

Breaking Open the Word

The Most Holy Trinity

22nd June, 2025



Clothed, Called, and Commissioned: A Gospel for All

A weekly reflection and sermon,
with study and prayer guides
following the RCL Lectionary

Dennis Webster



Revised Common Lectionary

Pentecost 2

Proper 7 OS 12

1 Kings 19.1-4 [5-7] 8-15a

Psalms 42, 43*

Galatians 3.23-29

Luke 8.26-39

Book of Common Prayer (1662) Collect

Introduction

Reflection

Discussion Questions

Five Days of Meditation and Prayer

O God,
the strength of all them that put their trust in thee,
mercifully accept our prayers;
and because through the weakness
of our mortal nature
we can do no good thing without thee,
grant us the help of thy grace,
that in keeping of thy commandments
we may please thee both in will and deed:
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

INTRODUCTION

In "Clothed, Called, and Commissioned," we explored how Jesus' encounter with the Gerasene demoniac is not a spectacle of supernatural power but a profound act of restoration and reconciliation.

Jesus resists being seen as a figure of fear or superstition and instead calls the man—once naked and tormented—into a new life of faith, community, and purpose.

This healing parallels the stilling of the storm; both moments reveal that Jesus calls for faith, not fear.

Through this, we are reminded that salvation is about being clothed in Christ, restored in mind and spirit, and sent out to witness what God has done.

As heirs of Abraham's promise through faith, we are invited to provide an "ordered account" of God's work in our lives, becoming part of the story of salvation that extends outward from Jerusalem to all the nations.

Prayer Point

Gracious God,
you clothe us in your mercy,
restore us in your peace,
and call us to witness your saving love.
Teach us to trust not in signs or superstitions,
but in the power of your Word and Spirit.
Please help us to recognise your presence,
give voice to your work in our lives,
and proclaim your kingdom of healing and inclusion.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

God of Creation, breathe into us, made of clay,
your gift of life so that we, made in your image
may become your eyes, ears, hands and voice.

In a world brimming with noise and suffering, what do we seek from God? A sign? A miracle? A quick fix?

Sometimes in the chaos, a moment of quiet gifted from God would be great. I delight in sitting in the Quiet carriage on the train to Melbourne. I put on my noise-cancelling headphones and listen to music, podcasts, or BBC radio comedies.

Coming back on Monday, I couldn't get a seat in the Quiet carriage. So, I sat in a middle saloon, and was astonished by the amount of noise, even having tuned out the world with my anti-social headphones. To get quiet on that carriage may well have been to ask for a miracle, but alas, as we know from the Pentecost gospel, God has given us many tongues to use, and for some, that is a gift too difficult to ignore!

But today's Gospel reveals something deeper than a quick fix, and the many tongues of evil were being heard. When Jesus enters Gentile territory and encounters a man tormented by demons, the meeting is not about superstition or spectacle. It is about salvation — salvation through faith.

And this story, paired with the stilling

of the storm just before it, reveals the heart of Jesus' mission: not just to still external chaos, but to bring peace to tormented hearts. To make heirs out of outcasts. To turn the formerly naked and fragmented into witnesses, clothed in righteousness.

1. Recognition and Resistance

As Jesus arrives on the shores of Gentile territory, a demon-possessed man rushes towards him. He is unclothed and dwells among the tombs, cut off from his community, embodying a stark representation of death and isolation.

He cries out:

"What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me."
(Luke 8:28)

The word torment is intense. It suggests that the man associates divine presence not with peace, but with pain. Given his past, why would God's arrival signify anything other than more suffering?

It also gives a sense of continuing action. Earlier in the Gospel of Luke, the spirit in a troubled soul also recognised Jesus for who he was.

But Jesus does not punish; he restores. He commands the legion of demons to depart, and they return to the deep, just as the storm did when Jesus rebuked it earlier.

It is here, consistent with his stated aims at the beginning of the gospel, that Luke is showing us something essential: God's visitation is not for judgment but for salvation. (Johnson p245)

2. Clothed in Righteousness

When the townspeople arrive, they see a miracle, but not the kind they expected.

"They found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind."
(Luke 8:35)

Here, Luke subtly introduces the concept of a sound mind, temperance, and dignity. Not only has he been healed, but the man is now a complete human being once more. He has been re-clothed — not just physically, but spiritually.

Paul later writes in Galatians 3:

"As many of you as were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."
"And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise."

This is what salvation looks like. It's not about taming spirits for display. It's about reconnection — with God, with oneself, with community, and with the long arc of God's promise, reaching back to Abraham and stretching forward to the ends of the earth.

3. Called to Witness

The man wants to go with Jesus. But Jesus sends him back:

"Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you."
(Luke 8:39)

Luke does something clever in the Greek text by using the same word he uses at the beginning of his account of Jesus' life.

The man, now in his right mind, is sent, apostle-like, to provide an ordered account. This is not random chatter; it constitutes a structured, faithful proclamation.

