

“GOD’S HUBCAP”

Pastor Becky Stephens

Text: Luke 8:26-39

Why are we here this today? Why are we not doing what many of the people in our community are doing right this moment?...Watching TV, heading to the movie theatre, hanging out with friends and family, whatever...Could it be that something has happened in our lives...something so great... ..that we wouldn’t want to be anywhere else? Or could it be that we are searching for something...something we have seen in others, something we know exists, but have not yet experienced for ourselves? What is your answer or reason for being here?

In our Gospel Lesson for today, Jesus meets a demon-possessed man who wants nothing to do with Jesus. He is afraid of God. The presence of the Holy for him is a tormenting thing. But in the later part of our Lesson we see a new man. Legion is healed. He is sitting at the feet of Jesus, not because he has to—but because he would not want to be anywhere else. He’s hanging out with Jesus and he’s relaxed...perhaps for the first time in his life. He is no longer fearful of God. And he even begs Jesus to allow Him to come with Jesus into the next town and the next and the next.

How many of us were like Legion before we were healed by Christ? In our communities today, many people are like Legion before salvation. They aren’t comfortable with God. God is a fearful thought to them.

And yet, in our society there are many folks who are searching for something.

Notice how many “religious” people there are! People are into gurus, transcendental meditation, Scientology, voodoo, witchcraft, and drugs. The very fact that people are searching is proof that there is a void in their lives, for no one seeks for what he or she already has.

The word “religion” is a Latin word. It comes from the root “to bind back.” Thus, when a person is religious, he or she is trying to “bind” him or herself back to God—to patch things up. But, of course, we cannot do this on our own. If we are to be “put right” with God, we must allow God to do the work!

A man driving along the highway heard a strange clang, but he ignored it and kept on driving. When he got home he realized that one of his hubcaps was missing. Two weeks later, while driving home along that same stretch of highway he noticed his hubcap propped up on the side of the road. Stopping to get it, he found a note attached. It read, “I’ve been looking for you!”

The human race is like that lost hubcap! We have no way to bind ourselves back to God...unless God comes looking for us. And this is the Good News of God!!! God is searching for us all!!! Jesus came looking for Legion.

Jesus bound Legion back to God, and Legion is no longer lost. Instead, he sits relaxed and attentive...even excited, at Jesus’ feet! At first glance, it may seem very odd to us that Legion was not overjoyed when he first met Jesus. Legion was naked and unwashed. He had no home, but lived alone in a cemetery, chained there by townspeople who were at their wits end with how to deal with him. “Many

times...” Legion “had broken his chains” ... but the demon drove him into even more horrible situations. What a miserable existence!!! We can almost feel the self-loathing Legion must have had.

This is the case with many folks in our neighborhoods. As humans, we are a hunted species, and we are often our own predator. Ours is a generation of self-inflicted wounds.

Norman Rockwell has a painting of a little girl sitting in front of a mirror. A movie magazine is in her lap and it's open to a picture of her favorite star. And as she compares what she sees in the mirror to what she sees in the magazine she frowns. It is a tragedy to go through life disliking ourselves. Salvation, for Legion, not only meant a new relationship with God, it meant a new relationship with himself!!! When Legion learned that God accepted him, then Legion began to accept and love himself! How exciting is that?

In the country of the Gerasenes, Jesus comes face to face with a raving madman, who lives a tortured existence among the tombs. Legion was a Gentile, he was mad, he lived naked and homeless in a graveyard, he lived near a herd of pigs. Not only does this event demonstrate Jesus' power over the forces of evil, but it also makes the point that no one is irredeemable, beyond the reach of Christ's saving and healing touch!!!

Is that why we are here today? Can we relate to this? It is God Who knows that those Whom He loves are lost. It is God Who seeks us out. It is God Who finds us. It is up to us to accept His offer to come into our hearts and lives.

Remember the movie Forest Gump? Forest is asked by his Lieutenant: “Forest have you found Jesus?” Forest answers: “I didn't

know He was lost.” We are not the ones who find Jesus...Jesus finds us!

After Legion was healed, the people from his town came and found him sitting at Jesus’ feet, “dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.” So they told Jesus to take a hike, to hit the road Jack and never come back!!! They were afraid of the Holy. They were uncomfortable with God. They wanted nothing to do with Him. The Light of God was shining bright, and it hurt their eyes to look at it...because maybe, just maybe...they would soon be forced to face their own demons—and accept the fact that Jesus does indeed save!!!

So Jesus got into a boat and left, and the newborn Christian—who had once been called Legion wanted to hop into the boat with Him. But Jesus had other plans for him. “Return home,” Jesus commanded, “and tell how much God has done for you.’ So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.”

We are the Body of Christ within this community... We are Christ’s representatives within a place where so many people neither know God nor want to know God. And Jesus is telling us to tell those in our community how much God has done for us. Are we doing this? We have the most exciting, intriguing and important story to tell. Nothing else beats it! Let us return to our homes and tell our stories today, tomorrow, the next day and for as long as we all shall live!!!