well. I'm not sure whether there are ny of us who would like to walk alone in a cemetery at night.

3. They were very violent (verse 28).

The Greek word given here to describe these men denotes that they were hard to deal with. They were fierce and savage. They were unreasoning. Apparently, Jesus and His disciples were trying to pass these men using this particular road, but these demon-possessed men were prohibiting them from passing by because of their violence. In fact, nobody from the town of Gadera could pass this road as well.

Mark and Luke give us more details concerning these men. Luke said that one of these man hadn't put on clothing in a long time (Luke 8:27). Mark tells us that this man was constantly, day and night, "crying out and gashing himself with stones" (Mark 5:5). Mark also describes the violence of these men by mentioning that those in the city had tried to restrain at least one of these men with shackles and chains. Yet, these men were so strong that they simply broke the shackles that were place upon them. This is equivalent to a police officer coming to arrest an individual and placing them in hand-cuffs behind his back, but the individual is so strong that he breaks the hand-cuffs. The city had done this upon several occasions, but we are told in Mark 5:4, "No one was strong enough to subdue him."

So picture it here. Jesus and His disciples just land in this region. These men comes running up to Jesus and His disciples from the tombs. These men are stark naked. These men had cuts and scars across their whole body. Perhaps portions of their arms or legs were bleeding. They weren't big and bulky like Arnold Schwarzenegger. They were probably normal sized men, but with a fiery and feisty look in their eyes. They looked incredibly strong and mean, due to their violent appearance. They were resisting Jesus and His disciples from crossing this man along this road.

WWYD? What Would You Do in this situation? I know that I would tap Jesus on the shoulder and say, "Uh, Jesus, perhaps we had better go up the road, the other way. If you really have your heart upon going to Gadera, perhaps we can take the long way around." Well, we see what Jesus would do. He confronts the situation head on. And thus, He demonstrates His authority over these supernatural demons in the presence of these disciples.

In verse 29 we find these men speaking to Jesus, "And behold, they cried out, saying, 'What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?'" We see these men ask two questions of Jesus. (Actually, they are the demons speaking, rather than the men). Both of these questions are really expressions of their own hatred and hostility toward Jesus. Their questions weren't seeking any information. Rather, they were expressions of their defiance.

First, they ask, "What do we have to do with You, Son of God?" They were defiant against Jesus, not hiding their antagonism. Jesus had come into their home turf and they didn't like it at all. Jesus was received into their country about as well as the United Nations weapons inspectors have been received into Iraq. This first question deals with their hostility of Jesus. The second question deals with the activity of Jesus.

Second, they ask, "Have You come here to torment us before the time?" These demons knew that Jesus was more powerful than they were. This is an incredible admission on their part. There was nobody in the whole country of the Gadarenes who was able to contain these wild, demon-possessed men. Yet, they fully acknowledged that Jesus was more powerful than they were. In defiance they said, "Have You come here to torment us?" It is almost as if these demons ask, "What have we done? We are way off here in Gentile territory. We are minding our own business. We aren't going after the people of God. We haven't even touched a Jew. And You are coming here to bother us?"

It is insightful to note here that these demons have incredible knowledge. In their first question, they display correct Christology. They identify Jesus as the "Son of God." I believe that this is what Matthew is really trying to get at in this section we have been studying of Christ's miracles. We are to see the power and authority of Jesus Christ and believe that He, indeed, is the Son of God.

By the way, this is the whole reason why the Bible was written. John wrote his gospel, "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). In some sense, this is the purpose of all of Scripture. It is written that you might have the correct Christology, like these demons. But, unlike these demons, it is when you believe these things that you have life in His name.

In their second question, they display correct eschatology. The fact that Jesus has confronted these demons has confused them, because of their correct eschatology. They know that they are headed for eternal torment. Rev. 20:10 says, "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." But they also know that the time for that hasn't yet come. Yet, it appears as if Jesus has come to torment them before the time.

So, these demons have incredible knowledge of Jesus and their own destiny. Yet, they remain defiant toward Jesus, rather than humbly accepting the truth, they are fighting against it.

There is a lesson for us to learn here. Knowledge of God isn't the key to repentance. The demons are some of the most orthodox creatures in the world. Here they get their Christology correct. Here they get their eschatology correct. We know elsewhere that they their theology correct. James tells us, "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder" (James 2:19). And yet, there is no sorrow in them, which would cause them to repent and turn from their rebellion against the Most High God. They are committed to fight against God and the establishment of His kingdom until the very end. And as these demons demonstrate, they know that they are headed for "the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). There is no attempt at reconciliation. They are soldiers loyal to their master, until the end.

In this way, they remind me of the men in the future who will experience the wrath of God in the bowl judgments to be poured out upon them. These men see and understand and believe that God is all powerful, but they still remain unrepentant. We read, "And the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given it was given it to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues; and they did not repent so as to give Him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds" (Rev. 16:8-11). Likewise, these demons have full disclosure and revelation of God and His power and authority over them. Yet, they have demonstrated a defiance against Jesus Christ.

What we see demonstrated by the demons has great application to us. Great Christology, great eschatology, and great theology isn't sufficient to lead a sinner to repentance. It isn't great knowledge that leads a sinner to acknowledge his sin before a holy God. We have sung at RVBC the words to James Montgomery Boice's hymn, ...

If sinners could be saved from sin by philosophical debate,
The wise, the brilliant, might get in, but what of those of low estate?

But, what do we notice among men? We notice that the brightest and smartest of all men are most often the ones who express their hatred for God in the greatest ways (for they are most capable). They are the intellectuals, who write books against Christianity. They are those who are puffed up in their knowledge and find refuge in their own intelligence. They are the ones who think that they have it all figured out, since they believe themselves to be so smart.

But God doesn't have mercy upon the intelligent, rather God looks favorably upon the broken and contrite of heart. God looks upon the one who cries to Him for mercy. And mercy is readily available at the cross of Jesus Christ. For those who acknowledge their sin and their desperate need for a Savior, forgiveness with God and reconciliation with Him are found by believing in Christ's work done on the cross.

The demons, however, are defiant and rebellious to the end. Though they know much and have experienced much, they want nothing to do with Jesus Christ.

Matthew records what happened next, beginning with verse 30, "Now there was at a distance from them a herd of many swine feeding. And the demons began to entreat Him, saying, 'If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.'" (verses 30-31). These demons have already admitted defeat. They knew that if Jesus wanted to cast them out of these wild-men, there was no way for them to resist the plans of Jesus.

Note, here that this admission on the part of the demons is quite an acknowledgment of exactly who Jesus was. Contrary to popular thought today, demons don't have to obey everybody who issues orders to them. There was a time, in the life of Jesus, when He was up on a mountain with Peter, James and John. The rest of His disciples were out ministering to the people. There was a man, who came up to Jesus' disciples and requested that a demon be cast out of his son. The disciples tried and tried and tried, but they couldn't cure him. When Jesus encountered the scene, Jesus rebuked the demon, "and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once" (Matt. 17:18).

In fact, the Jews had so much difficulty with these demons that when Jesus cast out a demon in a synagogue, the Jews were amazed, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him" (Mark 1:27). So, when Jesus was casting out these demons with such ease, the Jews claimed that Jesus was in cahoots with Satan Himself. They must have reasoned that the only way that Jesus could be casting these demons out so easily is by a big ploy on the part of Satan and Jesus, whereby the demons would willingly submit to Jesus for a greater purpose. They said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons" (Matt. 12:24).

This ought to teach us that anybody and everybody who goes around today trying to cast out demons today, doesn't understand the power of these demons. An exhortation to demons to leave a person, "In Jesus' name," isn't a sure-fire way of casting out demons today.

These demons were planning their next move, like in a chess game. They knew that they were defeated and had no defense, so they sought for the next best alternative. They had noticed that swine that had been grazing in the distance. They requested of Jesus that He send them into the pigs. "If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine" (verse 31).

In Luke's account we get a hint as to why the demons would request this. Luke tells us that "they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss" (Luke 8:31). In other words, these demons were afraid that Jesus was going to send them into the abyss, which you might think of as the "demon-prison," until the end of the time would come when Jesus would judge these demons with finality. They were requesting the next best alternative -- if they weren't permitted to indwell another person, at least they might be able to indwell an animal, which is better than nothing.

At this point, we can learn a lot about demons. Lest we think that demons are simply impersonal evil spirits, we can observe from these words here that these demons are very much possessors of personality. They aren't nebulous forces of wickedness. They are beings, who always resist the truth.

