

It is Thanksgiving season...and that means family and friends gathered around the table to eat with those that are most special to us. to feast and share, be thankful enjoy one another and and of course eat...*The Table...where everyone who sit there is welcome.* and that is Our series this month, we are going to be looking at the people that God has given a seat to at His Table.

Tables are great connecting points for people (Expound). The dinner table, the picnic table, the restaurant table...even the gambling table.

When we invite someone to sit at our table, it usually means "I accept you" "I like you" "you are In" "You're family". As we look at The Lord's Table this month and see who He has invited and accepted at His Table.

lets first consider the size of his Table.. explain the setting

Luke 22:¹⁷ After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. ¹⁸ For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

- **That is a big table!** big enough to seat the whole Kingdom of God! there will be no greater feast and thanksgiving than the one described in scripture when Jesus sits down to feast with all those who are...
- Well who gets invited? Our culture puts a lot of stock in credentials. If we hire someone for a job, we want to know they're capable of doing the work. If we ask someone for advice, we want to know they're familiar with the subject matter. *The more titles, diplomas, and achievements a person has to their name, the more we're inclined to trust them.*

We are even guilty as believers because we often think heroes of the Bible for sure have a seat...but God invites the zeroes to have a seat ...that is a broad table...heroes and zeroes!

...and there is no greater zero than this person we see invited today...He gets a personal invite! so if you think you fall more to the zero side of the spectrum...take heart..this guy beats you by a mile!! The background

Jesus just took the apostles on a boat ride...and scared the living faith out of them... then had to rebuild it...by calming a tremendous storm...after calming the weather and the water...he asks them..

MK 4:40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

MK 4:41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

- *He showed them a power they had not seen...over nature*
- *Now they are going to witness another power...the power of his love for a ZERO..*

first thing there is a purpose for taking on the boat excursion... they were going across the lake from Capernaum to the county or region of the Gerasenes about six miles away ...the storm actually served as a distraction so they would not focus on the destination.....they would not willingly go here in a million years...

After enduring the storm of the night, The disciples' hearts were probably still pounding from the scare of what they just experienced. Their pulse rate was perhaps at last returning to normal.

Now, as their boat glided gently up onto the solid ground of the shore of the Gerasenes, The solitude of the lonely shore was probably a welcome scene, after the crowds which had gathered along the Capernaum shore six mile away. . No one probably gave a thought as to why no people were around, or why the road, which led to the nearby town, was empty. Why?

As Jesus steps out of the boat onto the shore...where is he going?... we pick up the story...Spoken from the eyewitness account of Matthew.. Oh this is why no ones around...the area was patrolled by two crazed men..

*MT 8:28 When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two **demon-possessed men** coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way.*

- **Great... They roled up on a graveyard..unclean location for a Jew... they get away from the crowds to go to the land of the Crazyes!**
- **No wonder he did not tell his disciples...they probably would have tried to talk him out of it!**
- **and Two demon possessed crazy men lived in cave nearby... from their vantage point on the hill..no one could escape detection and most likely harm on the road below...**
- **Probably why he does not tell us where we are going to bring invites to the table of the Lord... before hand...we would probably try to talk him out of it...**
- **Apparently these men had once lived normal lives in the nearby town, they now lived like rabid animals. The men were demon-possessed, and they were dangerous.**
- **Mark chose to focus on one of them... and we will too..**

Mark 5:2 When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. ⁴ For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵ Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

- The townspeople had tried many times to contain and to control the men, even using chains, but their superhuman strength proved too much for the chains.
- They no longer wore clothes, and they often cried out in loud, but inhuman voices, often lacerating themselves with stones horribly disfiguring themselves.
- **They were dangerous not only to any passer-by, but to themselves as well.**
- The two men and the townspeople seemed to have come to an understanding. They would live in seclusion, where they would not hurt anyone else, and the townspeople would leave them alone. It was the best solution, it seemed, under the circumstances. The men were left to themselves, so that whenever the demons chose, they could torment them, but without harm to anyone else.
- **This man's dignity has been stolen by the enemy... so much so that this man horribly disfigured himself...He no longer even looks to be created in the image of God...all previous relationships destroyed...**
- living in a solitary place...and harming anyone who would come near...
- He destroyed his ability to chose or change... he is in bondage.
- He had no hope for a changed life either now or in the future...
- *The worst Zero ...ever!*
- *But the Gospel Invitation to the Lord's table...was being delivered by the Lord Himself...*

MK 5:6 When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him.⁷ He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!"⁸ For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!"

