

Sunday 30-Jan-22

Peace for the Disturbed

Psalm 103:1-6

Of David.

- ¹ Praise the LORD, my soul;
 all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
- ² Praise the LORD, my soul,
 and forget not all his benefits—
- ³ who forgives all your sins
 and heals all your diseases,
- ⁴ who redeems your life from the pit
 and crowns you with love and compassion,
- ⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things
 so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
- ⁶ The LORD works righteousness
 and justice for all the oppressed.

Matthew 8:28-9:8

Jesus Restores Two Demon-Possessed Men

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. ²⁹ "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"

³⁰ Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding. ³¹ The demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs."

³² He said to them, "Go!" So, they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water. ³³ Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. ³⁴ Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region.

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralysed Man

9 Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. **2** Some men brought to him a paralysed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, **"Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."**

3 At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!"

4 Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, **"Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? **5** Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? **6** But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins."** So, he said to the paralyzed man, **"Get up, take your mat and go home."** **7** Then the man got up and went home. **8** When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to man.

Sermon: Peace for the Disturbed

Today – we’re starting a series on Matthew’s Gospel – and we’re picking up where we left off last year.

So, please have your **Bibles opened** up at **Matthew 8** – starting at **verse 28**.

Let me pray for God’s guidance and understanding

Let’s pray...

Intro

A **question** first up – this morning –

What things **disturb your peace?**

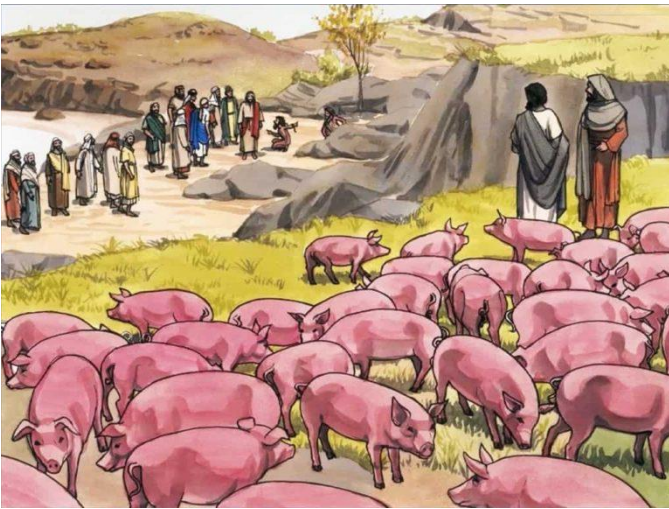
- What about **conflict** or **arguments** in our **relationships** – that can disturb our peace – can’t it?
- What about **someone’s poor or angry behaviour** – that can disturb our peace too – can’t it?
- What about **worrying about** something we have to face in the **future**?
- What about **being sick** or having a **disability** – or **having to isolate** because of **COVID** – that can disturb our peace too – can’t it?
- What about **uncertainty or insecurity** – that’s not very peaceful is it?
- What about the **fear of getting old** and perhaps the **fear of dying** – not much peace there either?
- Or what about **ruminating on** things that happened to us in **the past**?
- And then of course there’s our **conscience**? Our conscience is: *our moral sense of right and wrong which guides our behaviour*. What if our **conscience is troubled by our wrong decisions and choices**? Then our peace is disturbed – isn’t it?

(pause)

- In our **NT passage** this morning we have **two stories** where peace has been disturbed and Jesus restores peace
- In the first story – **Peace in the Community is disturbed** and restored (Matthew 8:28-34)
- And in the second story – **Peace of the conscience is disturbed** and restored (Matthew 9:1-8)

Peace for the Community (Matthew 8:28-34)

[PowerPoint 1-Community]



- In the first story – in Matthew 8:28-34 [[Please turn there](#)] – we see the **peace of a community disturbed**
- We **pick up the story** in verse 28 - Jesus is in the **region of Gadarenes** on the **east side of the Lake Galilee** (He's just calmed the storm on the lake earlier in this chapter)
- And Jesus comes across **two men possessed by demons**
- These men are **controlled by Satan and his evil spirits**
- Here we see what Satan can do to people
- **Satan can rob people of their sanity and self-control, fill them with fear, rob them of the joy of family and friends** – and even condemn them to an eternity of torment and judgment – away from God forever – if left unchecked

