

# Jesus' Authority Over Spirits (Following Jesus to the Other Side)

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[ 0 : 00 ] We pray for the meeting of preaching of Christ. Father, we ask that you will reveal to us the end of the earth so we might make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Teach us this morning what it means to be a true follower of Christ and enable us by the power of the Holy Spirit to follow and faithfully all our others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Amen. Please stand if you are able as I read from Matthew 8, 18-34 to honor God as we come to the Lord. Matthew 8, 18-34 Now when Jesus saw a crowd around him he gave orders to go over to the other side.

And a scribe came up and said to him, Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go. And Jesus said to him, Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

Another of the disciples said to him, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. And Jesus said to him, Follow me and leave the dead to bury their own dead. And when he got into the boat his disciples followed him.

[ 1 : 48 ] And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea so that the boat was being swamped by the waves. But he was asleep. And they went and woke him saying, Save us, Lord, we are perishing.

And he said to them, Why are you afraid, O you of little faith? Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea. And there was a great calm. And the men marveled saying, What sort of man is this that even winds and sea obey him?

And when he came to the other side, to the country of the gathering, two demon-possessed men met him coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way.

And behold, they cried out, What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time? Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged him, saying, If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs. And he said to them, Go. So they came out and went into the pigs.

[ 2 : 55 ] And behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city, they told everything, especially what had happened to the demon-possessed men.

And behold, all of the city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region. Scott's holy and authoritative word. Please be seated.

When people are learning about a trade or a subject, they often seek out internships or apprenticeships with someone who is already established in the field. An aspiring electrician seeks out a master electrician under whose tutelage he can learn to trade and accumulate the hours.

An aspiring counselor seeks out a licensed counselor under whose mentorship it can get the number of hours necessary to attain licensure. A PhD student seeks out an advisor who is already a scholarly authority in the field so that he can learn and gain credibility and build connections.

The apprentice seeks out the mentor because there is something to be gained in that relationship. Otherwise, why would interns and apprentices subject themselves to hard work and long hours for often little to no pay as many of our postdocs can attest?

[ 4 : 23 ] If the cost-benefit analysis changes, maybe the mentor is too demanding or the hours are too long or the research is too boring, the student might seek out a different teacher.

In our passage this morning, two Jewish men seek Jesus out to be their teacher, to be their rabbi so that they can learn from him and then train under him.

But Jesus, interestingly, does not offer them any incentive to follow him. In fact, he gives them every reason not to follow him. Following him, Jesus says, will mean rejection, hardship, danger, threat to their very lives sometimes.

And Jesus demands such allegiance that all those who follow him must put duty to him even above their filial duties to their parents. But why would anyone in their right mind follow such a demanding master?

Matthew's answer in this passage is that Jesus is no ordinary man. He is the son of God. And it is therefore worth risking our skin and forsaking even our kin to follow the son of God.

[ 5 : 43 ] That's my main point this morning. To illustrate this, Matthew recounts how Jesus took his disciples through a stormy sea to an unclean land and in doing so demonstrated that Jesus is a man whom we must follow, a man whom the winds and sea obey, and a man whom the demons obey.

We're going to talk about those three points in turn. Since we took a break from our series in Matthew last week for a guest preacher, let me remind you where we are in the passage. Set the scene. In the preceding passage just before this in verses 14 and 17, Jesus has spent an evening at Peter's house healing the sick and casting out demons.

And he said that many people were brought to him. So Jesus has already had a full day and evening of fruitful ministry. And since he is a man, truly a man, he most likely was physically exhausted.

So much so that later he would fall asleep on the road in the middle of the storm. Yet even after this ministry there's no end in sight because it says a crowd has gathered now around Jesus in verse 18.

And it says in 18, when Jesus saw the crowd around him he gave orders to his disciples to go over to the other side. Other side in the Gospel of the Union other side of the Sea of Galilee to the Gentile regions.

[ 7 : 02 ] It's interesting that seeing the crowds does not make Jesus stay. It actually makes Jesus go somewhere else. This happened again in chapter 5, verse 1.

Beginning of the Sermon on the Mount it said that seeing the crowds Jesus went up on a mountain and when he sat down his disciples came to him. There are times when Jesus sees the crowd and has compassion on them and ministers to them.

