

Luke 8:26–39: ²⁶Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.” ²⁹For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) ³⁰Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. ³¹And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. ³²Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

³⁴When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. ³⁶And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. ³⁷Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹“Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

Jesus Came to Conquer Evil

Introduction

Well, it’s happened again. Another atrociously evil attack. This time in Orlando, Florida. 50 people killed. 53 more injured. Whenever manmade or natural disasters occur, there’s always the questions: “If God is good, why does He allow evil?” “If God is so powerful, why can’t He stop evil?” “Why do bad things happen to good people?”

I’ve mentioned this before, when Jesus was asked, “Why do bad things happen?” His reply was quite simple: “Repent. When you hear of bad things happening, Repent!” Whether natural or man-made, when disasters happen, such events are reminders that this is a sinful world—and we

are why it's sinful. God gave us a perfect creation in perfect harmony—and we broke it. God doesn't have to insulate us from the evil that we cause—He never promised anyone a perfectly safe life.

But let's say God did take away evil. Where would you have Him start—and more importantly—where would you have Him stop? Take away hurricanes, tornados, floods, famines and excessive heat and cold—but that still leaves us with wars and murderers and rapists. But Jesus said, anyone who hates His brother is a murderer. Okay, then, take away war and murder and rape—but that still leaves us with lies and liars. Isn't lying a great evil. And aren't all of us liars? That's what Holy Scripture says.

So, if God took away evil, there would be no one left. But it isn't God's primary desire to destroy human beings. If it was, He would have destroyed Adam and Eve.

God loves His creation, flawed and fallen though it may be.

And contrary to what so many people on Twitter think, God has done something about evil. But know this, evil is primarily a spiritual problem. The apostle Paul reminds us of that fact in Ephesians (6:10–12): “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

God has done something about evil—He has sent His Son.

**INTO THIS WORLD OF SIN CAME GOD IN HUMAN FLESH TO CONQUER EVIL AND
DELIVER US FROM SPIRITUAL BONDAGE TO SIN, DEATH AND THE DEVIL.**

I. He asserted God's reign in a fallen world.

In our Gospel reading, the miracle of casting out a legion of demons from an afflicted man demonstrates not only Christ's care for human beings, but also His supreme power over the realm of darkness. The demon representative knows who Jesus is: "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me." This legion of demons is at Christ's mercy—they have absolutely no power over Him. They beg not to be sent back to hell, but to go into a herd of pigs. So that's where Jesus sends them, only to watch as these depraved and filthy creatures destroy the herd of pigs.

But the people of the region are afraid of Jesus. That's rather ironic—He's done a great thing: He brought healing and peace to a tormented man. But they want Him to leave because they are afraid of Him. Sounds a lot like our culture today. Christians have done countless beneficial things for this country, but rather than blame Islam's violent ideology for the murders in Orlando, the media have blamed Christians. They pretty much want us to go away.

But the man knows what Jesus has done for Him—and wants him to stay: ³⁸"The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹'Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.' And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him."

Evil fears Jesus. But faith doesn't fear Jesus—faith rejoices that Christ has the power to conquer evil in this world.

In this and all of His miracles, in His preaching, and in His love and care, Jesus begins to impose God's gracious reign on a fallen world—a work He will complete on Judgment Day. And though the people didn't want Jesus, He didn't leave them without hope—He sent the healed man to be His ambassador in that unholy country.

III. He crushed the devil's head on the cross and defeated death in His resurrection.

Yet Jesus' greatest work against evil was yet to come—in the most unsuspecting of places—on the cross. There on the cross, Jesus crushed the head of the enemy of all that is good and righteous. There on the cross, Jesus crushed the devil's head—He struck the devil with a fatal blow.

This is Christ's ultimate victory over evil. But it's not only Christ's victory, it's your victory. All who are in Christ join in Christ's victory over the devil. As the apostle Paul says, “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:37-39).

Human beings have the capacity to overcome a lot of evil in this world. But there's one evil we cannot overcome—death. But Jesus has conquered that great evil in His resurrection. The grave couldn't hold the Son of God, and it won't be able to hold those who have put on Christ and who have been made “sons of God” through adoption into God's family by Baptism.

And furthermore, do you know how God delivers you from evil on a daily basis? He forgives your sins—for Christ's sake He takes away your sin. The cross delivers you from death and the devil, but it also delivers you from sin. The apostle Paul says that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because what evil charge can Satan bring against you if God has taken away your sin in Christ?

You see, in your rescue from sin, death and the devil, God has done something about evil. In Christ Jesus, evil is conquered and you are delivered from evil's icy grip.

III. He comforts the suffering.

Not only had Jesus conquered evil spiritually, He's doing something about the physical impact of evil in your lives and the lives of all people. During His earthly ministry, Jesus healed the sick, cast out demons, raised the dead and comforted the mourning. He fed the hungry, forgave sinners, defended against false teachers, and loved the unlovable. Through His grace and compassion, Jesus alleviated the suffering caused by a fallen and evil world.

Today, Jesus continues to alleviate the effects of evil in a fallen world by giving gifts to human beings to protect and care for our fellow human beings. And we've all benefitted from these gifts: from farmers who provide our food, to doctors and nurses who care for us when we're injured or sick; from responsible government to keep us safe, to the judicial system to judge right and wrong; from those who serve in the military and armed forces to keep our nation safe, to those who serve on our streets as police officers and firefighters to keep us safe—Jesus has given countless good gifts to men and women through whom He daily conquers evil.

And through His Church, Christ continues to confront evil and comfort people in a fallen world through the blessings of His Word, and through the love and care of His people. As a believer, through your acts of love and compassion, through your prayers and sacrifices, you are part of Christ's conquering evil in this world every day.

IV. He will return again to put an end to spiritual and physical evil.

But one day, both spiritual and physical evil will come to an end—evil's time will be completely over and done. When Jesus returns to judge the living and the dead, evil will be wiped from the face of the new heavens and earth. Sin, death, the devil, his demons and all who reject God's love in Christ Jesus and persecute God's people will be cast into the Lake of Fire for all eternity, never to bother God's people again.

Conclusion

The tragedy in Orlando was unimaginable. And while the media focuses on the tragedy and guns and on fixing the blame, the Christian churches of Orlando have reached out to the survivors and to the hurting with the love and mercy of God, for this is where evil is truly conquered in our daily lives.

As we look upon this fallen world and pray, “Come, Lord Jesus,” we are asking Jesus to come quickly because we know that when He returns, He will bring an end to evil. Until then, we rejoice that He has graciously delivered us from the spiritual forces of darkness into His marvelous light.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.