

## The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

### Matthew 8:28-9:1

And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told everything, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts. And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city. (KJV)

Jesus Christ's power over devils is verified in the present Gospel. Jesus opened the roadway blocked by those possessed by devils. Christ will open the roadways for believers seeking the Kingdom of God.

Believers encounter roadways in life that appear impassable. Those possessed by the devil may be preventing passage. Jesus Christ has the power to open the passage way.

Faith in Christ opens paths to the Kingdom of God. Prayer reveals to believers the God-pleasing paths in life to follow. When roadways are blocked, believers do well to focus on Jesus Christ for direction.

A person may find him or herself in a work situation or a relationship in which the devil is preventing growth. Impatience and frustration are not the solution. Turning to Jesus Christ in prayer is the solution.

The present Gospel is prescribed by the Church each year. The Gospel assures believers of Christ's powers over devils blocking passages in life. Jesus' power is to be embraced for great benefit to life.

Each breath, each heartbeat, and each moment of life are due to Jesus Christ. Life exists to be lived in glory to Christ. God's Kingdom is the goal embraced at Holy Baptism.

Devils seek to frighten believers journeying to God's Kingdom. Luke warm faith when encountering devils prevents believers from growth in Christ and continuing the journey to the Kingdom.

Fervent faith in Jesus Christ is necessary when encountering devils in daily life. The Gospel fortifies believers. The Gospel assures believers to have hope in life.

Presently the Church is in the Apostles Fast. The Fast is a period for self-examination and assessment. The Fast is a time to look at the heart and mind to determine if fear of devils is blocking growth in Christ and in life.

Fears arise in the heart and mind often unintentionally and without notice. Devils delight in causing fear in the heart and mind. Jesus Christ is the antidote to fear in the heart and mind.

Jesus Christ is the cure for despair and depression. Jesus Christ is the Light when darkness overtakes life. Jesus Christ is pure peace and joy when the heart and mind need peace and joy.

Daily news reports often fill the air with bleak happenings. Fears can arise in the mind that keep people from traveling or undertaking certain plans that will lead to God's Kingdom.

The Gospel provides assurances to attentive believers. The Church stands as a witness for hope in the community. The Risen Christ defeated the barriers to death. Jesus destroyed the fear of death by rising from the dead.

Jesus Christ offers life with peace and joy. Jesus Christ offers safe passage to the heavenly Kingdom. Eternal life awaits those choosing to ardently follow Christ.

The Fast is a time to uncover the manifold blessings of the life in Christ and to embrace them. The Fast culminates in the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. Peter and Paul are primary witnesses to the glory of the life in Christ

Following Jesus Christ is not for the weak of heart. Devils take glee in attacking followers of Christ. Jesus provides strength for believers to confront the devils that arise. Jesus is the path to victory over devils.

The Church nourishes and educates believers in the way to confront and overcome the devils that arise in life. The Church is the beacon of hope in life.

Thank God for the Holy Gospel offering hope. Jesus Christ is due gratitude for His' power over the devils. The roadways are open today to pursue the Kingdom of God.

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The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost. Venerable Father David of Thessalonica. June 26/July 9, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic.