

## ***Sunday Morning Worship at Brentwood, June 19, 2016***

### **Notes for the sermon on *The Demons of our Time***

**Ps 22:19-28 and Luke 8:26-39 – Sermon Text = Luke 8:35**

***Then people came out to see what had happened and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.***

**[Hymns = 69, 682, 644]**

**Key ideas = begin with the positive impact of this healing – the man was restored to his ‘right mind’ – the mind that God intends for every human being – the mind of Jesus Christ – his love of God, love of others, and love of himself – whatever gets in the way of that mind blessing creation is demonic – in the wake of the slaughter in Orlando, a religious and social hatred that leads to mass execution – the least hint of this kind of hatred and dehumanization has no place in the mind of a follower of Jesus – so that places us over and against much that is going on in our time – called to be a firm witness against this demonic mindset – an energetic witness for the mind of Christ that is filled with compassion, peace, and blessing**



### **Demonic Powers**

The temptation, I find within myself and among the commentators, is to get fascinated with the demons and the pigs in this story – it’s pretty dramatic stuff – the village crazy, a nude weirdo who is rejected and reviled – drawn to Jesus and having his right mind restored – the demons no longer have power over him – he is loyal to a different lord – the One sent to invite and enable all peoples to participate in the Commonwealth of God

## **Making Sense of the Demons**

I've never considered Flip Wilson a great theologian – a comedian who became popular in the 1970s – one of his favourite lines was “The devil made me do it” – when we do ‘demonic’ things, things that run contrary to God’s intent, then it is some outside, evil, irresistible force that is working in us and controlling us – lots of people think that way – I don’t

For me, the ‘demonic’ is that complex web of fears, angers, and hatreds that build up when we see the world simply as a dangerous and threatening place – when people who think and act differently become ‘demonized’ as the ‘enemy’ – I’m not saying there are not people and peoples in this world who are crazed by a wide variety of complex dynamics going on within them and around them – but I don’t think they are possessed by demons and I don’t think slaughters like Orlando are the Christian way to deal with them

## **Taking the Jesus Way**

You may think me hopelessly and dangerously naïve, but I think the appropriate Christian response to the ‘demonic’ is to love it out of existence – to replace the ‘demonized’ mind with the ‘Christianized’ mind

This is the kind of leadership that the church, this fellowship of the friends of Jesus, is called by God to exercise and exhibit in our time – and to do this in our families, at our workplaces, in our communities, and in our political and economic choices - we are called to this kind of mind, the mind of Christ our Saviour:

- Model a different way of relating to others – a way of respect, compassion, and friendship
- Inspire a shared vision of peace and blessing for the whole creation – a vision that is shaped by God’s intention for his world
- Challenge the demonic ways in which power is being imposed and abused in our time – find the courage and creativity in God’s love to be different in and for the world
- Enable others to come to their right minds by nourishing their souls to flourish in the grace of Jesus Christ – invite them to participate in the community of the church where this alternative way of being in the world is cultivated
- Encourage the soul to be clear and courageous in its compassion – appreciate and support all efforts to bless the whole creation – see them all from God, through the work of the Holy Spirit, whether that power in the world is acknowledge or not – bringing people to a full realization of Jesus’ lordship over all is the work of the Holy Spirit – we simply point to that reality as best we can in everything we think, and say, and do

Taking the Jesus way in a world of fear and division is not easy – but it is right