

# Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 22 June 2025 - The First Sunday after Trinity

**Lectionary Readings** (depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on)

I Kings 19.1-4 [5-7] 8-15a, Psalm 42, 43 [or 42 or 43]; Galatians 3.23-end; Luke 8.26-39

## Homily

**Today's homily has been written by Canon Jan Payne, LLM; 5folds Benefice**

After our celebrations of Pentecost and Trinity Sunday, we find ourselves today starting the long season in the Church's year described as "Ordinary Time". This will take us through the summer with stories of Jesus's ministry here on earth. However, there will be little "ordinary" in time spent with the Gospel and today is no exception.

Luke's account set for today follows on from the calming of stormy waters on the lake. Jesus and his disciples have left Galilee and crossed over the lake entering land largely occupied by Gentiles. We are given no explanation as to why Jesus takes them on this journey but, here they are, safely landed after the traumatic crossing, only to find themselves facing a disturbing situation of a very different kind.

They are confronted by a young man who many probably said was mad, possessed by evil spirits. Unkempt, naked, with violent behaviour and seemingly, a strength that could break the chains in which he was sometimes held. He must have been an unwelcome sight, at least for the disciples. If they thought they'd come through the storm in the boat to find peace and quiet, they could think again. One might imagine them wanting to turn straight round, get back in the boat and head home to Galilee.

Today we don't generally talk about people being "possessed" by demonic spirits, though we do recognise that many people (of all ages) can live deeply troubled lives in the middle of a serious mental health crisis or breakdown. We might want to reflect on how we would have cared for this young man in our own day and age. Seemingly, the local residents left him alone except when they attempted to control him by force – a sad picture indeed.

Whatever the views of the disciples, Jesus is (as we might expect) unphased by this behaviour greeting him. Perhaps to everyone's surprise the young man seems to recognise Jesus. "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the most high God? he asks, seemingly experiencing even greater disturbance from that which possessed him. Jesus stands his ground and asks the man's name. "Legion" is perhaps a signal that he has been overtaken by more than one spirit and those, recognising Jesus, beg him not to send them back to the abyss, a place of confinement where they do not want to be. Some interpretations see the abyss as representing death or the underworld, but certainly a place of darkness and chaos.

Again, we might ask ourselves why Jesus didn't let them just go there and be done with it? We are not told but we need to remember that this was Gentile land where the keeping of pigs was permitted. However, for Jews, pigs were (and still are) unclean animals and they would not have kept them, nor eaten them. Sending the evil spirits to occupy the pigs, was to condemn them to their death. They ran off down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

When the pig-keepers see what has happened they rush off into the city to tell everyone what they'd seen and, not surprisingly, people start turning up to see for themselves. To their amazement they find the young man calm, dressed, in his right mind and sitting at Jesus's feet. For the disciples still trying to come to terms with Jesus stilling the storm and asking themselves questions about that, this must have only added to their question "Who is this man?"

We cannot be surprised that the young man himself wants to stay with Jesus but that is not in the plan. In some of his encounters we read how Jesus called people to follow and join him on the road and sometimes he asked people to stay silent about what had happened to them. However, in this reading, Jesus sends the young man away with instructions to tell everyone what God has done for him. A reminder to us that all that Jesus did was in his Father's name and strength.

Doubtless those who'd kept the pigs weren't that pleased to see their livelihood disappear into the lake. Therefore, rather than celebrating the healing of this troubled young man, the gathered crowd wants to retain a sense that they are in control of what happens and so they ask Jesus to leave and, along with his disciples, he does just that. Back into the boat and off they go to where, Luke tells us in the next verse of this chapter, a crowd welcomed them, for they had been expecting Jesus.

Overall, therefore, a slightly curious story that is set by Luke between the calming of the storm and a return back to Galilee, immediately into the healing of Jairus's daughter and the women with uncontrolled bleeding. Perhaps it is intended to open our thinking to the fact that Jesus is willing to deal with the most unlikely situations, and in ways that would not be possible for others. He crossed boundaries of traditions, cultural expectations and spiritual understanding when he helped and healed.

Faced with considerable human adversity, Jesus would still go the extra mile to reach out to the most vulnerable in society. The young man was told to "go home" – literally and spiritually. Back to those who knew him, maybe, but back to a deepening relationship with God and, through that, with Jesus too.