But I think in these two places Matthew is trying to emphasize the priority of discipleship. What does it mean to be a disciple and a follower of Jesus?

That's what the Sermon on the Mount really generally the subject of the Sermon on the Mount was all about. And in Matthew 7, 13 and 14 Jesus said that only a few of his true disciples enter by the narrow gate and the narrow way that leads to life whereas many enter by the wide gate and the broad way that leads to destruction.

Later in Matthew 13 Jesus speaks up to the crowds in parables so that they would not understand what he is saying. This is made explicit in Matthew 13.

[ 8 : 15 ] He says that the secrets of the kingdom of heaven have not been given to them. That's why he speaks to them in parables. But to his disciples to whom the secrets of the kingdom of heaven have been given Jesus speaks plainly and he explains his parables to them.

So why does Jesus see the crowd and leave to the other side? I think because he's trying to make the distinction between the crowds who are curious interested but not truly committed and his disciples whom he's investing in and training and mentoring because they're the ones who know what it means to be a follower of Christ.

As Jesus is about to leave though there are two people who try to join his entourage and he says in verse 19 a scribe came up and said to him teacher I will follow you wherever you go.

Remember the scribes in the gospels they are the Jewish legal scholars. They're the ones who usually teach people. And so for a scribe who is a teacher to come to Jesus and say teacher is a way a measure of humbling oneself and he offers to follow Jesus.

We can speculate on the reasons based on Jesus' response. We're told in Matthew 7 28-29 that after Jesus taught in his sermon on the mount that the people the crowds were astonished at Jesus' teaching because they saw that Jesus taught as someone who had real divine God-given spiritual authority unlike the scribes.

[ 9 : 52 ] They couldn't contrast the Jesus' teaching from the teaching of the scribes. So maybe the scribe is an opportunist. He saw the tide of opinions turning in favor of Jesus.

He saw that Jesus is a rising star and he wanted to throw in his lot with him. But this scribe doesn't truly understand discipleship what it means to follow Jesus.

He doesn't understand what that means and we know that from two primary things. First this scribe addresses Jesus as teacher. As a scribe right he was referred to often as teacher but remember how the leper that came to Jesus earlier in chapter 8 and the centurion also in chapter 8 that came to Jesus how did they address Jesus?

They addressed Jesus as Lord. In the Gospel of Matthew only people who are outside of Jesus' circle of disciples call him teacher.

Scribes the Pharisees the lone exception the only disciple that calls him teacher teacher is Judas Iscariot who later calls him Rabbi the Jewish who couldn't he would call him teacher twice when he is betraying him.

[ 11 : 13 ] So we know that this reference teacher doesn't really quite meet the standard of what he should think about Jesus how he should relate to Jesus that's the first clue. He thinks that Jesus has a good teacher but not quite as the Lord and Master that he should submit to and follow.

Isn't that the case this day and age as well? There are many people nowadays who will concede that Jesus is yeah he was a good man I think he was a good moral teacher but the Son of God the Lord no you're overstealing the case but acknowledging Jesus as a good teacher is insufficient must not acknowledge and have the Lord the Son of God worth risking our skin and forsaking our kin to follow.

The second clue that this scribe does not understand true discipleship the nature of following Jesus is verse 20 Jesus' response to it Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

Note that Jesus doesn't try to persuade this scribe to follow him he's actually trying to dissuade him from following him Jesus is not saying that if you follow him you'll never have any kind of home or lodging in fact they did just stay most recently at Peter's house as a base for their ministry so sometimes they did have housing however as an itinerant preacher Jesus did often go to places where they had no known relations foreign parts where there were no people to be hospitable toward them and often presumably he also stayed in exposed places even more exposed than foxes holes and birds nests that would have been a change for the scribe who was probably welcomed as an honored guest most places he went among the Jewish circles and so Jesus said later about the Pharisees and the scribes in Matthew 23 verse 6 to 7 that they loved the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called by others but the

Jesus warns this scribe this is what the scribes are like but Jesus warns this scribe don't think that you will find honor and recognition by following me don't expect the VIP treatment when we enter into towns!

