

Luke 8:26-36 *Then they sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. When he got out on land, a demon-possessed man from the town met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes and did not stay in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before him, and said in a loud voice, "What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I be you, don't torment me!" For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the an. Many times it had seized him, and though he was guarded, bound by chains and shackles, he would snap the restraints and be driven by the demon into deserted places. "What is your name?" Jesus asked him. "Legion," he said, because many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to banish them to the abyss. A large herd of pigs was there, feeding on the hillside. The demons begged him to permit them to enter the pigs, and he gave them permission. The demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned. When the men tended to them saw what had happened, they ran off and reported it in the town and in the countryside. Then people went out to see what had happened. They came to Jesus and found the man the demons had departed from, sitting at Jesus's feet, dressed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. Meanwhile, the eyewitnesses reported to them how the demon-possessed man was delivered. Then all the people of the Gerasene region asked him to leave them, because they were gripped by great fear. So getting in the boat, he returned.*

Luke 15:4-10 *"What man among you, who has a hundred sheep and loses one of the, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open field and go after the lost one until he finds it? When he has found it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders, and coming home, he calls his friends and neighbors together. 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my lost sheep!' I tell you, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who don't need repentance. "Or what woman who has ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together; saying, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found the silver coin I lost!' I tell you, in the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who repents."*

I want to give you some interesting context to consider with the first passage. The location where Jesus was at was one where Gentiles lived. Why is that important? Jews do not eat pork! These Gentiles did, therefore these pigs were money makers! Do you see how this puts a spin on it now? The Gentiles here didn't really care, per se, if this man was healed. As a matter of fact, they might have been upset. At the end, were they afraid of Jesus? Why? Here is a thought I read in a commentary, the town people felt like they had "control" over this guy. He lived out in the tombs, maybe didn't bother them very much, so who cares. They could tolerate him. The Gerasene people were in control, they had the power. In comes Jesus... he takes their power! Now. Now the attention might be on them!

Hold on! Maybe that's where it's at. If there is someone we can point at, someone worse than us, someone we can control and have authority over... don't we like that? Don't we want that? "See, I'm not as bad as him!" If he gets better or healed, then where does that leave me?

Let's switch to the other passage. I am sure you were thinking we should go on to the lost son. But no, that is not the perspective I want to take. Why would someone look for just one lost sheep? Are they really worth that much money? What about the 99? What if something happens to them when you are gone? If you are the one, then yay. But, if you are the 99... do you want your shepherd to leave? Heck no! Hey dad, what about me? I need you! I am a good kid, protect me. Not that other stupid sheep that wondered off. Who cares about a penny? A penny! What if she is searching for a penny and someone takes the other coins? She is worse off!

Let's wrap this up. Do you and I really want people healed? Do we really want them saved? Do you want this church to be a place where someone could come to after they get released from prison? Do we really want the addicted parent, or maybe the adult who spends their money on lotto tickets and smokes but doesn't have money for food... would we leave here, this safe space, to go after them?

Who makes our road signs and license plates?

Do we really want people saved? Really?