The first gospel sermon in Gentile territory is delivered not by an apostle but by a formerly tormented man, now healed, clothed, and sent.

This is Luke's vision for the Gospel: a movement that starts in unexpected places and among unforeseen people, but flourishes through testimony, not superstition.

This echoes Psalm 22:

“The poor shall eat and be satisfied... all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord.”

And Isaiah 65:

“I was ready to be sought out by those who did not ask, to be found by those who did not seek me.”

The good news is not confined to a single nation. It is for all nations—starting in Jerusalem, indeed, but not concluding there.

4. Faith, Not Magic

In this gospel sequence, the entire event is paired with Jesus calming the storm as the disciples feared for their lives. Jesus, in rebuking the storm also rebukes the disciples. The pairing of the storm and the demoniac in Luke's Gospel is intentional. Both stories demonstrate that faith, not fear, not magic, is the response that Jesus seeks.

In the storm, Jesus asks, “Where is your faith?”

In the healing of Legion, the man shows faith, not through words, but through his transformation. His salvation becomes evident: not merely in what was cast out, but in what was restored. Salvation is not a secret ritual; it is the public restoration of an individual to their role as an heir of God's promise.

Conclusion

So what does this mean for us?

Our faith should progress from merely being fascinated by what Jesus can accomplish to a belief in who He truly is — the one who came not to harm but to rescue, not to separate but to bring together.

Our response is not driven by fear; rather, it is a statement — a faithful account of what God has accomplished in our lives.

And it means that wherever we come from — whether Jew or Greek, slave or free — we are all one in Christ Jesus, clothed in Christ, and heirs of the promise.

This is the Gospel. This is salvation. This is the Triune God at work in the world.

The dance of the Trinity that we celebrated last week continues to invite us to keep pace and engage with others. And like any good dance, as Luke would have us remember, it is in the ordering of our account that we grow in our belief and deepen our faith in God.. Amen.

Discussion Questions

1. Recognition and Resistance

What might cause people today, like the man possessed by Legion, to initially resist or mistrust the presence of Jesus?

How do our past experiences shape our expectations of God?

2. Faith vs. Superstition

How can we distinguish between genuine faith in Christ and superstition or transactional thinking about God?

In what ways might our faith communities unintentionally drift toward one or the other?

3. Being Clothed in Christ

Galatians says we are "clothed in Christ." What does this imagery mean for you?

How might it reshape the way we see ourselves, others, and our identity as heirs of God's promise?

4. Giving an Ordered Account

Jesus tells the man to “return home and declare how much God has done for you.” What might an "ordered account" of your faith journey resemble?

How can storytelling serve as an act of witness and healing?

5. Faith and Reconnection

How does this story challenge or expand your understanding of who belongs in the family of God?

How might it invite us to actively reconnect across boundaries of identity, background, or belief?

Additional Reflection

Take time this week to write down a brief "ordered account" of your faith journey. What has Jesus done for you? Who might need to hear that story? How can your story be part of someone else's restoration?

Being Clothed in Christ

This theme is echoed in the teachings of Paul, who reminds us that through baptism, we are "clothed with Christ." This metaphor goes beyond the physical act of wearing garments; it signifies being enveloped in the character, virtues, and righteousness of Christ. Baptism marks the beginning of a renewed life, symbolising a shedding of the old self and the embrace of a new, sanctified identity. Thus, the man's transformation and Paul's words together illustrate how salvation not only heals but also dignifies, affirming our worth as beloved children of God.

Why is the 'Calming of the Storm' Significant?

The calming of the storm and the healing of the demoniac are intricately paired stories that highlight the authority and compassionate power of Jesus. In the account of the storm, Jesus is with His disciples on a boat when a fierce storm arises, causing fear and panic among even the seasoned fishermen. Despite the raging winds and turbulent waters, Jesus remains calm and asleep, embodying perfect peace.

When the disciples wake him in desperation, he rebukes the storm with a simple command, "Peace, be still," and immediately the sea becomes calm. This miraculous act not only demonstrates his dominion over nature but also serves as a profound lesson for his disciples. He challenges their fear and questions their faith, saying, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" This event underlines the call to trust in his power even in life's most tumultuous moments.

These two narratives, when viewed together, beautifully depict the theme of faith over fear. Whether facing the external chaos of a storm or the internal turmoil of a troubled mind, Jesus's authority brings peace and restoration. His rebuke of fear is a universal call to trust in His power, while the Gerasene man's transformation exemplifies the life-changing impact of that faith.

The story of Christ's love and redemption spreads not through grand spectacles or fleeting displays of power, but through the quiet, transformative power of reconciliation. As relationships are healed and communities are restored, the message of Christ's grace becomes evident. It is in the day-to-day acts of kindness, forgiveness, and unity that the world witnesses the true impact of his restoration. This is the beauty of Christ's work: it not only restores but also redefines, drawing us into a community where love, grace, and reconciliation are the hallmarks of our shared journey.