- We read in v28 that the **demon-possessed men** were **coming from the tombs**
- Why the tombs?
 - Well - Demon's love death – their purpose is to destroy
 - Tombs are a place the demon-possessed men can go – knowing people won't follow them – because graveyards and **dead people** are considered **unclean** and **offensive for the Jews**.
 - By the men hanging around the tombs – it would **encourage superstition** in the people of the town - **fearing that the men were possessed by the spirits of the dead** - in the tombs.
 - All this made the two men **very frightening to the community**
- So, not only was the **peace of the two men disturbed** - by their demon-possession – but the peace of the whole community is disturbed - The **two men** were **very violent** which made it difficult for anyone to pass the area they occupied.
- From the same story in Mark's Gospel we discover that...
- The **community** had **tried to bind one of the men with chains**, without any success. He just **tore the chains apart** and **broke the irons on his feet**. No one was **strong enough to subdue him**.
- Here we have a community in uproar – **peace completely disrupted**
- That's what the influence of Satan and his **demons** can do – if unchecked
- *There's no peace for the wicked* as Isaiah 57:21 says!
- But notice what happens **when Jesus turns up**
- See **v29** - The demons - possessing the men - know that **Jesus is the Son of God**; and they knew what lay ahead for them, and that ultimately, they would be cast out into everlasting torment (Matt 25:41, 46); they **knew their time was limited** and so

they wanted to be left alone to do as much damage as they could before the “appointed time” of judgment

- It's ironic - that the **demons know who Jesus is** – whereas His disciples back in v27 – even tough - when Jesus calms the storm – ask themselves “*What kind of man is this?*” – **they are unsure of who Jesus is?**
- Meanwhile there are a **herd of pigs at a distance** (v30)
 - We need to understand that **pigs were unclean to Jews**
 - But the **story is happening** in a **Gentile** (non-Jew) **area**
 - However, if there were any Jews living in this town – the **pigs should not have been there**
- In **V31** the **demons beg for Jesus** to drive them out of the men and into the pigs nearby – **so that they can at least continue their evil work**
- The **demons knew** that **Jesus** - as the Son of God – **had power of them** – as James 2:19 says: *You believe in one God. Good! Even demons believe that and shudder!*
- **Jesus has no qualms** in **answering their request** – **v32** –
- **Animal lovers might get upset** that the demons went into the pigs!
- But remember - **Jesus is God** – and as such **He has ownership over all creatures**.
And humans – who are made in God’s image – are **God’s most importance creatures**
- So - the fact that the **demons destroyed a herd of pigs** is nothing compared to saving two men from the grips of Satan (as Jesus says in Matt 12:12 says - *How much more valuable is a person than a sheep [or a pig for that matter]!*)
- **Jesus came to overcome evil** – and that’s what He does here
- And notice how **Jesus casts out the demons** – with just one word – **Go!**
- So - what did Jesus do for the men - and - for the community?

- For the men: Jesus restored peace to them, by removing the demons from their bodies! And by allowing the demons to enter the herd of pigs – this was physical evidence to the men and all watching that the demons had been removed. Seeing is believing!
- For the community: Jesus restored peace to the town; the community no longer had to fear what these demon-possessed men would do.
- But look how the community responded?
- Those tending the pigs ran off and reported what had happened to their pigs and what had happened to the demon-possessed men. The whole community went out to meet Jesus – and sadly and surprisingly, rather than being grateful for what Jesus had done – they pleaded with Jesus to leave their region.
- Isn't that typical of how many people today respond to Jesus– they don't want Jesus in their lives – and they completely miss how He has brought peace between God and humans - through His death on the cross to forgive sin – and they'd rather live their lives without Jesus – they'd rather live without peace in their lives!

Peace for the Conscience (Matthew 9:9-8)

- In the second story – Matthew 9:1-8 – we see how Jesus restores peace to a disturbed conscience
- Picking up the story from v1 – Jesus has **crossed over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee** - to the western side and He comes to his home town – of **Capernaum** (Matt 4:13)

[PowerPoint 2-Paralysed Man]



- The **man** in the story is **paralysed** (literally the man has palsy). He is **unable to walk** - and he is **lying on a mat**.
- His **friends** are **determined to take their paralysed friend to Jesus**. In the same story in Mark's Gospel – we **discover** that the paralysed man's **friends could not get near Jesus** – so they **dug and opening in the roof and lowered their paralysed friend down to Jesus**.
- His **friends showed great faith!**
- **Jesus is so impressed with their faith in v2**
- But notice - Jesus addressed the **most important sickness that we all need healing from**. That's our sickness of sin. Our conscience is disturbed by our sin and has no peace until our sin is dealt with
- Jesus recognized **the man had a greater problem than being paralysed**
- We don't know whether the **man's conscience was troubling him** – wondering if he was paralysed because of any sin in his life
- We don't know if the man's friends' consciences were troubled about the same thing – but we should note though that **in the Jewish culture of the time** – there was a universal belief that all sickness was the result of sin – and that no sickness could ever be cured until sin was forgiven