[ 13 : 43 ] for the son of man has nowhere to lay his hand Jesus does not promise wealth comfort popularity to his followers as the two following stories from Jesus life will illustrate foxes have holes and birds have nests but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head this is the first time that Jesus uses applies the title son of man to himself and I'll talk more about the meaning of that later on but for now the contrast between the son of man and the foxes and the birds even the beasts of earth have homes but this man does not so who wants to follow this son of man it's a non-starter it's the anti recruiting bitch right and then in verse 22 another of the disciples said to him lord let me first go and bury my father this volunteer this prospective disciple starts a little better he addresses

Jesus as lord and Matthew even refers to him as another disciple but based on his question and Jesus response it doesn't seem like this disciple makes the final cut either he says to Jesus let me first go and bury my father it seems unlikely although it's possible that this man's father literally just died because then why would he be hanging out with the crowd here with Jesus teaching being attending to his funeral responsibilities it it seems more likely that the expression bury my father is in reference to this man's sense of filial responsibility of providing end of life care for his elderly father this was a responsibility that was taken much more seriously in the ancient near east than here in the US for example in Genesis 47 it says that when the time drew near that Jacob must! he called his son Joseph and made him swear to bury him back in the promised land in Canaan and not in Egypt he doesn't die right away after that he lives for a while after that but he nonetheless still already tells Joseph what to do for his burial Joseph is the one who is in charge and has this real responsibility of burying his father and so this man is in a similar situation and he is asking to defer

his enrollment as a disciple of Christ he's not asking for a super long deferral but it is kind of an indefinite postponement Jesus I really want to follow you but I have an elder to follow you see and it's my filial duty as a son to care for him until his death so give me a little bit of time save me your spot on your roster I'll come back I promise when the time is right however

Jesus response is uncompromising he says follow me and leave the dead to bury their own dead this man is closer to being Jesus disciple than the scribe Jesus actually invites him follow me but there's something he must leave behind in order to follow Jesus leave the dead to bury their own dead dead people of course cannot bury anyone so Jesus not speaking in the first instance of the word dead of physically dead people he's speaking of the spiritually dead leave the spiritually dead to take care of their own physically dead in the parallel account in Luke 9 verse 60 Jesus says leave the dead to bury their own dead but as for you go and proclaim the kingdom of God Jesus is here speaking of the utmost priority of following

Jesus this is a shocking thing to say even in our culture but especially so in Jesus' day because the Jews considered this filial responsibility one of the highest obligations for humanity in the Old Testament people the Jews were forbidden from coming into contact with the dead with diseased people with harnesses because they believed that that caused ritual uncleanness and they would be unclean for a period of time which was difficult however Leviticus 21 verses 1 to 3 specifically made exceptions for coming into contact with your dead parents and your close relatives don't touch the dead don't defy yourselves by touching the dead but if it's your father if it's your parents bury them and then cleanse yourself after all the fifth of the ten commandments is to honor your father and mother and yet

[18:59] Jesus says put following me above caring for your parents this prospective disciple said let me first go and bury my father and that's the problem Jesus says follow me first it's similar to what Jesus says later in Matthew 19 verse 29 and everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my name sake will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life please don't misunderstand me I'm not saying that you should go and neglect or abandon your family members right now the command to honor our parents still applies to us today in first 25 verse 8 teaches us but if anyone does not provide for his relatives and especially for members of his household he has denied the faith and is worse than unbeliever what then does Jesus mean when he says follow me and leave the dead to bury their own dead

Jesus is putting things starkly intentionally to communicate clearly the radical demands of Christian discipleship there are some people who seek to defer or delay following Jesus I'm in graduate school and I can barely keep up with the deadlines deciding whether or not follow Christ can wait I'm still getting established in my career when things are more settled then I can prioritize church I'm just getting married I just bought a house I have young kids when they're a little older I can focus on being Christian following Jesus I have parents that take care of I can't go to church but Jesus says no either you will follow me first or you will not follow me at all

Jesus will not play second fiddle Jesus will not settle for third wheeling in your life he must be your first liege your first loyalty your first love committing to follow Jesus will turn your life and priorities upside down I love the phrase that a Bible commentator R.T.

