

# Matthew 8:18-34

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[ 0 : 00 ] We are in Matthew chapter 8 and we finished verse 17 last time or at least I thought I'd finished it and then I had a conversation with Jo afterwards and realised I'd left a bit out.

So turn to Matthew 8. It's important for us to realise, if we haven't already, that one of the things that Jesus is doing that's recorded in chapter 8 and has also been recorded through the Sermon on the Mount, now he's establishing himself as Messiah but it must be dawning on the people who are listening to him what that really means.

That he's not just turned up as someone who's greater than they've ever known but he's turning up as God on legs. And that is a massive mental shift that we're not dealing with just a man here but we're dealing with God in human form.

And so his push is to establish that by doing things that only God could do. And we come across, from time to time, we come across little bits of interface where on the one hand they've kind of come across this thing before.

For instance, we're going to be dealing with deliverance from demons. Now the Jews had a ritual for deliverance from demons. So an exorcism ritual, if you like, and you can find that written in Mark chapter 5.

[ 1 : 46 ] And as we go on through we will deal with that a couple of times because it particularly is poignant when we get to Matthew chapter 12. But there were the things that were prophesied Messiah would do.

There were the things the Jews in their own head said. If someone turns up and does this then you're looking at Messiah. And above and beyond that there is his own stuff.

So just to go back to what I missed last week. We were doing chapter 8 and we got, I overlooked or skipped over verses 11 to 13.

Where Jesus says to them and they've listened to all this teaching. And then you have the centurion's faith. And it says Jesus marveled at the centurion's faith.

And then he says, which must have been, it must have been like a kick in the shins really to the Jews. He says, I say to you that many will come from east and west.

[ 2 : 56 ] In other words Gentiles. Many will come from east and west and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And there's a lot of debate over this. What it means, the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

I think in this particular instance you can take the context that is here. It doesn't mean that you're in trouble. It means you're in eternal trouble. So what he's saying to the Jews is being Jewish isn't enough.

In Romans 2, if you turn there. And this is all by way of intro to, well, postponed intro really because I should have done it last week.

Romans chapter 2. In verses 26 to 29, Paul is, in the first three chapters of Romans, you may recall if you've read it through or ever studied it, that he deals with both Jews and Gentiles and he deals with the religious and the irreligious.

[ 4 : 13 ] And one of the things he says to people in these verses from 26 to 29 is this. For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the law.

But if you are a transgressor of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. Of course circumcision was the hallmark of the Jew. What he's effectively saying is if you don't behave like a Jew, you're not considered to be one.

So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be required or be recognised as circumcision?

In other words, you can become a Jew if you stick to the law. And this is, of course, he's talking about the old covenant. And in fact, he wasn't advocating returning to the law. Well, what he was saying is the fact that you claim to be a Jew doesn't make you one.

And the fact that you say that you're not one doesn't mean that you're really not one if your behaviour is in keeping with the law of God. It's what's in the heart that counts.

[ 5 : 20 ] And so he goes on to say, And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the law, will he not judge you who, though having the letter of the law and circumcision, are transgressors of the law?

You make all the claims. And, of course, we've been through the Sermon on the Mount where he said of the Jews at the time, when he said to the people who were listening to him, you need to have a righteousness greater than the Jews, because they were making all the right noises and doing all the wrong things.

It's not about the noises you make, it's about what's in your heart. Reading on. For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. And his praise is not from men, but from God.

So, to the Jews who were following him around, to suddenly be told, you shouldn't think that your place in heaven is guaranteed, because loads of these Gentiles are going to come and cue-jump you, and they're going to be in heaven before you, and you might not even get in.

[ 6 : 42 ] And if you do get in, it might be with your pants on fire. He was telling them that their conduct and their hearts were unrighteous, despite what they were proclaiming with their lips.

So, that's the end of last week's sermon. And now, we've come to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 8, verse 18.

And I don't know whether to read this straight through. We'll read it in chunks, in case we don't make it to the end. Because there's a lot to get through. I was going to, my aim was to finish the chapter.

But as it gets through, it gets a little bit meaty in places, and you think, I'm not sure if I'm going to make the time scale. So, if I don't, we'll just call a halt at 45 minutes and start again next week. Oh, I've turned to Matthew 18, that won't do.