- Jesus knew what the paralysed man's greatest need was
- As bad as it is to be paralysed, it's infinitely worse to be bound and lost in our sins!
- We can't be sure that the man was paralysed because of his sin. This may or may not be the case
- But we can say – in general terms - people are paralysed, disabled and sick - because - we live in a broken and fallen world
- One thing for certain is – we all need to have our sin dealt with
- There are several reasons why Jesus dealt with the man's sin first:
 - To show that sin is the root from which all evil comes – it disturbs peace!
 - To show forgiveness is more important than bodily healing
 - To show that the most important thing Jesus came to do was to deal with sin (Luke 19:10)
 - To show that when a person is forgiven – they become a child/son of God
 - To show that the response to an expression of faith (like the faith expressed by the paralysed man and his friends) – the response to faith in Jesus - is the forgiveness of sins
 - And Jesus dealt with sin first - so that He could begin a conversation with the teachers of the law and the Pharisees – and teach them something!
- Unfortunately, we see another poor response to Jesus – see v3 – the teachers of the law – think Jesus is blaspheming - Blaspheming is: *to say God's name in vain or to speak irreverently about God.*
- By Jesus telling the man that his sins were forgiven – Jesus was actually inferring that He is God, because God is the only one who can forgive sins; therefore, in the eyes of the teachers of the law, Jesus was speaking irreverently

about God – and therefore blaspheming. What they didn't realize is that Jesus is God.

- But look at Jesus' response in verse 4 - Jesus even know what the teachers of the law are thinking! [See Psalm 139:2 – “you [God] perceive my thoughts from afar”] - Only God can do that!
- Then **Jesus bamboozles them with his question in verse 5 “Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk?’”** - what does Jesus mean by that?
- Well - Jesus' point here is – it's obviously easier to say “your sins are forgiven” but not so easy to prove. Whereas people could see if the man was healed – if he could get up and walk. **Jesus is able to both heal the man and forgive his sins!** And if Jesus proved the man could walk then they might believe Jesus can forgive sins too.
- Jesus action here seems to be an outworking of our OT reading from Psalm 103:3 which says *[God is a God] who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases*
- That's precisely what Jesus does for the paralysed man here – **Jesus forgives his sins and then heals his paralysis**
- **Jesus restores peace to the man's conscience** – I'm sure the man wondered if he was paralysed because of his sin? **But now the man's conscience is no longer disturbed** – and his body is no longer disturbed either
- As we said earlier - not all sickness is caused by sin. We live in a broken world since the Fall of Adam and Eve. Sickness and death are a result/consequence of that Fall. There is **not a one-to-one relationship between sin and sickness**. Sin A does not equal Sickness A; Sin B does not equal Sickness B.

- However – **we should certainly be examining ourselves for any unrepented sin**
- And notice also - forgiveness of our sins does not necessarily mean bodily healing.
Jesus could simply have forgiven the man's sins and left him paralysed; but Jesus showed compassion and mercy. Jesus' point to the teachers of the law, is that it's more important to be spiritually healed than physically healed.
- Just one more thing to note here
- If we think back to when God created everything in the beginning – **He simply spoke to create everything!**
- In Matthew 8:26 – **Jesus simply spoke to stop the waves and storm!**
- In Matthew 8:32 – **Jesus simply spoke - “Go!” - to the demons and they left!**
- In Matthew 9:6 – **Jesus simply spoke to the paralysed man - “Get up, take your mat and go home”**
- This tell us - **Jesus is God and has God's power and can simply speak to creation and it obeys**
- It also says - **Jesus is in the business of restoration and recreation!** (Rev 21:5)
- As we come to believe in Him – **we are a new creation and born again – because of Him** (2 Cor 5:17 and John 3:3)

Applications

Let me leave us with - **3 take home applications this morning:**

[PowerPoint 3-Applications]

1. We need to have faith in Jesus like the paralysed man and his friends. The friends' faith drove them to get the paralysed man to Jesus because they knew Jesus was the only one who could fix him. We need to show that same faith in bringing people we

know to Jesus - knowing Jesus is the only one who can fix their sickness of sin and give them forgiveness and eternal life.

2. **How do we respond to Jesus' power?** Do we respond like the community in Gadarenes who asked Him to leave – and thought more of their pigs than they did of Jesus? Do we respond like the teachers of the law who were outraged by Jesus and doubted Jesus' credentials as God? Or do we respond like the crowd in Capernaum who were amazed at Jesus' miraculous healing and praised God!

3. **We began by asking what things disturb our peace?** The Apostle Paul tells us how to get peace in our lives – it's in Philippians 4:6-7 – which I will finish with
Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The Bottom line is – **Jesus brings peace to all who are disturbed!**

Let's pray...

Father God, thank you that in your grace and mercy, you sent Jesus – to bring peace between You and humankind – by allowing Him to die for the sin of the world.

Thank you that by having a relationship with Jesus, we can get real inner peace – a peace that surpasses all understanding – a peace that leads to eternal life – where we can live with you forever. Help us to have faith like the friends of the paralysed man – a faith that believes and knows that Jesus is the only one who can fix the sickness of sin.

In Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen