

When Jesus Steps Ashore

✦ **Satan shakes** (vv.26-29)

✦ **Fear falters** (vv.30-37a)

✦ **The Word works faith** (vv.37b-39)

In the name of Jesus our powerful Savior and Friend, dearly beloved of God our Father:

Most Dads who are into history know about D-Day and the storming of the Normandy beaches to take back Europe from Hitler in WWII. It was a huge operation of Allies coming ashore against Nazi fortifications. But did you know that an amphibious assault was also planned for Desert Storm in Kuwait, 1991? Huge battleships, USS Wisconsin and Missouri, bombarded Iraqi positions ashore. That was real; the amphibious assault was not. Newspaper articles later reported amphibious assaults are too dangerous and ineffective, except in this case where the fake focused enemy troops in the wrong direction.

Now flashback nearly 2,000 years to a Jewish rabbi in a small wooden boat with twelve disciples. No fakery here. No huge bombardment. The enemy knows He's coming. And He has only one weapon. In fact, He is the weapon, the Word of God Incarnate, who spoke everything into existence. When God's Word said, "***Let there be light...there was light.***" (Genesis 1:3 EHV) And **When Jesus Steps Ashore...**

✦ **Satan shakes** (vv.26-29)

Our Lord Jesus has been battling with Satan all through His ministry. He had healed several women of evil spirits and diseases including Mary Magdalene from whom seven demons had gone out. These women were so grateful for Jesus' kindness and mercy they supported him and His disciples with their own money. Jesus had spoken the *Parable of the Sower and the Seed*, showing that the enemy of God's Word is Satan. God's Word like seed falls on a hard path where birds come quickly to eat it up before it can take root and bear fruit. That's how the Devil snatches the Word from people's hearts because he does not want them to believe and be saved. Early in Jesus' ministry His own brothers did not believe in Him. His family came to take him away, thinking he'd lost his mind. And the religious experts? They said Jesus was possessed by the Devil and that's how he was able to drive out demons. It was so dreadful that Jesus had to warn about the one unforgivable sin, stubbornly speaking evil against the Holy Spirit. He's the one who gives faith through God's Word and sacrament. We want to listen and take God's Word to heart. He is so merciful he does not wait for us to come looking for him. **Jesus Steps Ashore.**

You can still see the high bluffs on the far shore of the Sea of Galilee, about eight miles across, more like a lake in Minnesota. Matthew reports that two demon-possessed men came out at Jesus from the tombs. Mark and Luke were inspired by the Holy Spirit to focus on the one. The demon is called an *unclean spirit* because of the terrible turmoil inside, the mess he made of the man's life, the filth that came out of the man. Imagine the stench of tombs instead of a house. Chains and shackles can't hold him. And out of his filthy mouth he shouts at Jesus "***What do I have to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God.***" And then this, "***I beg you don't torment me!***" **When Jesus Steps Ashore, Satan shakes** in terror at God's holiness and power. *Night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, [his victim] was constantly crying out and cutting himself with stones.* (Mark 5:5) *Deserted places*, desolate existence.

✦ **Fear falters** (vv.30-37a)

For the demon to be named **Legion** should have brought the greatest **Fear** to all the neighbors. A Roman legion numbered over 6,000 troops plus as many auxiliaries. How one body could hold so many

demons shows the vast space of the spiritual world. And yet, though they vastly outnumber *Jesus, the Son of the Most High God*, they're terrified of *the abyss* where Satan and the demons are locked up by God's Word, but loosed like a junkyard dog on a longer chain these Last Days. (Revelation 20:1-3) Why Jesus gave permission for them to go into the pigs, the Holy Spirit does not explain. Mark says the herd was nearly 2,000, anywhere from \$1-2 million dollars now. And yet the demons drowning the pigs shows more of Satan's obsession with death and destruction, and people's addiction to material things.

Word got out quickly from the swineherds. *People went out to see what had happened. They came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet. He was clothed and in his right mind, and the people were afraid. Those who saw it told them how the demon-possessed man was saved. The whole crowd of people from the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were gripped with great fear.*

Bible-believing Christians today are appalled at our culture of death. Protecting life from the womb to the tomb is dangerous for judges and all who *speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves*. (Proverbs 31:8 NIV) Unfortunately, each of us has a deadly traitor who sides with Satan and this sin-stinking world. Our sinful nature **falters** in **Fear When Jesus Steps Ashore**.

There are some truths we just don't want to face, facts that we don't want to learn. When one unknown member heard about our Bible study on God's roles for men and women, gender issues in the Bible, she commented, "I already know how to be a woman." I ask, "A godly woman?" Our Good Shepherd Jesus is still teaching me how to be a godly man, to live self-sacrificing *agape*-love of Christ. Can any dear sister or brother really say, "I already know..." as if Jesus can no longer teach us anything?

The healed demoniac's painful experience needed to be *sitting at Jesus' feet...in his right mind*. He was saved from sin by Jesus to have self-control deep inside heart and mind. It's the same *self-control* Paul tells Pastor Titus to teach men of all ages, and to have older women *train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, busy at home, kind, and submitting to their own husbands, that the word of God might not be slandered.*" (Titus 2:4f EHV) The links Pastor Gawrisch is supplying are for WELS Women's Ministry, older women helping younger to be blessed by God's Word and to be a blessing. **When Jesus Steps Ashore, Fear falters**, but...

✦ The Word works faith (vv.37b-39)

As Jesus got into the boat and started back, the man from whom the demons had gone out begged to be with him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your home and tell how much God has done for you." Then he went through the whole town proclaiming what Jesus had done for him.

Won't that help to take the pressure off your witnessing for Christ? Share with neighbors your own struggles, always confessing, "I'm just so glad that Jesus died for me!" He did not refinance your mortgage in heaven as if you need to pay him back as Mormonism teaches. Jesus literally *set him free, released from guilt, pardoned*. There was no obligation to pay back, just a heart set free and filled with gratitude that could not be silent. He could not help proclaiming to all God's great deeds of love for him.

When Jesus Steps Ashore, The Word works faith. When Jesus leaves, He leaves the Gospel behind in your heart. And *"out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks."* (Matthew 12:34 NIV) That same Word of God works with power from your lips too! The Holy Spirit so richly blessed the man's witnessing that the next time Jesus came to the Decapolis other Gentiles came to Jesus asking for healing. (Mark 7:31-37) They were no longer wanting to send Him away.

Whenever I'm afraid of some hard truths about myself or God's will for my life, it's so comforting to see our gentle Jesus. He never forces Himself on anyone. He will go away if you want Him to. Still He sends witnesses to warn us of our sin and point us to our Savior so that the enemy of our souls can have no power over us. **When Jesus Steps Ashore**, welcome God's peace. Amen.