This five-day devotional will continue a stately dance into the sermon from this weekend. We will explore the profound themes of resistance, restoration, acceptance, and peace. And in doing so, we will consider for ourselves what is it we are being called to do and be?

Clothed, Called, and Commissioned

Texts: Luke 8:22–39 | Galatians 3:23–29 | Psalm 22:24–28 | Isaiah 65:1–9



Theme:
Salvation through Faith, Not Superstition;
Restoration, Testimony, and Identity in Christ

Day 1: Recognition and Resistance

Scripture: Luke 8:26–30

Reflection:

The man, plagued by numerous demons, identifies Jesus and exclaims, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?" His fear runs deep, shaped by a history of suffering.

Yet, Jesus approaches not with intentions to inflict more pain, but with the purpose of bringing healing and restoration.

Question for Reflection:

- In what ways might you misread God's approach as judgment when it's really mercy?

Prayer:

- Lord, in our fear, give us faith to recognise your grace at work.

Day 2: The God Who Clothes

Scripture: Luke 8:35 | Galatians 3:27

Reflection:

The townspeople find the man "clothed and in his right mind," a scene that resonates with profound spiritual significance. This simple yet powerful description is not merely about his external appearance but reflects a deeper transformation within. It reveals a fundamental spiritual truth: salvation has the

power to reclaim our dignity and restore our true identity. The man, once tormented and lost, is now whole, embodying the grace and mercy that comes with divine intervention.

Question for Reflection:

- How does being “clothed in Christ” help you see yourself and others differently today?

Prayer:

- Lord, wrap us in your mercy, and let us live from a place of belovedness.

Day 3: Sent to Witness

Scripture: Luke 8:38–39 | Isaiah 65:1

Reflection:

In the narrative, the man fervently pleads to accompany Jesus, longing to remain in His transformative presence. However, Jesus gently instructs him to return to his home and community, not as a mere follower in his physical entourage but as a living testament to the profound change wrought in his life.

This directive carries profound significance, as it positions the man—a figure who might seem an improbable candidate for such a mission—as an evangelist tasked with sharing his personal encounter with divine grace.

Question for Reflection:

- What part of your story could be a testimony to someone else today?

Prayer:

- Jesus, show us how to give an account of your goodness, not just with words but with our lives.

Day 4: Faith Over Fear

Scripture: Luke 8:22–25

Reflection:

When Jesus encounters the Gerasene demoniac, a man tormented by an unclean spirit, living among the tombs, isolated from society, and exhibiting violent, uncontrollable behaviour. The man’s condition represents a life in chaos, much like the storm the disciples had faced the previous night..

However, upon encountering Jesus, the demons within the man recognise his authority. With a commanding word, Jesus casts out the legion of demons, sending them into a herd of pigs that subsequently rush into the sea and drown.

The transformation of the Gerasene man is striking. From a state of despair and torment, he is found sitting, clothed, and in his right mind, a testament to the profound healing power of Jesus. Unlike the disciples who struggled with fear, this man responds with faith. He desires to follow Jesus, but Jesus instructs him to return home and share his story, spreading the news of what the Lord had done for him.

Question for Reflection:

- What storms are you facing that tempt you toward fear rather than faith?

Prayer:

- Jesus, speak your peace into our chaos. Help us trust that you are present in every storm.

Day 5: Restoration and Reconnection

Scripture: Galatians 3:28–29 | Psalm 22:27

Reflection:

Restoration in Christ doesn’t just put us back together—it transforms us and places us within a vibrant, interconnected community. This restoration is not merely about mending what was broken; it’s about reshaping our identity and purpose. In Christ, we are no longer fragmented individuals, isolated by our past or our struggles. Instead, we become part of something greater—a family bound not by blood, but by grace and faith.

We are no longer strangers wandering aimlessly or spectators observing from the sidelines. We are adopted as heirs to God’s promises, woven into the rich tapestry of his family. This new identity carries with it a profound sense of belonging and purpose. The barriers that once divided us—be they cultural, social, or personal—are dismantled through Christ’s work of reconciliation.

Question for Reflection:

- Where is God calling you to reconnect—with Him, with community, or with a part of yourself?

Prayer:

- Spirit of God, draw us deeper into your family, where no one is outcast, and all are welcome.

End notes and further reading

Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Luke (St Paul's Press) (Johnson)

The Gospel of Matthew

The Gospel of John

Rev Dr Andrew McGowan: Andrew's Version: <https://substack.com/@abmcg>

David Adams, Glimpses of Glory, Year C

The following authors as featured at The Worship Cloud

www.theworshipcloud.com

N. T. Wright,

Jane Williams,

P James Woodward,

Paula Gooder

Mark Pryce,

David Perry



Brabarlung Totem

This is produced on Gunaikurnai Country and our respects are made to the First Nations people everywhere.

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