- **Notice no one brought this man to Jesus...Jesus called him...for he say what do you want?**
- **Others he would hurt...but with Jesus he knelt before him..he knew who he was and he knew who Jesus was...but he thought he knew the character of Jesus ...and that he was going now to be judged and condemned ...but first tortured...as if Jesus was a Sadist**
- **But His heavenly Father drew this man to Jesus...so he could raise him up...to be with him...**

JN 6:44"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

- **Who would have thought Jesus would claim this man....and invite him to his table.... No one! The demons were under judgment...but Jesus came to save the man!**

MK 5:9 Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many."

Jesus asked this man his name.....or how do you identify yourself?

- *Legion was not the man's name..those were the demons...speaking...Jesus can separate the person from the problem...*
 - **“A legion was the number in a Roman regiment consisting of 6000 foot soldiers and 120 horsemen**
 - *Jesus is going to give a new name...a special name...not right then but someday..Rev 2:17..but now he will restore his dignity as a human being and child of God*
- **Lets examine something... Why would demons want to possess a man?...possess or control never own ...only the creator has ownership....a few reasons probably more**
- 1. Because man created in the image of God...he can love, procreate, have dominion... man by nature is a human being with a physical nature**
 - 2. Demons do not have bodies of flesh and bone like us...it appears they want to have them... Although some angels when appearing to men have the appearance of a physical human body...it is not exactly like ours**

ESV...LK 24: 36 As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!”³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.³⁸ And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?³⁹ See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

- 3. Demons hate God and want to destroy humans because humans are made in the image of God...**
- 4. Demons want to make people in their image...hateful, and destructive...**
- 5. And indwell him...as God does...**
- 6. and they do not want man to rule the earth but rule over man...thus possess/control him**
- 7. God loves man and wants a relationship with humans based on loving him back.**

God’s desire completely opposite with the Demonic... and their leader the devil...
JN 10: 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

- **kill and destroy the relationship between God and man**
 - **Tries to steal the image of God in each one of us...even though we are fallen ...that image remains...**
 - **his goal destroy our lives...**
- Just like he did to this man...he tries to do to all people... kill steal and destroy...our god given image...relationships...he wants to isolate and drive us to dead things to try and find life...**

But Jesus came to give life...and give life back! So Jesus asked this man his name.....or how do you identify yourself?

1. Second They begged and begged not to be sent out of the area...

¹⁰ And he begged Jesus again and again *not to send them out of the area.*

- God gave the earth to be ruled by human beings...so not only does the enemy want to usurp the Lord's image in our soul....he wants control of the Land...earth...
- Demons appear to be territorial...
- An example given in the book of Daniel..when Daniel had prayed about a vision and was awaiting God's answer... when the angel arrives he gives the reason for his delay...

DA 10:12 Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

- And Paul gives us insight in Ephesians they appear like the angels in an organized hierarchy...akin to a military gradation...privates to captains

EPH 6: ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

- So, They ask to remain in the territory...and Not be judged yet and beg **the Lord if they could not control a man...how about some pigs? You are a Jew and don't eat pork...pigs aren't no big deal? Right!!**

*MK 5:11 A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. ¹² The demons *begged* Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." ¹³ He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.*

- It is interesting that the Lord granted their prayer so readily...
- They did not know it but he did...They were leaving no matter how they tried to get around it...
- It is interesting that apparently The pigs preferred death to demon inhabitation
- What must be seen above all else is that the fate of the swine demonstrates the ultimate intention of the demons with respect to the man they had possessed.
- It is their purpose to destroy the creation of God, and halted in their destruction of a man, they fulfilled their purpose in the swine

MK 5:14 Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened.

