

Youth Teaching Resources

June 23, 2019



Easter Season (April 21-June 2)

Resurrection Realities

Acts 16:16-34 – “Doubled Deliverance”

Pentecost Sunday (June 9)

Genesis 11:1-9 – “What Did You Say?”

Season After Pentecost (June 16-November 24)

Trinity Sunday

Romans 5:1-5 – “Imaginary Numbers”

On the Road with Jesus

Luke 8:26-39 – “A Bad Day for Pigs”

Luke 9:51-62 – “A Hard Row to Hoe”

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Find links and videos related to this lesson.

A Bad Day for Pigs

Luke 8:26-39

YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Jeremy Colliver

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

PARENT PREP

Students can be stopped in their tracks by the things that fear them. Fear is powerful and can be used to control what we do, when we do it, and even why we do it. But fear causes anxiety and not freedom. It is choosing not to do something instead of doing something. How do you help your students ease their fears? How do you help your students overcome their fears? Being present can go a long way in these situations. Knowing that they aren't alone can allow someone to work through their fears.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Fellowship

Before the session begins, create a list of phobias that people have and then find their scientific names. As the students arrive, create two equal teams and then play a guessing game where you read off a scientific name of a fear and they try and guess the fear. After you have played several rounds, facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) Which fears had you heard of before?
- 2) Which fears were the most obscure to you?
- 3) Do you know anyone that is petrified by fear?
- 4) What is your biggest fear?
- 5) Should a person of faith be fearful?

Information

Transition to the next section of the session by reading Luke 8:26-39. Allow the students to ask any initial questions they have about the text. As you answer their questions, you may want to provide some of the information found in Tony's commentary to answer their questions. When the students have had an opportunity to share their initial thoughts, continue the discussion by facilitating a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What would you have thought was going on with this man if you had met him without Jesus?
- 2) What were the "demons" this man had?
- 3) What wisdom did the man have about him that the other people didn't have?
- 4) Why did Jesus send the demons into the pigs?
- 5) Why does Jesus send the man back to tell what happened to him?

If your group would like to dig deeper in their discussion, share some of the insights that Tony provides in the "Digging Deeper" portion of his commentary. You may want to use some questions like the following to facilitate your discussion:

- 1) What did ancient people think of demons? What do you think about demons?
- 2) Why did Jesus go out of his way to meet with this man?
- 3) How big was a legion?

You may also want your group to discuss "The Hardest Question" if they would like to continue their discussion on this passage. Tony poses the following question to consider as "The Hardest Question": Where did the story of Legion take place?

Transformation

Conclude your session by showing the clip "Bruce Wayne embraces his worst Fear" from *Batman Begins*. If you are unable to show the clip, summarize it to the best of your ability, and then facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What was Bruce's biggest fear?
- 2) How does Bruce overcome his fear?
- 3) What fears do you have?
- 4) How do you face your fears?
- 5) How can fear motivate you? How can it debilitate you?
- 6) How does your faith impact the way you face your fears?

Close with a prayer of strength to face and overcome our fears.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartledge

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

A long night’s journey into day—The long day Mark and Luke describe began with a long night: after a tiring day of dealing with crowds and healing many, Jesus instructed the disciples to put in one of their boats and sail southeast to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, a distance of several miles over open water. A life-threatening storm blew up, but Jesus slept through it – at least, until the disciples woke him up (8:22-25). Jesus responded by calming the storm with words alone, then questioning the faith of his followers.

The process would have stirred all kinds of thoughts in their minds, and they may have been just as afraid of Jesus as they had been of the towering waves: wasn’t he even more powerful than the storm? The disciples were still learning to understand that Jesus really was more than just a man: what kind of man can control the wind and the sea?

The next day, the long day, would go far toward increasing their understanding – and their questions.

Three hard cases—The first hard case is found in our text for the day, the story of the Gerasene wild man, which takes place on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee (Mark 5:1-20, Luke 8:26-39). The second story, the story within a story, occurs after Jesus had returned to the north shore, probably to Capernaum. There he met a centurion who asked him to heal his daughter, but as he was going he met with a woman who had suffered from persistent bleeding. In each case, Jesus brought healing and hope (Mark 5: 21-43, Luke 8:40-56).