France uses about pursuing the kingdom of heaven following Jesus involves a degree of fanaticism if you become a true follower of Jesus the people of this world will look at you and say there's that religious fanatic that Jesus was forsaken the world to follow Jesus what a shame what a waste she has so much potential he used to be so fun you guys have heard that are you ready for that are you prepared to make Jesus your highest priority above your career relationships including your family are you willing to risk your skin and forsake your kin to follow

Jesus if not then Jesus is not ready yet to be his disciples but what kind of man may speak in this kind of way what kind of man demands such high allegiance that's why we have the next two paragraphs to answer that question the second point a man whom the winds and see obey verse 23 continues this theme of discipleship of following Jesus having ordered his disciples to go over to the other side it says Jesus now gets into the boat and when Jesus got into the boat his disciples followed him this is not a throw away detail like who cares who got into the boat first what does Matthew tell us that he is speaking of discipleship Jesus gets into the boat first and then his disciples follow him this is the third time we are seeing the word follow in a span of few verses a scribe said to Jesus in verse 19 teacher I follow me follow is the language of discipleship and you'll see it again in

[ 23 : 58 ] Matthew 9 9 and 10 38 and 16 24 what does it mean to be a disciple what does it mean to follow Jesus it means that you decide no longer to go your own way no longer to choose your own path no longer to be the captain of your own soul and the master of your own faith no longer to live to satisfy your own desires and to fulfill your own dreams instead to follow Jesus means to follow another's path to submit to another's will to learn another's way to build another's kingdom to live to fulfill another's dream that's what it means to serve a Lord that's what it means to serve a king that's what it means to follow Jesus and be his disciples we live in a city full of leaders all you have resumes chock full of leadership experiences but the question that is of first importance that we all must answer the question that is almost on my mind as a pastor is not whom you are leading but whom you are following

God is more interested in your followership potential than your leadership potential God is more interested in your humility than in your giftedness than in your platform in fact only those who know how to follow well can lead well only those who are faithfully following Jesus can fruitfully lead others to the kingdom of God are you ready to follow Jesus the two prospective!

disciples we saw in the preceding verse were not quite ready to follow Jesus but these disciples who are now getting into the boat after Jesus are following him they're committed to leave everything behind following him so what happens when these disciples make the commitment take the plunge through their line with Jesus what happens when you become a Christian a follower of Christ safety serenity smooth sailing verse 24 and behold there arose a great storm on the sea so that the boat would be swamped by the waves but Jesus was asleep the disciples are immediately in for rough sailing a storm that threatens their very lives Jesus

I thought you are the Lord of all creation and here we are we're following you and we're about to die the sea that is mentioned here is the sea of Galilee which by our gigantic United States standards is more like a lake but the sea of Galilee so I'm going to call it the sea of Galilee and the sea of Galilee is surrounded by hills and mountains which can funnel wind down the valleys creating sudden sprawls on the waters it sits well below sea level in the Jordan Rift valley so that there is a huge disparity contrast between the cool air on top of the mountains and the warm air over the water and that contrast also can produce sudden weather changes so this kind of sudden squalls and storms are well documented in the Sea of Galilee back then as well as today and we know this is a boat let's it tip over and some of them are rowing furiously to try to get the boat to go where it needs to go and some of these other people are trying to dump water out of the boat so it doesn't sink and so it's a frantic mess and remember the first disciples of

Jesus were with him at this time Peter Andrew and James and John they're all fishermen! for their lives it's a great storm save us Lord we are perished but Jesus on the other hand is sleeping amazing I have a funny sweatshirt that a good fan of mine gave me I think a few others in our church have that it says Jesus took naps be like Jesus and it has a Bible reference for a version of the same story in Mark it's a fun sweatshirt but that's not the point of this verse Jesus was truly human so he must have been exhausted and sure he took the nap that's fine but imagine the snooze doesn't last very long does it right he's just ministered throughout the evening and now he's on this boat and then there's a storm and his disciples wake him up come this is an illustration of what

[ 29 : 39 ] Jesus said in verse 21 the son of man has nowhere to lay his head this is Jesus life place to place rejection after rejection hardship after hardship following Jesus entails trials and hardships storms and struggles and yet the sleeping Jesus contrasted with the frantic disciples teaches a lesson in faith Jesus says to his disciples in verse 26 why are you afraid oh you of little faith this expression echoes what Jesus said earlier in Matthew 6 verse 30 to people who are anxious about what they will eat and what they will wear Jesus said at that point I think I have it to display on the screen are you not value than the birds of the air that your heavenly father feeds and which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his life if

God clothes the grass of the field which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven will he not much more clothe you of you of little! people worry about food why?

