

The Other Side (Matthew 8:28-34)

"... **the other side** in the region of the Gadarenes"

- Eastern shore; Gentile area (cf. **heard of pigs**)
- You have to **imagine** you are one of the **disciples**
 - It's been a long journey (started in **verse 18**; **read vv.19-22**)
 - Some were not willing to follow Jesus because of what it may involve (sacrifice)
 - But the disciples were (**verse 23**)
 - They soon found out that **following Jesus wasn't safe** (**read vv. 24-27**)
 - They **finally** arrive on **the other side** after a near death experience, and it's **a horror movie**
 - Deserted place (tombs + **no one could pass that way**)
 - Two demon possessed men (**They were so violent...**)
 - **Broken shackles** and **self inflicted gashes** (Cf. Mark 5:4-5)
 - Huge heard of **pigs** (Cf. snakes)
 - **The disciples were tripping!**
 - Unclean (religious sensibilities)
 - Unsafe (second guessing following)
 - **This was their journey to the other side** with Jesus
 - **"I just wanna go home"**
- And then things only get stranger...

Demons start speaking through these men (**shouted**) (**verse 29**)

- This would only add to the craziness of the disciples **journey to the other side**
 - First of all, the demons knew exactly who Jesus was (**Son of God**)
 - Cnt. **verse 27** (**James 2:19** = **The demons believe and shudder**)
 - They knew that in the end Jesus wins (**torture us before the appointed time**)
 - Cf. **Revelation 20:10**, NASB
 - Cf. **"... the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels"** (Matt 25:41b, NASB)
 - Even though they knew who He was and what He could and would do, they still challenged him
 - **"What do you want with us..."**
 - More of a rebuff than a question (a rejection)
 - Translation of saying = **"This is none of your business... not your party"**
 - It wasn't a challenge of **identity** or **authority** or **power**—but of **presence**
 - Cf. **we do not want anything to do with you**
 - They knew where the power and authority were
- And then, they make a strange request...

Verses 30-32

- Things just got even weirder
 - The demons want to go **into the pigs** (surreal) (**why?**)
 - Jesus commands them with a word (**Go**) (absolute authority) (Cf. wind and waves)
 - The pigs run off a cliff into the **water** and drown
- There are a few things this makes clear
 - The intent of evil (**John 10:10**, NLT)
 - The authority of Christ (**1 John 3:8b**, NASB)
 - The expulsion of evil (visible, tangible change/transformation)

The salient point here is this:

- Matthew is proving Jesus' identity by recounting how He does what only God can do
- And connecting the works of Jesus to **the story of Israel**
- This account of the **furious storm** and the **violent demons** is a further fulfillment of God's work for His people (**Psalms 89:8-10**, NIV) (How was Egypt crushed?) (passing through water to the other side)
 - The faithful, saving power and love of God made manifest on earth again

Isn't it strange how the people from the town responded? (Verses 33-34)

- It is clear that **those tending the pigs** were mostly concerned with the **pigs** (reported all this, including...)
 - Perhaps that is why the townsfolk asked Jesus to leave?
- Maybe they thought **what they lost was greater** than what they had gained?
 - But, What if they had **misread their own best interests**?
 - What if "**There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.**" (Proverbs 14:12)
 - What if they **underestimated** evil? (**steal, kill and destroy**)
 - What if they **misunderstood** Jesus? (**came to give life abundant**)

Life can get confusing on the **other side**

- We know this... we all have our "**other sides**"
- Places that are **like the other side** of the Galilee:
 - **Darkness, stench of death, unchecked evil, unclean things, secret violence; access has been cut off**
 - Those can be conflicted and confusing places (Cf. **Proverbs 14:12**)

It is to these dark places—on **the other side**—that Jesus chooses to go

- It's not that we doubt the **identity** or **authority** or **power of Christ there**—but His presence
- "**This is not your business**" (Cf. Demons)
- "**Please leave**" (Cf. the townsfolk)

But it is His business—He has made it such (He has crossed over to your **other side**)

- These **dark and ugly, secret shores** of our lives are **the destination of God's love**
- Jesus really loved the Gadarenes... He went to them

What if when Jesus shows up on these shores and begins to work (and it is messy... like drowning pigs)...

- What if we tend to worry more about what we might lose than what we are gaining?
- What if we have a proclivity to misread our own best interests?
- What if we tend to underestimate evil?
- And misunderstand the loving work of Jesus in confronting our sin?

We love the fact that Jesus was in the boat with us during the storm... but if Jesus is going to be in the boat with us, He will also arrive at **the other side**—on our dark shores

The lament of the story is that when the townsfolk asked Jesus to leave, **He did**

- **Jesus stepped in the boat, crossed over and came to His own town** (9:1)
 - This story isn't primarily about the demon possessed men—its about the townsfolk
 - It's about **life on the other side** and how we prefer living there rather than stepping into what Jesus is calling us to
 - And how obviously **blind** and **foolish** that is—but that is what sin does to us
- **Hebrews 3:12-13**, NLT
 - The distant dark shores of the other side of our lives are conflicted and confusing places
 - Conflicted and confusing because our hearts have been deceived and hardened by sin
 - In our confusion, we misread our own best interests and misunderstand Jesus' intentions
 - We think Him to be a taker that will cost us—when He is actually a giver that has come to free us!
 - And we beg Him to leave us alone on our dark shores

On what distant shores of your heart have you been asking Jesus to leave?

- Jesus really loves you... He has come to you
- Don't say "**no**" -- Don't say "**please leave**"
- Say "**yes**" to Jesus on your darkest shore (what does that look like?)
 - Time of silence/reflection
 - Read: Ephesians 4:17-24