



## **WnL CONNECT Groups**

### **Responding to the Power of Jesus**

Luke 8:26-39

#### **MAIN POINT**

When we follow Jesus, we'll experience His power in our lives and testify to others what He has done.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

- Who was your favourite superhero growing up? Why?
- What would you say is your greatest strength? What about your greatest weakness? In what ways do your weaknesses motivate you to rely on Jesus? Give examples.

Power naturally elicits a response. In Luke 8, Jesus encountered an army of evil spirits. These spirits had power over the man they possessed, but their power was no match for the inherent power of the Son of God. Through this encounter, we see people respond to Jesus in different ways. Their responses challenge us to recognize Jesus' power, welcome His power to remove evil in our lives and tell people what His power has done.

#### **UNDERSTANDING**

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

#### **Ask a volunteer to read Luke 8:26-33.**

Immediately after Jesus stepped out of the boat and sailed across the Sea of Galilee, a man possessed with demons confronted Him. The man was taken over by many demons who had completely invaded his body. His existence was an extreme distortion of humanity. He wore no clothes, lived among the dead, and even chains couldn't shackle him. What's worse, the man was isolated from his community, driven to madness and hopelessness.



- What name did the demon-possessed man use in addressing Jesus? What is significant about the fact that the man referred to Jesus in this way when he encountered Him?
- Why do you think the demon-possessed man engaged in conversation with Jesus instead of running away from Him?
- What do you learn about Jesus from this miraculous event?

Jesus' casting out the demons was not just a display of His miraculous abilities, but also of His power against the darkness. The possessed man called himself "Legion," a name that did not simply denote a large number (5,600 soldiers would constitute a legion), but the term referred to a large organized collection of soldiers who were connected to a greater army. In other words, these demons were a collection of evil spirits at war against this man, and ultimately against God. Yet at the sight of Jesus, they cowered and began to make the terms of their surrender.

The demons that controlled this man immediately recognized Jesus. They intrinsically knew that His power far exceeded theirs. Jesus is the "Son of the Most High God," and the demons knew that their fate rested solely in Jesus' word. In every display of glory, Jesus' power pointed back to His Father.

The demons begged that Jesus not send them to the place of eternal destruction (abyss), but instead into a herd of pigs. Their interaction with Jesus showed that they were fully aware of their final destiny. Their understanding of who Jesus was and their certain end was ironic in that Jesus' own disciples did not yet have this full understanding. Jesus' disciples had yet to realize the depth of who this "Son of the Most High God" was.

#### **Ask a volunteer to read Luke 8:34-39.**

- What were the Gerasene herdsmen talking about? The people of the surrounding country? The previously demon-possessed man? Who do you relate to the most? Why?
- When the healed man begged to stay with Jesus, what kind of life do you think he was hoping to experience? How did Jesus change his understanding of what it meant to follow Him?
- What does this story reveal about the different ways we can respond to Jesus?

This crowd reacted differently than other crowds. People who witnessed a healing or exorcism usually crowded Jesus with others to heal and help. Not the Gerasenes. They demanded that Jesus leave their region immediately. The cares of the world and the world's riches were too much for them. Their livelihood took precedence over human need. They expelled the most powerful and caring person in history without seeking His help for any of their friends and neighbours.

However, the healed man wanted to answer Jesus' call to follow. Jesus' response may have surprised him. For this man, following meant going back home and telling fearful friends and neighbours what Jesus had done for him.



The man obeyed instantly. He took the good news to a town that had expelled Jesus, telling everyone exactly what Jesus had done for him. The call to faith is a call to commitment to the mission Jesus defines for us—not a call to the things we want to do.

### **APPLICATION**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

- What's preventing you from declaring Jesus' miraculous work in your heart and life?
- How should knowing Jesus has authority over demons (and all things) impact those obstacles that keep you from declaring to others His power in your life?
- What seemingly unconquerable forces in your life do you need to hand over to Jesus to heal? How might this way of living point others to the truth about Jesus?

### **PRAYER**

Praise Jesus the Son of the Most High God, whose power and authority changes lives. Thank Him for the work He has done in your life, and invite Him to give you opportunities to share that with other people this week.

