



Accepting our Neighbors

- What happens if our neighbors begin to find freedom in Christ and come to church?
- What if they don't exactly look and act like us?

Luke 8:26-39

- Jesus is in the region of the Gersenes
- As Jesus left the boat he met a naked demon possessed man
- might not be unusual at camp but in polite society it is
- He yells at Jesus not to torment him
- Even the demons recognize Jesus and his power (James 2:18-19)

- The people of the town had tried to control this guy
- They and tried and failed on their own strength to stop this problem
- *If we want to really help our neighbor it can't be on our own strength
- *recidivism rate in prison (1994 51.8%)

-What was needed beyond just human strength?

- The guys name was legion because he had many demons
- Legion is 6,000 Roman soldiers
- The demons were cast in 2000 pigs
- This guy is messed up but it is still nothing for Jesus

- *We can never write someone off. They are never beyond Jesus power to save
- Paul the chief of all sinners
- Guys at Urban Hope

*We do have to have boundaries

- It is interesting how the other people of the town respond
- Rather than be amazed at the great miracle and happy for this guy, they just want Jesus out of their town for killing pigs
- They had so marginalized this guy they missed the miracle
- *This is what happens when we write people off, we miss out on the miracles Jesus can do

-How would we respond if Jesus worked in a miracle in our neighbor who is different than us?
Would they be welcomed in our church?

- Most of the time churches look very homogeneous
- Social Stratification
- Talking to Jess about her and her friend fitting in

Galatians 3:25-29

- the church is to be made up of a variety or peoples
- we are equally sons of God and brothers and sisters in Christ
- we are all baptized by the Spirit into union with the church body (1 Cor. 12:12-13)
- Some Jewish men prayed, "I thank God that Thou hast not made me a Gentile, a slave, or a woman."
- this doesn't mean that we force everyone to look the same but we are united as a body even with our differences

Wrap up

- *Who have you written off that you need to show grace to and continue to love?
- *Are you doing what you can to make everyone, irregardless of race or social status feel welcome in this church?