because they don't want to starve today people worry about clothes and shelter homes why?

because they don't want to freeze today people worry when they are riding planes and there is turbulence why?

because they don't want to fall to their death people worry about diseases! why? because they don't want to die from illnesses people worry about being shipwrecked why?

because they if you think about it most of our anxiety is at their root to come down to death don't they? but Jesus reminds us that no matter how much we worry no matter how much we frantically try to grasp for control in our lives and are wrecked with anxiety he says we cannot prolong our lives by even one hour which of you by warning can add a single hour to your life because our life and life and death are in the Lord's hands before a single day of our life came to pass God said that all of our days were written in his book already according to Psalm 139 verse 16 so why do so why do we worry do we not believe that our heavenly father cares for us do you not believe that we will die not one hour sooner and not one hour later than the exact time that

[ 32 : 20 ] God has appointed for you to die Jesus says oh you of little faith Jesus was able to sleep unlike his disciples because he had much faith because of his rock solid confidence in his relationship with 75 then it says in verse 26 Jesus rose and rebuked the winds and the sea and there was a great calm it's an amazing demonstration of Jesus authority the verb rebuke in Greek as well as in English usually takes a personal object right people usually rebuke sentient beings that are capable of listening to rebuke a man might in his anger when his car doesn't start kick it and rebuke his car you piece of junk start for once when

I need you but nobody in their right mind expects the car to actually listen and start when you plan a picnic and it's rain when have you seen your friends rebuke the rain Jesus rebukes the wind and the sea if anybody but Jesus did that we would be right to think that he's crazy but you know what's crazier the winds and the sea actually they obey him the world was created by the word of God we see that in Genesis 1 we see that in Psalm 33 verse 6 and John 1 tells that Jesus is the word of God who has taken on human flesh so apparently creation still recognizes the very voice that created that throughout scripture it's only

God who ever rebukes nature rebukes the sea Psalm 106 verse 9 speaks of how God rebuked the Red Sea and it became dry Psalm 18:15 recalls how the Lord rebuked the sea and exposed its foundation so Jesus does in this scene what only God can do the great storm of verse 24 becomes a great calm in verse 26 the repetition of the word great highlights Jesus' complete mastery and control over nature this is no gradual dying down of the storm this is no a big storm becoming a medium storm no there's this great storm and then Jesus says rebukes the storm and then seizes a great calm imagine how eerie that must have felt no wonder disciples respond this way it says in verse 27 and the men marbled!

saying what sort of men is this that even wins and see obey him did you catch how awkwardly the disciples were referred to in that verse they're called men men Matthew calls them disciples in verse 23 and verse 21 and so why after having already specifically identified them as disciples does he use such a generic term to refer to them this is intended to highlight the contrast with Jesus the son of man the man marvel saying what sort of man is this that even wins and see obey him whoever Jesus is it is clear he's not like these other men he's not the same sort of man he's something more he's set apart from he's unlike any other man that has ever lived or ever will he is a kind of man worth risking your skin and forsaking your kin to fall in verse 28

Jesus and his disciples arrive on the other side of the sea of Galilee to the country of the Gadarenes we know that this is a Gentile territory because of the presence of pig farming which only Gentiles did because the Jews regarded pigs as unpleased animals this story is reported in all of the synoptic gospels Matthew Mark and Luke but there is a curious discrepancy between the version that we find here in Matthew and the version we find in Mark and Luke he says in verse 28 that when Jesus and his disciples came ashore they were greeted by two demon possessed men but Mark and Luke report only one demon possessed man this isn't the only place that Matthew differs from Mark and Luke in this manner in Matthew 20:29-34 Jesus heals two blind men in Jericho but parallel accounts in Mark and Luke Mark 10 and Luke 18 record only one blind man that was healed so

[ 37 : 51 ] Matthew tends to give two when Mark and Luke give one Mark and Luke prefer to focus in on a single character in greater depth for example Mark and Luke both include the detail in the healing of the blind men in Mark 10 and Luke 18 that they were both beggars Mark even tells us the man's specific name that he was called Bartimaeus so Mark and Luke tend to zoom in on a single more compelling character whereas Matthew tends to give us a wide angle lens so you can see both characters and gives us his sparse on Matthew tells us that there were two demon possessed men that Jesus healed whereas Mark and Luke tell us only one Mark and Luke in their stories give us much more detail than Matthew he tells us how Jesus performed the exorcism the name of the

demon the legion he gives details about how the delivered demon life was transformed and how he became a witness for

Jesus in the region the gentile the cop! Matthew doesn't tell us any of that but he does tell us that there were two so that's the literary reason for Matthew including two characters but there's also theological reason why Matthew does this Matthew is the writer who tells us specifically in Matthew 18 19 if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask it will be done for them by my father in heaven Matthew is hearkening back to the Old that the testimony of two or three witnesses is necessary to establish a judicial verdict a legal verdict it so happens that in both of these stories where Matthew has two people where Mark and Luke only have one the people involved bear important testimony regarding who Jesus is Matthew includes two pairs of stories about two pairs of blind men being healed in his gospel in chapter 9 here and then later in chapter 20 and in both cases the blind men bear witness to the fact that

Jesus is the son of David which is a messianic time and then here with the story of the gathering demoniacs they are the first to declare that Jesus is the son of God so by mentioning two individuals rather than bolstering the credibility of these testimonies regarding who Jesus is it's not just one but two who say these names so now let's dive into what actually happened verse 20 it says that the two demon possessed men came out of the tomb to meet Jesus they reside in the tombs which is a ritually unclean space which is quite fitting because these are fallen angels they are demons!

unclean is kind of a misnomer since demons don't actually own anything all creation believers and unbelievers are owned by God to belong to him he is the potter who makes both vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath to display his patience and holiness and justice for from him and through him and to him are all things there's not a thing in this world that the demon owns the demons own so demons don't possess anyone in the sense of owning them the bible does however teach us that people can have demons within them and be controlled by them which is why they have to be cast out so

Jesus does over and over again throughout the gospel later in Matthew 12 I think I have this for you guys on the screen from verse 43 to 44 she says that when the unclean spirit has gone out of a person it passes through waterless places seeking rest but finds none then it says I will return to my house from which I came unclean spirits seek rest they long to be housed demons and we know from the story of the gathering demoniacs that both humans and animals are capable of housing demons housing spirits perhaps it's because it's the animals and humans that have the breath of life in them according to Genesis 1 30 and 2 7 so that's how we ought to understand the word demon possession not possessed by demons Old by demons but possessed with demons having demons within them the

[ 42 : 58 ] Greek word behind demon possessed can be translated more literally simply as demonized it's just a verbal form of the noun demon and it means to come under the influence of demons the same word is sometimes translated in the ESD the English Standard Version as being oppressed!

by a demon so whether it says in the Bible that you read they were oppressed by demon or possessed by a demon the underlying it is actually the exact same word the demonization can vary in its intensity and its extent and in the worst cases like this gathering demoniac the demons can exercise such control so much control it almost seems like a puppeteer controlling a puppeteer but to lesser degrees demons can also attack and influence Christians Satan it says sifted Peter like wheat according to Jesus in Luke 22 31 and it says a messenger of Satan continually harassed even the apostle Paul in his flesh according to 2nd Corinthians 12 verse 7 this is why Christians are commanded repeatedly in the Bible to resist the devil to stand firm in our faith and resist the devil if we could not be attacked no point for resisting

Ephesians 4 26 to 27 tells us not to let the sun go down on our anger because holding on to anger will give an opportunity to the death literally the word opportunity there means a place you hold on to your anger your bitterness your unforgiveness you are giving room real estate to demons evil spirits in your heart and in your mind these two demonized men had done precisely that unclean spirits had taken lodging in them and they were so severely under demonic influence that the demons spoke through them like a ventriloquist what have you to do with us oh son of God have you come here to torment us before the top it's an incredible confession the demons through their hosts acknowledge that