Right, Matthew 8, verse 18. So, as a preamble to this, he's healed Peter's mother-in-law.

[ 8 : 00 ] And we talked about the fact that he was picking out the ones who were societally rejected. He picked out lepers. He picked out the Gentiles and healed the Gentile servant, the centurion servant.

He picked out women who were a downtrodden part of society in those days. All of those things would set him against the Jews. They would walk past these people in the street and wouldn't even throw water on them to put them out if they were on fire.

There was that kind of anathema, particularly of Gentiles, but also of women. You know, women were discarded. And we kind of joked about it and said, where did they think they were going to get their sons from if they didn't value women?

But it's an odd thing. But I think what happens now is God turns the volume up on what we then see. What we don't know is whether what we're about to read followed immediately after.

See, the previous section, he came down off the mountain and did it. With this one, we don't know chronologically whether it happened immediately after or whether there was a time gap.

[ 9 : 12 ] Let's read some of it and then we'll move on. Now when Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave orders to depart to the other side of the sea. Then a scribe came and said to him, Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.

And Jesus said to him, The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. Another disciple said to him, Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.

But Jesus said to him, Follow me and allow the dead to bury their own dead. I think I'll try to deal with that. It's not a very long section and it's not complex, except for this saying.

Jesus said to him, The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. Huh? What do you mean? Now most people that speak on this, and I think

I agree with them, simply say that what Jesus was doing is he was saying, If you're going to follow me, you can forget creature comforts, you can forget, you know, the foxes have somewhere to lay their head.

I don't. I don't even have a home. I quite often sleep under the stars. And if I do sleep in a home, it belongs to somebody else.

[10:37] I don't have anything. So if you think following me is going to get you creature comforts, it's not. Now I would say to properly follow Jesus, that is true today.

That it will bring you some grief. It'll bring you a lot of heartache. The society we live in, it doesn't necessarily bring you discomfort, because we have nice homes and they're central heated, and we don't live in, yeah, praise God for central heating, but we don't live in the harsh reality that they did. Nevertheless, and I'm sure you've experienced this at least in part, but trying to follow Jesus the way your heart would have you do it, and to try to do that to its fullest, is costly.

People come into this church, and came into my previous church, and they professed all sorts of loyalties, and they all left in the end. And when it came down to the rigours of God's word, they were not prepared to stick in there, and stick with the word of God, and do what God's word said you should do, when you become divided from your brothers.

There was no attempt at reconciliation a lot of the time. And I don't know whether they ever cried over those things. I know I did. And situations here, where we've had families come in who are unsaved, or immature in their walk, perhaps, who need to be developed, and you reach out in your heart towards such folk, and you want to build them up, and you want to lead them on in Christ, because it's the only thing that eternally makes any difference to their lives whatsoever, and they lose interest.

[12:25] And I find myself gutted by that. I really do. And I'm supposed to be gutted by that, because we love because he first loved us.

So the reason I feel gutted by that is because God has put his love in my heart for those people. Now, and I'm not trying to big myself up. That's what God does to his own children.

I'm using myself as an example of what God will do with anyone who unequivocally gives his heart to God. And as I say, we don't know whether this was immediately following on, or whether it was at a later time.

Anyway, so what we have is this situation where he says to them, you'll say you'll follow me anywhere, count the cost. Now this other chap says, let me first go and bury my father.

He says, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. Which, in some sense, and he probably didn't mean it like this, but it's a contradiction in terms.

[13:33] What you're saying is, Lord, you're not really Lord, because I want to go and bury my father, rather than do as I was told. Lord. I'm told that the language of this, and I've not been able to back this up, so do what you like with it, but some people who've preached on this have said, the language indicates that going to bury his father didn't just mean going and putting him in the ground and coming away, but it meant ongoing care for him as he went towards his death.

So it was a longer term commitment. I've not been able to verify that from the language. The language is, it doesn't plainly say that. But the point is, if you say you're going to follow God, you have to be prepared to follow him to the letter and do whatever he says.

Which immediately throws up all sorts of concerns, doesn't it? So, I mean, I'm a father and a grandfather and a husband, now I know a lot of men who leave their wives and kids and go off to Africa and preach the gospel, and I question whether many of them should have done so, because their excuse for doing so is, well, God called me to it and I have to follow God first.