Matthew’s gospel contains a variant of the first story, in which there were two demoniacs and the people are called Gedarenes instead of Gerasenes (Matt. 8:28-34). It is also followed by a re-crossing of the sea, but then a different story, the account of Jesus offering forgiveness and healing to a paralyzed man, leading to conflict with the scribes (Matt. 9:1-8).

Demons?—Ancient peoples did not understand either physical or mental illness as we do. When someone experienced convulsions or an epileptic seizure, they assumed that an evil spirit had seized them (as in Luke 9:37-42). When someone exhibited schizophrenia, bi-polar behavior, or multiple personalities, the common diagnosis was demon possession. Even ordinary physical diseases could be attributed to evil influences.

Digging Deeper *continued*

Cemeteries—Ancient cemeteries in the Middle East were often found in rocky hillsides where caves could be expanded or chiseled out as family tombs. Benches were typically fashioned against the walls, where the dead were laid. After bodies had decomposed, the bones were gathered and piled in a corner or put into an ossuary (bone box), freeing the bench for the next death in the family. This practice lies behind the concept of being “gathered to one’s ancestors,” as the bones of succeeding generations were gathered together.



The tomb pictured above (with modern supports and walls added) is located on the Mount of Olives, near a chapel called Dominus Flevit, the traditional site of Jesus’ weeping over Jerusalem.

A divine appointment?—It is interesting to note that Jesus had left the Capernaum area to cross the Sea of Galilee, met with the demoniac, and then immediately returned to his starting point. This seems like a lot of trouble for a very short stay, giving the impression that Jesus went with a purpose and not just to escape the crowds. It was as if he’d had a divinely arranged appointment to keep.

Legion—The troubled man in the story called himself “Legion,” referring to the legions of demons he believed had tormented him. First century readers would have recognized an oblique reference to the powerful Roman legions, each consisting of thousands of soldiers who occupied the country and often extorted money from local citizens.

There might have been some subtle pleasure in thoughts of a “Legion” getting its comeuppance from Jesus, who possessed greater power.

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartledge

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Where did the story of “Legion” take place?

Where did the story recounted in Luke 8:26-39, Matthew 8:28-34, and Mark 5:1-20 take place? That subject is a matter of debate, for several reasons. Both Mark and Luke say that Jesus had come to “the country of the Gerasenes,” presumably named for the city of Gerasa (now known as Jerash). But Gerasa, whose marketplace is shown at right, was located more than 30 miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee. That’s a longer distance than Jesus and company would have covered in a day – and would require a pig stampede longer than a marathon.



Matthew’s account says Jesus had come to the region of the Gadarenes, which seems more reasonable, given that the city of Gedara (left), like Gerasa a member of the Decapolis, was only a few miles from the lake’s eastern shore. Though it was south of the Yarmuk River, what was considered the “region of the Gadarenes” could easily extend to the seashore. Recognizing this, scribes who made copies of Greek manuscripts began to change “Gerasenes” to “Gadarenes” in the text of Mark

and Luke, too. Thus manuscripts belonging to later traditions have “Gadarenes” in Mark and Luke, but the earlier manuscripts – probably closer to the original reading – have “Gerasenes.”

At least one scholar has suggested that the event occurred near a town called Kersa, which was adjacent to the sea. “Kersa” sounds similar to “Gerasa,” so it’s possible that there was understandable confusion about the name of the place.

As noted in the lesson, while the identity of the place may be troublesome, it has no real bearing on our understanding of the text: it was clearly in Gentile territory, and did not take place in any city, but by the seashore.

The Hardest Question *continued*

The question of location is regularly discussed in commentaries and there is little unusual presented here with the exception of the idea that there was a town named “Kersa.” I found it in Craig A. Evans’s commentary on Luke (*Luke*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011], 138). Evans credits Earl Ellis with the observation about Kersa as a possibility (*The Gospel of Luke*, rev. ed., New Century Bible [London: Oliphaunts, 1974]).