Jesus is the son of God and they also concede that Jesus has the authority to torment them in verse 31 these demons would maintain a reign of terror in the cemetery so that no one could pass that way now beg Jesus that you cast us out send us away to the earth kings hear the helpless resonance in their voices as they plead with Jesus as they beg Jesus because they know that they are powerless to resist him and they know that their tenure their stay in these demoniacs is coming to an end cast can you please cast us out into the pigs which is also thinnick as pigs are unclean animals Jesus command is majestic simple and singular God amazing God and the spirits go out of the men and into the pigs and the successful exorcists is confirmed by the herd of pigs the successful exorcist is confirmed by the herd of pigs all of a sudden stampeding down off a cliff running down the steep edge and running and drowning in the water you think that after this that Jesus would receive heroes welcome and that everybody in the gathering area would want to spend time with him and be around him but instead the herdsman the owners of the pigs the pigs were their livelihood they are unhappy with what Jesus has done and they beg Jesus to leave the region this is another illustration of what Jesus said before these two illustrations foxes at holes birds have nests but the son of man has no place to lay his head leave the dead to bury their own dead it's happening again in Jesus life following Jesus he's illustrating again from these stories it will mean rejection it will sometimes mean you have no home no place it means having to go to unclean places dealing with unclean spirits it means being rejected by men so why should we be [ 48 : 20 ] Jesus disciple because again as Matthew tells Jesus no ordinary son of man he's not the same sort of man that we are he is truly a man but he's not only a man he is also the son of God whom even the demons obey think about that demons are fallen angels right they're disobedient rebellious spirits and yet when Jesus speaks they have no choice but to obey and do as Jesus says Jesus doesn't have a five step exorcism process he orders no incantations he sprinkles no oil he plays no music he just says one word go it's exactly what the centurion said in the preceding passage I say to one go and he goes and I say to another come and he comes Jesus spares the demons for now he doesn't send them into torment because their time for their judgment is not yet but

Revelation 20 verse 10 prophesies of the coming day when the devil Satan and all of his minions the demons will be thrown into the lake of fire and soft and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever and Jesus holds the cosmic authority over even the realm of the spirit which is why the demons asked have you come here to torment us before the time isn't that an interesting phrase that raises a good time before the time of judgment that's appointed Jesus will return and after his second coming Jesus will judge the world but Jesus came before that time in his first coming Jesus came not to condemn the world to judge the world but to save the world it says in John 3 17 Jesus spent his earthly ministry proclaiming the kingdom of God and calling sinners to repentance he was criticized for calling tax collectors sinners to follow him and for calling them to be his disciples but Jesus responded to people's criticism by saying this those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick for I came not to call the righteous but sinners so if you are here this morning and you know that you are a sinner and this is good news for you and me we too can be a disciple of Jesus we can follow him he calls us follow me the son of man and son of God died on the cross to pay for our sins because he was truly a man he can rightly represent us he was man that sinned and brought brokenness and sin into the world and so a man had to bear the punishment and so 1 Timothy 2 5 says for there is one God and one mediator between God and man the man Christ Jesus Jesus had to be man in order to save us but Jesus was also truly God he was the son of

God and therefore he could rightly represent God and make an acceptable atoning sacrifice for sin Psalm 49 verses 7 to 9 says this truly no man can ransom another or give to God the price of his life for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice that he should live on forever and escape death because the wages of sin is death and all men have sin so the price of redemption is too high for any man to be able to afford but then this song continues in verse 15 but God will ransom but God will ransom my soul from the power of shield for he will receive me no man can ransom a soul but God can Jesus can because he is not only God having died for the sins of people Jesus was raised from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the father having received all rule and authority and power and dominion and that's why in the cult worship this morning that we read from Daniel 7 13 to 14 which is the prophecy concerning the one like a son of man that Jesus is now applying how can a man deserve that it's because that man is Jesus who is son of man and son of

God he is the savior of sinners like you and me so will you trust in him will you follow him before you say yes too quickly take stock and count the cost following Jesus is not a hobby it's not a gig it demands your everything it rapidly reprioritizes your life requires you to risk your own skin forsake even your family are you willing to give up this entire world and surrender your whole life to follow [ 53 : 56 ] Jesus are you ready to stop trying to lead God and start following him are you willing to say not my will but your will be done I don't promise you that your life will be easy and I would never ask you to follow anyone else in this matter but Jesus is worthy of it because he is the son of God do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul rather fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell for whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake Jesus says will fight it let's pray together father raise the bar in our minds right now of what discipleship looks like but even as you raise that bar raise even higher father our esteem of Jesus our regard for Jesus your son your only son that no matter how high the cost of discipleship no matter how steep the loss that we must endure they will see that it is worth forsaking all to find help us to do that in Jesus name we pray amen