1. Demons are personal beings with a personality. They describe themselves as "us."
2. Demons can communicate. They can speak through these men.
3. Demons have intelligence. They knew of Jesus and His ministry. They could reason through the better alternative of being cast into the abyss or being cast into a herd of swine.
4. Demons have a will. They chose the better of two options.
5. Demons have emotion. They feared and trembled at the possibility of being sent to the abyss.

Matthew tells us what Jesus did. Verse 32, "And He said to them, 'Begone!'" I'm reminded of the words of Martin Luther, ...

The Prince of Darkness grim, We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, For lo, his doom is sure;
One little word shall fell him.

In this case, the little word Jesus said was "Begone!" "And they came out, and went into the swine, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters" (Verse 32).

This little event of Jesus has created much discussion over the years, especially on behalf of the animal rights people. Perhaps some questions have come into your mind as well. This is such a strange occurrence. Why would Jesus grant their request? If Jesus were really trying to demonstrate His authority, wouldn't it have been better not to give into these demons at all? Did Jesus not care for the fate of the pigs? Pigs are part of God's creation too. Why would Jesus willingly allow all of these pigs to die? How can demons enter into animals? Can demons enter into other animals?

I think the key to these questions is to realize that Matthew is putting forth Jesus as the one who has authority over all of the demons. When Jesus cast these demons out of these men, they went into "the whole herd" as verse 32 says. Mark tells us that there were two thousand pigs (Mark 5:13). This equates to at least 2,000 demons that Jesus cast out with a single word. Perhaps this gives us insight into why these men were such a raving maniacs! Each of them had at least 1,000 demons within them. (I thought about entitling my sermon, "2,000 pigs under the sea" or "Jesus Makes Deviled Ham" but chose not to).

After these pigs were destroyed, we hear nothing more of these demons. Perhaps they returned to their master, Satan himself, for more marching orders. Perhaps they destroyed the pigs so that they could leave the pigs and be assigned somewhere else. I'll have you know that pigs can swim! The fact that they fell into the sea wasn't any sure-fire way to insure that these pigs would be destroyed. The demons also drowned these pigs.

We hear no more of all of these demons. The only picture we get of them is of their defiance and antagonism toward Jesus. But, we do hear

of the people of Gadera, who will give us another reason why people reject Jesus, though they see Him and experience His power so clearly. They had an attitude of ...

2. Resistance (verses 33-34)

Verse 33, "And the herdsmen ran away, and went to the city, and reported everything, including the incident of the demoniacs." You can well imagine the story that these guys told the city!

"You know that herd of pigs that I was hired to watch? All of them have rushed down the hill and into the water. You know the place where I'm talking about, where the bank of the river goes into the water. It was right there that all of the pigs rushed into the sea and drown! I didn't know exactly what had got into these creatures. They normally aren't so uncontrollable. I have tended them for years now, and they have never acted this way. For a few minutes, I stood there stunned. I was trying to figure out what had happened.

"As I was walking nearby the spot where the pigs entered the water, I saw about 15 guys near the shore, whom I had never seen before. So, I went to talk to them. They were a bunch of Jewish fishermen. And a couple of guys from Gadera. I didn't recognize the guys from Gadera at first, but then I did realize that they were those two guys who lived in the tombs. They looked so different than normal. They were sitting in their right mind, calm and listening to Jesus.

"So, I asked what had happened. Several of these fishermen all answered at once. I finally figured out that those wild-men confronted their leader, whose name is Jesus. Apparently this man discerned that they were filled with demons and cast the demons away from the men. These demons then caused the pigs to rush into the water and drown like they did.

"As soon as I figured out the whole story, I ran to tell all of you. We need to figure out what to do with these Jewish fishermen. Of all places for them to go, why would they come here and destroy these pigs like they did?"

In verse 34, we read, "And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they entreated Him to depart from their region." It wasn't just one or two from the town. Matthew says, "the whole city came out to meet Jesus." We have no idea how large this town was, but the fact is that there was another multitude of people surrounding Jesus and His disciples. (He had just left a multitude in Capernaum, and now another multitude of people came upon them). When they came and surveyed the situation, we find that they wanted Jesus to leave town. These people here didn't want anything to do with Jesus. They wanted Him to leave town.

At this point, most commentaries say that these people from Gadera were angry with Jesus. They say these people were materialists -- they preferred their swine over the Savior. They say that they were angry at the financial loss of 2,000 pigs. Today, you can purchase a lean hog for \$50-60. With these prices, we are talking about \$100,000 financial loss. However, Mark and Luke tell us that they were **frightened** with Jesus. We read that the town "observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the 'legion'; and they became frightened" (Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35). The town was not angry at Jesus for the financial loss. The town was frightened that Jesus was able to cast the demons out of this man.

