

3/1/26

Sermon Title: The Way of a True Disciple

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soonbae

Scripture Passage: Matthew 8:18-34

The Cost of Following Jesus

¹⁸ When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake.

¹⁹ Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."

²⁰ Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

²¹ Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

²² But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Jesus Calms the Storm

²³ Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him.

²⁴ Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping.

²⁵ The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"

²⁶ He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

²⁷ The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

Jesus Restores Two Demon-Possessed Men

²⁸ When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way.

²⁹ "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"

³⁰ Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding.

³¹ The demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs."

³² He said to them, “Go!” So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water.

³³ Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men.

³⁴ Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region.

When the crowds gathered after seeing Jesus heal the sick, the demon-possessed, and the weak, He left that place.

He gave orders to His disciples to cross over to the other side.

¹⁸ When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake.

At that time, a teacher of the law came to Jesus and asked to become His disciple. Jesus told him that the way of following Him is a difficult path marked by hardship and suffering.

¹⁹ Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.”

²⁰ Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

Although the teacher of the law was already one who instructed the people, he addressed Jesus as “Teacher.”

This indicates that he was overwhelmed by Jesus’ teaching and acknowledged His absolute authority.

He then expressed his commitment by declaring that he would follow Jesus wherever He went.

He had made the decision to become a disciple of Jesus.

Jesus accepted him as a disciple and implicitly revealed the suffering that He Himself would face.

Through this, Jesus made it clear that there would be suffering for those who follow Him.

The path of discipleship is a lonely and difficult road, marked by much pain and hardship.

That Jesus accepted him as a disciple can be inferred from the phrase in verse 21, “another of the disciples.”

Another disciple then came to Jesus and said that he would follow Him after first burying his father.

²¹ Another disciple said to him, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”

²² But Jesus told him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

This man, though called by Jesus as a disciple, was confused about his priorities. He was torn between his desire to follow Jesus and his wish not to neglect his duty as a son.

He failed to recognize what was more urgent and truly important for a disciple. Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and follow me.” If this saying of Jesus is misunderstood, Christianity could be criticized as an immoral religion that disregards even the basic ethical duty of honoring one’s parents.

However, such criticism arises from a misunderstanding of Jesus’ words.

What Jesus meant was that the spiritually dead—those who are dead in sin and have no spiritual relationship with Him—should take care of burying the physically dead.

Honoring one’s parents is a crucial commandment, corresponding to the fifth commandment of the Ten Commandments.

Moreover, it was entirely natural and expected for a child to attend a parent's funeral.

Nevertheless, something takes precedence even over personal filial duty: proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of heaven in order to bring spiritually dead people to life.

From the perspective of Christian doctrinal history, funeral rites after death hold no ultimate significance.

One cannot follow Jesus without commitment.

To become a disciple of Jesus, one must regard following Him as more precious and more urgent than anything else in the world.

After teaching about the path of discipleship through the teacher of the law and the other disciple, Jesus got into a boat with His disciples.

Suddenly, a great storm arose, and the boat was being swamped by the waves.

In their fear, the disciples woke Jesus, crying out for Him to save them.

Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith, then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and as a result, there was complete calm.

²³ Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him.

²⁴ Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping.

²⁵ The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"

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²⁷ The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

Because the Sea of Galilee lies below sea level and is surrounded by high mountains, sudden rises in air temperature often create pressure systems that generate strong winds sweeping down from the southeastern plateau.

Even so, the fact that the disciples—who were well acquainted with the Sea of Galilee—felt the terror of imminent death suggests that this storm was unusually severe.

When the boat was being overwhelmed by the waves, the disciples, still not fully understanding who Jesus was even though He was with them, were filled with fear.

Yet they sought the Lord with what little faith they had.

At that moment, however, the Lord was sleeping peacefully.

This reveals the calm of one who abides in God.

Jesus rebuked the disciples for their lack of faith, because even though they were with the Son of God, the Messiah, they were living as though they were completely under the power of the wind and the waves.

When Jesus rebuked the wind and the sea, the storm became completely calm.

Through this, He revealed His absolute authority.

Indeed, Jesus is God Himself—the One who created heaven and earth by His word and who sovereignly rules the universe by that same word.

When the disciples and those who were following in other boats witnessed the wind and the waves obeying Jesus at a single command, they began to ask in awe who this man truly was.

Their question reflects the confession that no one except God alone has authority over the wind and the sea.

Jesus then crossed to the other side of the Sea of Galilee and came to the region of Gadara.

Gadara was one of the cities of the Decapolis, a federation of ten Greek cities in Palestine.