With all our contemporary medical insight and Biblical knowledge of Jesus, we might still do well to ask ourselves the same question as the disciples, "Who is this man?". We hopefully know the answer but are we ready to embrace fully what that might mean and look like for us? How willing are we to accept the man who died on the cross and who we claim to follow? Jesus is the one who heals the sick and serves those in need, and often calls those on the very edge of society, He is the one who seems to have power over everything and who is part of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

To become a follower of Jesus is a wonderful journey in our lives, bringing much joy and strength that supports our daily living. Yet it also brings its challenges – the Christian journey is certainly not always a bed of roses, or for the faint-hearted but Jesus offers an invitation to follow him. Therefore we, too, are called to “go home” and share the good news and live our lives refreshed, renewed and restored. Amen.

### ***Ways to Engage all Generations***

When different generations are gathered together in worship there is an opportunity to build relationships and to encounter God in our conversations as we build relationships and learn from each other no matter what our ages, stage of life or faith and for all present to feel included. Adding some wondering questions to the service at an appropriate moment can help to do this.

Wondering Questions: Some wondering questions that may help to engage all generations to ponder and explore during the talk, service or during the week may include (three or so) of the following style of questions:

- I wonder what your favourite part of the story/passage is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder who your favourite character is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder how \_\_\_\_\_ felt or I wonder how \_\_\_\_\_ felt when \_\_\_\_\_ happened?
- I wonder how you feel about \_\_\_\_\_?
- I wonder where you are in this story?
- I wonder what part of the story is about you?
- I wonder what the [tree, pearl, coin] could really be?
- I wonder why \_\_\_\_\_ said \_\_\_\_\_?
- I wonder what we can learn about God in this story?

### ***Suggested intercessions***

Almighty God, we lift to you our troubled world, with its rich diversity that we can celebrate but also its conflicts, natural disasters and environmental challenges that cause us to cry out to you in our lament of pain and sadness. We pray for peaceful understanding between nations and those who lead them, for appropriate relief and care to reach those most in need and for a better understanding of the threats to our climate and creation and a like mind to bring about actions to sustain all we need and value around us.

Lord in your mercy

### **Hear our prayer**

Heavenly Father, we pray for your Church here on earth and for our diocese and all who work and worship in it. With give thanks for the ministry of Dagmar, Bishop of Huntingdon and Acting Bishop of Ely, for our Archdeacons and Rural Deans, diocesan staff and, in our local context, for our own parish here at..... (insert name). We pray for all who exercise any form of ministry (you might like to name your local ministers, ordained and/or lay) and pray that all congregations may be part of the priesthood of all believers, committed to the sharing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Lord in your mercy  
**Hear our prayer**

Loving God, as we near the ending of another academic year, we pray for all currently undertaking exams, or who have just recently concluded them, that will shape their lives and future. Be very close to them we pray as the results are published, that none may see themselves as failures if they have not achieved all they need. May they know that there is a future for them, and we pray for wisdom for those who will help to guide them in ongoing discernment as to what to do next.

Lord in your mercy  
**Hear our prayer**

Comforting God, we pray for all in any kind of need at this time, especially today praying for those who find themselves in the midst of mental turmoil and crisis and the professional teams who care for them and for their loved ones who watch, wait and support. May all in any kind of difficulty sense your healing presence in their lives and, from that, be nurtured in their recovery and on-going journey in life.

*[At this point you may like to introduce any local needs into your prayers but please only do so if you have the permission of any to be named individually to do so. Thank you.]*

Lord in your mercy  
**Hear our prayer**

God of all, by the gift of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ who came to show us a better way and who gave up his life for us, may we know and receive the assurance that you hear our intercessions and bless us in our worship of you, our rock and our hope, our only way on which we build our lives.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen

### **Suggested hymns/songs**

Amazing Grace (Traditional Hymn)  
Amazing Grace, my chains fell off (Chris Tomlin)  
Christ is the world's true light  
Christ's is the world in which we move  
God is love: let heav'n adore Him  
My Saviour, my Jesus  
O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
Praise my soul the King of Heaven  
Thou whose almighty word

**Two Taizé chants:** Within our darkest night (Dans nos obscurités) and Bless the Lord my soul

**Activities to accompany the service**

If you are looking for resources to accompany the service for engaging younger children, then there are lots of online resources. The following free to access/download resources may be useful starting points:

- <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/>
- <https://www.faithinkids.org/>
- [reflectionary.org](https://www.reflectionary.org/) – lectionary-based resources
- [engageworship](https://www.engageworship.org/) – in particular 'Area 52' for lectionary-based material
- <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>  
(weekly@lectionary resource)