Jesus was their concern and not the herd of swine. They were not angry, they were afraid. They clearly saw the authority of Jesus. They wanted no part of it! We have been looking in the past few weeks at the authority of Jesus. We have seen many come to Jesus, because He was healing them of their infirmities. "They brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill" (Matt. 8:16). We have seen disciples challenged to follow Jesus. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Matt. 8:20). In all likelihood, this man didn't follow Jesus, because the challenge would be too high. We have seen some disciples take up the challenge of Jesus and follow Him, as His disciples did when they left in the boat (Matt. 8:23). This morning, we see Jesus encounter a group of people, who want nothing to do with Jesus.

They clearly saw His authority and His power, because they had witnessed it first hand. Far from finding it attractive, they found Jesus to be repulsive. They resisted Jesus and wanted nothing to do with Him: "they entreated Him to depart from their region" (verse 34). These people thought that the two demoniacs were difficult to control! What about Jesus? If he could subdue these two raving maniacs, He has demonstrated that He has much more power and authority than they have. He would be more difficult to control. At least with the demoniacs, they minded their own business down by the tombs. Sure, they blocked a road, but we can build other roads. But, there is no telling what Jesus would do. These Gentiles demonstrated that they would rather have a few raving maniacs who live down by the tombs, than a man who appears to walk in his right mind who has the power over these demons!

In our minds, this is a crazy choice they made! They rejected Jesus, precisely because they saw His power and His authority. Fundamentally, they were resistant toward Jesus.

In thinking about this, I thought about policemen. A policeman has great power and great authority. He has a gun and a badge. The gun gives him the power and the badge gives him the authority. Though a policeman has great power, because he has a gun, when you have done no wrong, you are not afraid of the presence of a police officer. You are not afraid of his gun, because you know that he will use it appropriately. The policeman will use his gun based upon the rules and regulations of the land. Yet, when you have done wrong, you have every reason to avoid and dread the presence of the police officer. This is especially the case if you are willfully opposing the police officer and resisting him. In other portions of scripture, we are told that "rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil" behavior, they are a cause of fear (Rom. 13:3).

In this way, the police officer is different than the thief. When a thief holds you up with a gun, you ought to fear! The thief has every bit as much power as the policeman, but since the thief will act in accordance with his own whims and desires, you fear what he will do. He could

pull the trigger, simply because he wants to. The policeman is different. He will only pull the trigger if there is good reason for him to pull the trigger.

In some ways, you can compare the power and the authority of Jesus with the power and the authority of a police officer. He has great power, but He also had great authority, which comes from His Father in heaven. And we can trust that He will deal with us fairly. We have no reason to fear the power of Jesus, unless, we are resisting Him. If we are resisting Him, we have every reason to fear.

The demons were defiant against Jesus and were fearful of Him. These Gentiles were resisting Jesus and were fearful of Him as well. Both of these groups wanted to have nothing to do with Jesus. Both of these groups witnessed the clear testimony of the power and authority of Jesus. Let's be done with the notion that people need to see miraculous things in order to believe in Jesus. Let's be done with the notion that if people only would know enough about Jesus, they will believe in Jesus. Jesus is disclosing a full knowledge of Himself to these people and it repelled them, rather than attracting them. The demons and those in Gadera wanted nothing to do with Jesus!

How about you? What sort of attitude do you have when it comes to Jesus? Are you defiant and resistant against Him or are you compliant and humbly ready to submit to His every desire? Perhaps you have never clearly seen the authority of Jesus in such obvious ways as the demons and the Gadarenes. Yet, week by week, as you attend church and hear His word preached, you continue to see Him unveil Himself in all His glory and demonstrate His authority.

At least one of the men, from whom the demons were cast out, came to Jesus with a humble and submissive attitude. In Mark 5:15, we read that he was "sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had the 'legion.'" He demonstrates a proper attitude when it comes to encountering Jesus. He was humble and teachable and wanted to follow Jesus. Jesus refused his request, instructing him to "go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you" (Mark 5:19). We find this man doing just as Jesus told him to do throughout the Decapolis (Mark 5:20).

How about you? You have seen and have heard of the power and authority of Jesus. Will you follow Him or will you be defiant and resistant?

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on December 1, 2002 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.