

Part 35 The Kingdom which Brings Change (8:22-39)

3. The kingdom of God comes through persistent faith

• An experience that leads to a new grasp of Jesus

• A man and yet one who acts as God

4. The kingdom of God overthrows Satan's power

• The people need to know that God has been displeased with their breaking the law

3. The kingdom of God comes through persistent faith ¹. Jesus had mentioned persistence of faith ². Luke tells the story of the storm on the lake; it makes the point that faith has to persist even in a storm. Jesus and the disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee ³. Jesus has been busy. He falls asleep in exhaustion. Even a mighty storm does not wake Him up ⁴! They wake Him up in alarm ⁵, but Jesus asks 'Where is your faith?' ⁶. If they have truly recognized Jesus as the King of God's kingdom, why have they not attended to His message and held it fast in the middle of a storm? The kingdom of God requires persistent faith. It is those who 'hold it fast and bear fruit with perseverance' who reap its blessings. In their alarm and panic they are not holding fast to their confidence in Jesus. Their experience leads them to a new grasp of Jesus. 'Who then is this?' they ask ⁷. This event makes them realise He is greater than anything they had imagined! He is one who can be so exhausted that He falls asleep in a boat and not even a storm wakes Him up. But the one who fell asleep with weariness wakes up and commands even the winds and the seas with a single word of command! How can someone be so tired and so powerful at the same time? They are getting a glimpse into the marvels and wonders of the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is man as though He were not God. He is God as though He were not man. He has the weakness of a human nature and needs sleep after toil. Yet He has within Him the power of God and when led by the Spirit can, by faith, make use of the resources of the divine nature. By faith in His Word, by spiritual relationship to Him, and by persistent faith, we shall experience the royal power of God in Jesus.

4. The kingdom of God overthrows Satan's power ¹. Wherever the kingdom of God is, Satan reacts with hatred. The kingdom of God is the presence of Jesus as King. Where Jesus is, there is the kingly power of God. When Jesus goes to Gadara¹ there is immediately a repercussion from the world of evil-spirits. Demon-possessed people in the area immediately react. Matthew mentions two of them. Mark and Luke mention one. A man comes with all of the marks of demon possession: nakedness, association with death, recognition of Jesus, fear, violence ¹. Jesus finds out the facts, compelling the demons to reveal themselves ². They ask permission to go into the pigs nearby. Jesus allows them to enter the pigs. It is actually a case of sin destroying sin ³. God had always forbidden pigs in the land of Israel; they were unclean animals according to the Mosaic law. According to the Bible, animal life may be taken away in situations where the well-being of humankind is more important. This is a situation where the people need to learn something. They need to know God has been displeased with their breaking His law in the land of Israel. They need to know that where Jesus comes such disobedience to the Mosaic law will be rebuked. People will be released from Mosaism

¹ 8:22-25
² 8:13,15
³ 8:22

⁴ 8:23
⁵ 8:24
⁶ 8:24

⁷ 8:25

1 see note below

¹ 8:26-29
² 8:30
³ 8:31-33

• Release from the law of Moses will come but later

• A miracle – sin destroys sin!

5. The kingdom of God requires openness to change

• The people of Gadara prefer their pigs to Jesus

• A lost opportunity – Jesus leaves

• Their only hope now will be to heed the delivered man's testimony

eventually but they had not been released yet. Until the death and resurrection of Jesus, God wanted the details of the Mosaic law to be kept. Jesus did not abolish them during His earthly ministry; He fulfilled them.

So an extraordinary miracle takes place. The pigs run down the hill and destroy themselves ¹. Satan is malicious and hateful towards the whole of God's creation.

5. The kingdom of God requires openness to change ¹. Now there is a great challenge for the people of Gadara. Jesus has come into their lives unexpectedly. He has revealed that His kingdom is a kingdom of power which destroys the power of Satan. Yet His kingdom will also bring some changes in their lives. If Jesus is tolerated in the land of the Gadarenes it will not be only pigs that have to go; many other things will have to go as well.

The kingdom of God will bring wonderful things into their land. They can see that the demoniac is now calm and peaceful, sitting listening to Jesus, 'clothed and in his right mind' ¹. This alarms them! They are amazed to see such an evidence of Jesus' great power. But do they really want Him around to do things like this? The answer is: no, they do not! They prefer their pigs to Jesus. The kingdom of God might be wonderful but they do not want it if it will make them lose their pigs! People are often like this: they beg Jesus to go away so that they might keep their pig-like unclean ways ². The opportunity is lost; Jesus goes away. But the healed man will still be among them, proclaiming the wonderful ways of Jesus ³. Their only hope now will be to heed the testimony of one of God's people. The kingdom of God requires attentiveness, spiritual relationship to Jesus, responsiveness, persistent faith and openness to change.

Note 1. Matthew has 'the Gadarenes' (Matthew 8:28); Mark and Luke have 'the country of the Gerasenes' (Mark 5:1). In all three gospels there are variant readings. It could not have happened in the far-away town of Gerasa. Probably the event took place near Gadara, the regional capital, but the people are called 'Gergesenes' or 'Gerasenes'. Alternatively there was a smaller town on the lakeside with a name like Gerasa, but Gadara was the capital of the area. The complicated evidence is laid out in I.H. Marshall, The Gospel of Luke (1978), pp. 336–337.

¹ 8:31-33

¹ 8:34-39

¹ 8:34-35

² 8:36-37

³ 8:38-39



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