

Bible passage: Luke 8.26-39

Introduction

In our story from Luke's gospel, we hear of a demon possessed man who is totally transformed. Jesus was met by this man who was full of demons and Jesus' response was not to run away but to address him. He asks him his name and acknowledges this social outcast. Jesus heals and transforms this man, inside and out.

What was the responses of others in the story? Do they choose **fear or faith**?

The demon possessed man was full of faith. He had been healed and transformed and he wanted to go with Jesus. But Jesus asks him to stay in his hometown and tell others about the good news of God. So, the man decided, despite the town's rejection of him, to stay and share the good news. **He chooses faith.** He went back to a community of people who probably resented him and shared what Jesus had done for him, despite the cost. His response was to choose **faith over fear.**

The other response was from **the Gerasene's**. Some had heard and some had seen the transformation. They came to Jesus to see what had happened and found the demon possessed man no longer possessed, no longer naked but calm sitting at Jesus' feet and it say's 'they were afraid'. They ask Jesus to leave. They don't worship him and they aren't in awe of him, they just want him gone because they were overcome with fear. Their response was to choose **fear over faith.**

Maybe the demon possessed man chose faith over fear as he had nothing to lose. Maybe the Gerasene's chose fear over faith because they felt they had everything to lose.

Faith isn't easy, its risky and costly. It comes with joys and pains, highs and lows. Faith is a choice, we don't always feel it. Sometimes we can be afraid and yet still choose faith. But when we choose fear we miss out on the experiences, the opportunities, and the transformations that Jesus can offer in our lives through faith. Fear gets in the way; fear binds us up like the chains on the demon possessed man. Fear holds us back like it held back the Gerasene's from accepting Jesus. Whereas faith can transform and set us free

Some questions for discussion

1. Do we choose fear over faith? Or faith over fear? What do we find easier to choose?
2. I wonder who we relate to in the story? Do we feel we are more like the demon possessed man, choosing faith over fear? Or more like the Gerasene's, more cautious or afraid?
3. Are there things in our lives that Jesus may want to change, which we are fearful of happening?
4. What would it look like to choose faith in this circumstance.
5. Read Hebrews 11. What does this teach us about faith and how it works? What confidence do these stories give us in relation to faith? Do you have stories of your own or of others where choosing faith has transformed yours/their lives?