Yes, that's true, but does God call you to leave your wife and kids stranded with no dad? And there may be occasions when he does.

My only warning would be make sure you're absolutely certain that that was a call from God, not just. A sense of adventure for yourself to get out and do something meaningful, when in fact, quite a lot of the time, God calls us to do the menial stuff at home, you know, to help with the Hoovering, to clean the toilet, keep the car on the road, mend that leaking window.

[15:27] All of this is just as much a service to God as being certain of what you're called to, but if you're called to that, then do it as if you were doing it for the Lord.

So what he was saying to them was, if you follow him, you're likely to be impoverished, lacking in creature comforts, and certainly depleted in reputation.

People are going to want to throw rocks at you. So, the one who was wanting to bury his father was being challenged, get your priorities right.

And the, let the dead bury their own dead, which sounds like a very, very harsh comment. I suppose, whichever way you interpret it, it was quite a harsh comment, but I think what's behind that, lots of people have said this, and it strikes a chord with me, is let, let the spiritually dead bury the physically dead.

Because a corpse in the Bible was known as a dead body or an unbeliever. Unbelievers are always referred to as dead. They're dead in their transgressions and sins.

[16:40] So, let the corpses that are still walking bury the corpses that are not, was the, the feeling behind that. If you're not one of the corpses, you've got other things to be doing.

And I think it was just a very, very sharp challenge, get your priorities right. Let's read on a bit. So, verse 23.

When he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. I'll repeat it from previous weeks. Disciples doesn't mean it was the twelve. The word disciples simply means followers. So, when he got into the boat, people followed him into the boat.

And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves, but Jesus himself was asleep. And they came to him and woke him, saying, Save us, Lord, we are perishing.

And he said, Why are you afraid, you men of little faith? Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm. The men were amazed and said, What kind of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

[17:57] In the Sea of Galilee, I better take this device with me, or it will fall on the floor. The Sea of Galilee is a lake.

It's not seawater. And it's a lake that is between six and seven hundred feet below sea level. So it's a big basin, if you like.

And what happens is, cold winds from the Mediterranean are drawn across, and they're pulled down into the Sea of Galilee, and they create this cauldron turmoil.

It's not like normal sea waves. The waves go in all directions, and they buffet things, and they're very unpredictable. And most boats will ride a normal wave pattern, but this is not a normal wave pattern, and the boats the disciples would have been in were not sea boats.

They're designed to fish from. So quite easily overwhelmed, in fact. Now I've got a little video, and I need to fiddle with the technology to get the right bit, because it's 15 minutes long, I know you only want to play about a minute.

[19:00] So bear with me. Yes.

So I think about there will do it. That might be too soon, actually.

Try that. Wow, is that? So this is... I think the storm... This is a couple of people who are looking out for a storm.

Look how fast it's going, so you can see it. And what I want to see is just how suddenly it comes up. Now, here it is. So over here, it's covered in rain.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. See it? So it's like a funnel, a funnel of rain. Now, the waves aren't very big yet. Yeah. It's suddenly like cold.

[19:57] It crisp red winds. Do you feel it? Yeah, yeah. Like it was an accident. Oh, cold.

Even though this is rare, it is certainly not the first time that a storm hits the lake. You can see the waves getting a little bit bigger. Just a year ago...

Now, this is within minutes. ...deliverosi, who is also known by stage name Nothing Less, was able to capture this footage from a pier, located just a few hundred feet away from where Roto and I are standing today.

And while this might look severe, we should first assess the height of the waves by using a reference subject such as the railing. Because we know that the approximate height of the rails is about four feet, we can take this measurement, drag it to the lowest point of the wave, and estimate that the height of the wave is about the same four feet.

And so while this water looks unusual for us, certainly does not look thick enough to make professional fishermen be scared for their wives. But luckily, we were able to gain access to another footage.

[ 21 : 18 ] The year... 1992. When a famous Israel director, Moshe Alperin, captures one of the greatest storms ever recorded on tape, in the Sea of Gownen.

You would never think this was a freshwater lake, would you? In the form of the same analysis method, we can estimate that the height of the waves would be as high as 10 feet.

On smaller boats, waves this high can definitely be considered life-threatening, even for experienced fishermen. What have I done?

Oh no, don't do that. I just want that. And then... that.

Right. So, that was the diagram that was in the video film, just shows that at times, given the right kind of storm, you can get waves up to 10 feet high on the Sea of Galilee.

[ 22 : 27 ] And these fishing boats were actually designed for fishing in flat water. So, that would easily overwhelm a fishing boat. The amazing thing was that...

and I have to believe that the Lord engineered this. That he thought, you know, I'm going to go to sleep and see how long it takes before they wake me up.

And it's a scary thing. I've been around boats on and off for most of my life, especially my younger life. And Sharon and I were on a ferry once going across to Jersey and it was really, really rough.

And people were having panic attacks. Now, I wasn't having a panic attack because I'm used to boats. But the people who weren't used to boats couldn't see how it couldn't turn over. And there was one woman in particular having screaming fits.

panic attacks in the lounge and all the staff were gathered round trying to calm her down. Because as this boat turned to go into a harbour and turned across the sea, it began to pitch and roll and it was easy to see why people were scared.

[ 23 : 33 ] Now, these were experienced seamen and they were scared. And they woke him up. What's interesting is his response, oh ye of little faith.

And when you look at what we've just seen, you think, it's actually perfectly reasonable to be scared in those situations. I mean, there's a lot going on. And it's all bigger than, if you think of, you're sitting down in a boat when you're in the trough of one of those waves and it's ten feet high.

It looks monstrous. So, you think being scared is perfectly reasonable. But what happens when we get scared is we stop listening to the Lord.

And he had said, let's go to the other side. So, their response should have been, and I'm sure I would have had a right response if I'd been there.

Not. But the response should have been, we needn't worry because the Lord said we're going to the other side and if he says we're going to the other side then that's where we're going.

[ 24 : 35 ] But no, they had to wake him up and say, do something! When he did something he did the very thing that only God can do.

The maker of the universe, the one who made the universe with his words can also direct it with his words and only God could suddenly say to the waves and the sea, calm down, be quiet.

And it didn't happen over, I mean that storm we watched there sprang up in minutes. But it didn't seem to have calmed down in minutes when Jesus spoke.

It seemed to have gone instantly calm. So much so that they were blown away by it. Now another point I want to bring out here is that every time Jesus does something like this, particularly in this phase of his ministry, he always ensures that it's witnessed and that it's witnessed by enough people that you can't then write about it.

If it was a lie, if you later wrote about it people would say no, that didn't happen. These men were saying what kind of man is this? They were all bowled over by it and so the talk the chatter when they got to the other side would have been you'll never guess what he did.

[ 25 : 58 ] That storm you saw on the lake, we were going to be drowning it and he told it to stop and it stopped. This would have been widely witnessed and so people would kind of say oh well you know these are all fairies, hails and myths.

If we stop and think about it the number of eyewitnesses to things like this prevents it from ever being anything other than the truth. There might be varying opinions, you know, the typical man's fisherman's tale.

The waves were 25 feet, well actually they were about 10. There might have been exaggeration but you'd never be able to get away with saying there was no storm and he didn't calm the storm.

So once again what we have is Jesus who has been on this road of proving that all the aspects of God that we know he's almighty, he's omnipresent, he's omniscient, he's having to prove that

because Messiah has to be that.

He's having to show them beyond doubt that he is the real deal, that he is God on legs. He doesn't have to be somewhere to create a healing there. He healed the centurion servant when he wasn't even in the house.

[ 27 : 21 ] He is not limited by incurability. He healed the leper and forced them to use that ritual that they had that they'd never used.

You know the ritual for the cleansing of a leper. He'd healed I mean it just says I think I said this last week there are 37 or 38 depending on your view of one of them there are 37 recorded miracles in scripture but the scripture says he did many many more than could be recorded in scripture.

John's gospel says if they'd all been recorded there might not be enough books to contain it all. So the ones that they've picked they've picked for particular reasons and I would submit to you that they've picked them because they demonstrate not just that he was an interesting bloke but that he was doing stuff that Messiah was expected to do and taking control over the weather is something that only God can do so he's just done something that only God can do.

Now you could argue that only God could have done all the other things as well but this was a particular healings we've seen before. We've seen people get better before from things that you would think nobody could recover from but we've never seen anybody talk to a storm and make it calm.

That's the same God that spoke once to the sun and told it to stand still in the sky. That's the same God that one day told the shadow to go backwards. The God that controls the weather.

[ 28 : 59 ] So this is the point that Matthew is making to the Jews. This is not just any man you've got here. This is God manifest as man talking to you as man who has joined us as man.

This is the fulfilment of your feast of tabernacles where God has come and is tabernacling in the midst of you in the same tabernacle that you wear a human body. It's a profound thing and when you think of the persecution they underwent later it would have to be that profound wouldn't it? You wouldn't settle for anything less really. You wouldn't leap up and follow someone and become a martyr for someone who hadn't demonstrated that they were divine.

And then we get to the next bit which is from verse 28. When he came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes and your versions may have different words there some of them might say the Gennesarenes and some of the Gennesarenes and the Gerasenes it is all the same place. They are nuances of villages in the same area. The area I believe was Gadara which was a town and this was close to Gadara but they had other names for little pockets of population around the area.

[ 30 : 34 ] So when he came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes two men who were demon possessed met him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way.

And then they cried out saying what business do we have with each other son of God you have come here or have you come here to torment us before the time. Now there was a herd of many swine feeding at a distance from them.

The demons began to entreat him saying if you're going to cast us out send us into the herd of swine. And he said to them go and they came out and went into the swine and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters.

The herdsmen ran away and went to the city and reported everything including what had happened to the demoniacs. And behold the whole city came out to meet Jesus.

And when they saw him they implored him to leave the region. That is so sad. Almighty God comes in your midst and what you want him to do is leave.

[ 31 : 44 ] So first of all we need to know that this tale is told in three gospels. It's told in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Mark 5 and Luke 8. And they all concur with a few extra details in some that you don't have in others.

So the other two accounts talk of a single demoniac. And you'll often hear preachers preach about the Gadarene demoniac, the demon possessed man from Gadara.

But there were two, it's just that Matthew is concentrating on one in particular. And we don't know why that is. No, the other way round. Matthew is talking about two.

The other two gospel writers are concentrating on one in particular. Another one of my famous misspeaks. So there are these two guys who are possessed by evil spirits.

[ 32 : 43 ] What does that mean? And as far as we can, we'll kind of bottom that out. What are demons?

If you ask five different theologians what demons are, you'll probably get six different answers. The commonest view is that they are the spirit of fallen angels.

But that is contested. Some people say it's something completely separate from angels. To be honest, I neither know nor care. I just know that these are powerful influences over human beings. And they don't just hang around, but they actually possess people. They seek embodiment. They want a body to live in. Hence, in this particular account, when they know they're going to be cast out, they don't want to be cast out into nothingness.

They want to inhabit a body. And so they say, please cast us into the swine. And when demons inhabit people, what they do is they, firstly, are very destructive.

[ 34 : 00 ] They cause them often to be self-destructive, so self-harming and even suicidal. But they also cause them to be destructive with their mouth. They speak very badly.

They're very abusive. They're often very violent. They're totally unpredictable a lot of the time. I've had one or two, and there are people who kind of go demon chasing and they find demons in every lamppost.

You know, there's just a sort of, they claim to have a deliverance ministry and they chase around and they spot a behaviour pattern and say, oh, you've got a spirit of whatever they've spotted. Mostly, you should never trust that, mostly. There's the odd occasion when it might be real. And I can think of a couple of occasions over my 40-odd years as a Christian that I think, yeah, that was really a demonic thing going on.

Once was a lady friend of ours, she got sectioned into a mental hospital in Somerset and we went to visit her because being in there wasn't doing her any good.

[ 35 : 13 ] So we wanted her out and back with the church community. so we went to visit her in hospital because they needed to see that she had a support network and when we went in and sat down and started to talk to her, she started manifesting something absolutely horrible.

She started gnashing her teeth and doing all sorts of weird things and we prayed before we went in there and we asked the Lord to be with us if this happened because we knew it wasn't, it's the sort of environment where it does happen.

And so we said to this thing, whatever it was, shut up in the name of Jesus and get out. And she immediately calmed right down.

Now that doesn't give me a deliverance ministry, it just means God equipped me in the moment.

And I would never claim to have a deliverance ministry. Neither am I particularly good at discerning when demons are present unless God makes it obvious.

Because there are all sorts of behaviours that are just learned behaviours, bad behaviours, but not necessarily demonic. There are all sorts of mental illnesses, you come across them in the scriptures, where clearly that kind of, let's say, seizure that somebody's having is driven by a demonic presence.

[ 36 : 35 ] But it doesn't always have to be that. And then there's a need to be discerning. So, there's another question we might as well answer without going into great detail and great depths of study.

People ask, can a Christian become demon possessed? My answer to that is no. A firm and unequivocal no. If the Holy Spirit is in me, there isn't room for a malevolent spirit.

Right? That said, there are people who think they're Christians or portray themselves as Christians because it fits with their intentions and what they want to portray in life.

They want to be seen to be good. And it's just a matter of discernment as to working out who those people are. But for people who have given their life to Christ and they've received the Holy Spirit, there's no room for demons.

That's a malevolent spirit, not a benevolent spirit. Yeah. So, these two guys were possessed to the point where no one could go near them.

[ 37 : 50 ] And it's demons have personalities and they impart that personality to their host. And so, people become violent in their actions, violent in their talk, drive people away.

they also often have supernatural strength. Hence, these demons, these demon-possessed men, had the ability to break the chains that bound them.

So, it's a very, you're dealing with forces that are much more powerful than normal human forces. Which is why I wonder why anybody goes looking for them.

but they are driven by the desire to see human beings harmed.

Anything to do with Satan, and demons are to do with Satan, hate human beings. And so, whenever they possess, they intend to cause harm. And it can be all sorts of different ways they do that.

[ 38 : 53 ] I've listed some scriptures there. I'm not going to go through all of them. I just put them up there for you to chase down in your own time. But we will look at the two scriptures in 1 Samuel.

So go to 1 Samuel 16 and 23. And it's one of the... We tend to...

As a society, we tend to look at the whole idea of demon possession. And we include it in horror films and we make light of it and it's all a source of ridicule.

And if you tell someone you actually believe demons are real, they'll quite often go, you don't believe that nonsense, do you? I think Sharon's father once said to one of the children, when they talked about demons, he said, well, you bring me one in a box and I'll believe in them.

And there's that kind of mentality to it, but these are invisible and when they're not embodied, they're invisible and immaterial. They don't have a material presence.

[ 40 : 02 ] 1 Samuel 16, if I've got the right verse, 23. So, just read verse 22.

Saul sent to Jesse saying, let David now stand before me for he has found favour in my sight. So it came about whenever the evil spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play it with his hand and Saul would be refreshed and be well and the evil spirit would depart from him.

So the idea of evil spirits is nothing new and I don't know whether there was more demonic activity back then or whether there's more now but we don't recognise it for what it is.

The way our society is going I think it's probably more now that we don't recognise it for what it is. 1 Samuel 18 verses 9 to 10. Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on.

Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God, now that's an interesting one isn't it? Evil spirits can be used by God to achieve God's purpose. So they're not of God but God can send them on a mission and Saul had been very disobedient to God so God was using evil spirits to affect Saul.

[ 41 : 28 ] It came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul and he raved in the midst of the house while David was playing the harp with his hand. As usual and a spear was in Saul's hand.

I'm not going to go on with the story except to say that God used the evil spirit to cause Saul to reveal his true intentions in this particular account.

And you can look at the other scriptures, some of them we'll come across as we go anyway. demons are powerful and can only be cast out by someone more powerful or on the authority of someone more powerful.

So in other words either God does it or you do it if God has empowered you to do it. you may remember the account of the seven sons of Sceva where they decided to have a go at this demon possessed person and they tried to cast out this demon and they said we adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches to come out of him and effectively all seven of them got duffed up by the man who was demon possessed because they were acting in their own authority, they hadn't been given authority by God to do it and they suffered for it which is another reason why you don't go hunting for demons.

They are powerful, powerful beings and you will have the power in your word to command them to stop if you're operating in the power of the Holy Spirit and if you're not you're likely to get duffed up.

[ 43 : 18 ] So it's best avoided unless God corners you to do it. But remember you see if you turn to Luke 10 17.

