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Luke 8:26-29

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"So they [Jesus and his disciples] arrived in the region of the Gerasenes, across the lake from Galilee. As Jesus was climbing out of the boat, a man who was possessed by demons came out to meet him. For a long time he had been homeless and naked, living in the tombs outside the town. As soon as he saw Jesus, he shrieked and fell down in front of him. Then he screamed, "Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Please, I beg you, don't torture me!" For Jesus had already commanded the evil spirit to come out of him."

Luke 8:26-29, NLT

As I've been re-reading the book of Luke with the start of a new year, this story seized hold of me. Here we find a demon-possessed man who meets Jesus and as He demonstrates his authority and power as the Son of God, commanding the evil spirits to come out of the man, the man is overcome with fear "Why are you *interfering* with me Jesus?"

Have you ever felt Jesus was interfering with your life?

Perhaps it was a welcomed interference: "Jesus, please *rescue* me!" Depending on your situation or circumstance, maybe you've cried out to God, pleading for His divine power to be unleashed in your life, your finances, your health, or your relationships. Perhaps you've put up defense mechanisms to keep Jesus from interfering? The relationship He warned you not to pursue, but you did so anyway by doing whatever necessary to block out God's incessant voice whispering in your ear. The conviction He's placed heavy on your heart, but you know that in order to heed His word you'd have to give up the very things that bring you pleasure so you saturate yourself in Netflix or video games hoping the conviction will simply go away. Or maybe you put physical distance between you and God - you don't want to read His Word, don't want to hear Him spoken about at vespers or church so you simply don't attend, don't want to hear others talk about Him so you resist joining a LifeGroup even though community is what you long for.

When Jesus interferes with our lives it seems to turn things upside down sometimes doesn't it? Sometimes His interference calls us to greater discomfort, deeper faith, challenges our prior understanding, and reveals our broken humanity in ways that can be painful. But Jesus doesn't want to interfere in our lives just for sport. Or to cause damage and calamity and sorrow.

Jesus longs to interfere in our lives with all the power from on high in order to call us by name, as He does this demon-possessed man if you keep reading in Luke 8, **and heal us, and set us free!** Jesus casts the demons out of this man and into a herd of pigs (weird, I know). Verse 35 records, “People rushed out to see what had happened. A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been freed from the demons. He was sitting at Jesus’ feet, fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid. Then those who had seen what happened told the others how the demon-possessed man had been healed. And all the people in the region of the Gerasenes begged Jesus to go away and leave them alone, for a great wave of fear swept over them.”

We can either fear what divine interference will do in our lives - how it will convict us, change us, challenge us - or we can invite Jesus to have full access to our lives and see what greater and better things He has in store for us as we are set free!

It’s my prayer as we start this new semester that you will make Jesus the Main Thing in your life and give Him full access to mess you up, turn you upside down, and set you free to experience all that He has to offer - grace, joy, peace, and unending love!

Reflection:

1. Do you think you are afraid of God’s interfering in your life, or are you more inviting? Journal or talk with a friend or mentor.
2. If you, like me, want to move away from being afraid of God’s interfering in your life, pray and honestly confess to God your reservations and ask for the ability to surrender.
3. Come to vespers this Friday at 8pm in the University Church and declare with us “No Longer!” Sign up to engage in ministry this semester at Ministry Expo immediately following vespers and participate alongside God as He interferes in your life and in the lives of others on this campus, and in our local and global communities.

-Pastor Anna Bennett