- **The pig ranchers did not own the animals, were witnesses to this whole encounter from a distance and so ran away to tell of what happened..**

Mark 5:15 When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, **sitting there, dressed and in his right mind**; and they were afraid. ¹⁶ Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man--and told about the pigs as well.

- **Interestingly the people were not amazed by the dead pigs but by the man clothed and in his right mind.**
- After his healing experience **He is clothed and seated, the position of a disciple a student of Jesus, he was in his right mind listening to what Jesus was teaching.....** Sitting at the feet of a person is a rabbinic term for “I want to be your disciple!” He has a new Master!! **how awesome...**

○ And at the same time

¹⁷ Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

- **Others began to ask him to depart. For his work has had already a negative economic impact on their region...who knows whose livestock operation ill be ruined next..** For the Gerasenes, it was too much to risk.
- **THE PEOPLE OF THIS REGION were MORE FRIGHTENED OF JESUS THAN OF THE DEMONIAC, SO THAT THEY WOULD RATHER HAVE HAD THINGS AS THEY WERE, AND THAT THEY WOULD RATHER HAVE JESUS LEAVE THEM THAN STAY WITH THEM?**
- The people were so afraid that this man might shake up their world that they clean forgot to be thankful for the removal of public menace #1.
- **So...They asked Jesus to leave.**
This fear of the new is not unknown to us.
- **Christ does not stay where he is not wanted.**
- *******But he loved those people...and so they would not be left without a witness...**
They have rejected Jesus but someone has to be left behind to **not simply to tell people about the miracle that happened to him but what that miracle signifies: The Lord has been at work**

MK 5:18 As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹ Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." ²⁰ So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

- **Decapolis. A district so called from its ten cities, of which Gadara was one.**
- **And...The first preacher of Christ there was one who could testify of Jesus power and what Jesus had done for Him.... His mess gave him a powerful message... The**

first preacher in the Gaserenes was a man insane, uncontrollable, isolated, alone and possessed by thousands of demons....

- He had done much damage to his family and the town he grew up in...
- Leaving to go with Jesus would in a sense have been running away from the wreckage of his past...
- God is not the god of loose ends...trash people runaway... start fresh ...with a new group...repeat cycle..
- This man needed to live in such a way that his words would match his actions...
- Jesus did not just deliver him from demons...but delivered him back to health in every way...he would not have the opportunity to learn how to be a man that would be a blessing to others ...starting with his own family...and town...
- **Because of this man's experience with spiritual forces of darkness ...and intimately knows their power...and then experiencing the power of a spiritual force greater...**
- **This man knew Jesus had control of the spiritual realm...which is more powerful than the physical realm ...whether he was present physically or not...**
- **So if Jesus says stay...and Jesus leaves...he has not really left...he is still in charge...and his word can be trusted...powerful lesson for us...**

The result of going home...he makes a Zero into a Hero! the food at his table is the best ever!!

- For many months the former demoniac shared the good news of Jesus in the Decapolis. The next time Jesus came to the region of the Decapolis, there were 4,000 Gentiles waiting to greet Him and hear His words (Matt. 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-10).

*MK 7:31 Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and **into the region of the Decapolis.** ³² **There some people brought** to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man.*

*MK 7:33 After he took him aside, **away from the crowd,** Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue.....*

MK 8:1 During those days another large crowd gathered.....

- **In a short time...because of the testimony of this formerly demon possessed person...crowds were waiting for Jesus now.**
- **Zero's are Heroes in the hand of God...**
- **Most likely the changed demoniac did not know this man personally...yet he had a hand in bringing him to the one who could help him...**
- **That how it works...he was a curse now he gets to learn how to be a blessing...**
- *******It is interesting that those whose lives are most damaged become the ones whose lives are most radically transformed and often end up being the strongest witness for Jesus!**

there is room at the table for all who accept the invitation...especially those who would think they would never be invited...that is something to be Thankful for!