Luke 10 17. This is immediately after. So Jesus sent out the 70, said go out there and preach the gospels and heal the sick and raise the dead and do all sorts of things.

and in verse 17 the 70 returned with joy saying Lord even the demons are subject to us in your name. So they've been casting out demons in Jesus name but he had sent them out for that purpose and that was clear.

They knew what they were going out to do. So when they acted they were full of faith anyway because that's what Jesus had told them to do. the seven sons of Sceva were never told to go and do that and they got duffed up.

But when you are operating in God's authority yes you can do this I just don't think you should ever play with it as if it's something light.

[ 44 : 58 ] So I'm so near the end I'm going to finish. What we read was the demons speak to Jesus and the first thing they say is have you come to torment us before the time?

Now before the time is interesting because the word kairos is used rather than chronos which doesn't mean time it means an appointed time.

It's specifically a word you would use if you had an appointment at the dentist and you were speaking Greek you would have a kairos with the dentist. So these demons it's important to know first of all it's important for us to know that they do have an appointed time when they will face judgment but the demons themselves also knew that there was an appointed time for them to face judgment.

the second thing is they recognised it was Jesus. They didn't say who are you? They said you're Jesus son of almighty God you're God's son and you've come to get rid of us before judgment day. And then they had this pleading we want to enter the pigs well we've covered that demons like to be embodied so they were allowed to go into the pigs and we finish with this I don't know what to make of this but the pigs are demonised and I think it's in Luke's account we realise that there were 2,000 of these pigs so this means that Jesus has dealt with probably 2,000 demonic presences in these two men with a single word can we go into the pigs go and on the word go 2,000 demons were dispatched which gives any onlookers a real idea of the power that's involved here now these pigs the existence of a herd of pigs here is really interesting because this is Galilee of the Gentiles and it's the area known as the Decapolis where there were 10 Gentile cities but it was still overall in Jewish rule and eating pork was illegal and so no Jewish person should have a pig farm so I think it's quite likely though not proven by these scriptures

[ 47 : 24 ] I think it's quite likely that when those pigs became demonised and all ran into the sea and drowned I mean obviously whoever owned those pigs suffered a massive loss I wouldn't be at all surprised given that it was perfectly legal for Gentiles to eat pork I wouldn't be at all surprised if those pigs belonged to Jews because it was God's way of showing that he knew they were breaking the law now I've made all that up that's not in the scriptures so please don't but it's just why pick on the poor pigs and what's the purpose in having 2,000 pigs floating around in the water well it could be that the owners of those pigs who were trying to circumvent the law got their comeuppance and so you finish up with the pigs being demonised the pigs then dying so the demons have got no more embodiment anymore they don't have a body to live in anymore so they finish up

I don't know what demons do when they're not in a body they just float around or whatever I have no idea but the demons are no longer embodied and the pigs are no longer a good investment so the herdsmen run into town and tell what's happened and the townsmen come out to Jesus and ask him to leave finish with this if you read Luke's account I think when this bloke who's been delivered of demons he goes back to his hometown because he first of all said to Jesus let me come with you and Jesus said no go home and tell everybody what God has done for you so Jesus has been asked to leave but the demoniac the former demoniac who they all knew is back at home telling them what God has done in other words he's an evangelist and he's giving testimony and that's what our testimony is for it's to tell people in the world about

Jesus so he goes home and in verse 40 of Luke chapter 8 it says that when Jesus returned there they welcomed him with open arms so he was a very effective evangelist based on the testimony of him being delivered so can I finish with this statement whatever God has done for us we need to broadcast it we need to tell people whenever we get an opportunity it's not I think there's a there's a level at which people do that sometimes which is just offensive where they grab people in the streets and browbeat them with the gospel I don't ever see that in scripture what I do see is people just saying once I was blind and now I see just sharing heart coming across people and people who are sick and saying people prayed for me when I was sick and I got healed can I pray for you that kind of use of the testimony that God has given us

Father thank you for this word sorry I ran over time thank you Lord for this word and thank you that you are the one true almighty ever present omniscient God and let us never lose sight of that fact that the God we worship is not some made up thing but you are a God to whom we can relate and a

God who has a phenomenal history upon which we can draw Lord we thank you for your word to us  
in Jesus name Amen Amen