Mark and Luke refer to this region as Gerasa, but this does not present a contradiction.

Because Gadara was the capital of the region of Perea, nearby Gerasa—located about twelve miles southeast of Gadara—could also be described as part of the Gadara region.

This area was predominantly Gentile territory, a place Jews normally avoided, yet Jesus deliberately went there.

There Jesus met two demon-possessed men.

These two men were so violent that no one could pass by that way.

They came out from among the tombs and confronted Jesus.

They cried out, calling Him the Son of God, asking why He had come to torment them before the appointed time.

It was the demons within them who were speaking.

The demons begged Jesus to allow them to enter a nearby herd of pigs.

When Jesus gave them permission, the demons entered the pigs, and the entire herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished.

The pigs could not withstand the presence of the evil and violent spirits and were destroyed.

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There are several important points we should pay close attention to here.

First, the demons knew the identity of Jesus—an identity that no one else, not even the disciples, fully understood at that time.

Second, the demons knew that Jesus would come to carry out the final judgment, and that at that time they would be sent to a place of punishment.

Third, the demons also knew that Jesus possessed the authority both to drive them out of people and to permit them to enter other beings.

In the phrase “before the appointed time,” the word “time” refers to the day of judgment.

The demons understood that when that time comes—that is, on the day of judgment—they would be subjected to eternal punishment together with the wicked.

When those tending the pigs saw the whole herd perish, they ran into the town and reported everything that had happened.

The people of the region of Gadara then came out to see what had taken place, and they pleaded with Jesus to leave their region.

³³ Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men.

³⁴ Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region.

Unlike the Jews, pigs had economic value for Gentiles.

As a result, the destruction of the herd meant a tremendous financial loss.

Matthew does not specify how many pigs were lost, but the Gospel of Mark records that the number was as many as two thousand.

The people of the region of Gadara showed no interest in the fact that the demon-possessed men had been healed.

Nor did they attempt to discern who Jesus was, even though He had performed such mighty works.

Instead, their attention was fixed solely on the property they had lost. They loved their wealth more than the Savior and loved the world more than God, and as a result, they missed the precious opportunity to receive the gospel. Satan stirred distorted thoughts in the hearts of the entire town, leading them to reject Christ.

The scene in which the demon-possessed pigs perish symbolically shows that the demons were confined beneath the waters—that is, into the Abyss—prior to the final judgment.

The confinement of demons to the Abyss testifies that the kingdom of God had come powerfully through the authority of Jesus.

Although Matthew does not explicitly use the term “the Abyss,” the Gospel of Luke records that the demons begged Jesus not to send them there.

(Luke 8:30) Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him.

(Luke 8:31) And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

(Luke 8:32) A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission.

Beloved members of the Church of Godly Dreams,
Jesus calmed the Sea of Galilee and its raging storm, and He even crossed into the region of Gadara, a Gentile land that no Jew would normally visit. There He met those who were suffering under demonic possession, drove out the legion of demons within them, and set them free. Through this, Jesus clearly testified to His disciples and to the people that He is not merely a great teacher, but the Son of God, the Messiah, who possesses absolute authority—not only over nature, but also over the spiritual realm.

Yet despite witnessing these astonishing works, the people of Gadara did not welcome Jesus.

They valued their lost possessions more than the lives that had been healed, and as a result, they made the tragic choice to reject the Savior.

Although the Lord Himself had come to them to offer salvation, they failed to receive it.

This event speaks powerfully to us today.

Are we, like the people of Gadara, valuing the things of this world more than the Lord?

Are we, perhaps, rejecting the Lord who has come to us—making excuses such as, “Not now, maybe next time”?

Beloved brothers and sisters,

do not be those who ask the Lord to leave, as the people of Gadara did.

Rather, be true disciples who choose to follow Him no matter the cost.

Trust in the Lord’s authority amid the storms of this world, do not be afraid in the midst of spiritual battles, and confess Jesus alone as the Lord of your life.

The path of becoming a disciple of Jesus is a difficult one and requires courage.

It is a path filled with danger, a path that may require us to let go of even what we once possessed.

Yet it is the only path that leads to true freedom and life.

When we obey our calling and decide to walk that path, Jesus will be with us.

He will strengthen us and give us courage.

He will show us the true joy that awaits at the end of the journey and faithfully lead us to complete it, guiding us into the kingdom of heaven.

As we behold the kingdom of God that is coming among us even today, may we all respond with obedience before the absolute authority of Jesus Christ.
In the name of Jesus Christ, I bless you.