

Having taken on Christ, we are spiritually akin to Abraham (v. 29). Being “one in Christ” (v. 28), racial, social and gender differences are insignificant.

#### Luke 8:26-39

Jesus and his disciples arrive in Gerasa, a city some 30 km east of the Jordan – in Gentile territory. Ancient ideas of dementia were very different from ours: demons were spirits of an evil kind, thought to do battle, as a “legion” (v. 30), with God and his allies; they were thought to invade human bodies and personalities, causing mental (and some physical) illness, and taking control of people; “the wilds” (v. 29, the desert) was the abode of demons and destructive forces; “the abyss” (v. 31) was the realm of Satan and home to demons. People who had been deprived of their liberty (e.g. prisoners) lost the right to wear clothes. “Tombs” (v. 27) were ritually unclean places. Jesus has power over evil forces (“fell down”, v. 28; “commanded”, v. 29). The man recognizes Jesus for whom he is. “Swine” (v. 32) were a symbol of pagan religion and of Roman rule: even they are subject to Jesus’ authority. Perhaps Luke predicts the fall of Rome in telling the fate of the swine (v. 33): that Roman legions will drown. The man not only sits “at the feet of Jesus” (v. 35), as disciples did, but becomes a missionary to fellow Gentiles (v. 39). This is a story of transformation; so dramatic is the change in the man that the people are “seized with ... fear” (v. 37): they can’t handle it. What does Luke mean by “had been healed” (v. 36) or saved? Look at the changes in the man’s life: from outside the city to inside it; from living in tombs and being driven into the desert to living in a house; from nakedness to being clothed; and from being demented to being of sound mind. From destructive isolation, he has become part of a nurturing, human community. He proclaims the good news. To Luke, a “house” (v. 27) is a home where one belongs, is a person, interacts with others, and exercises personal and communal rights and obligations, including moral ones.

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#### ~ Notices ~

**Ukraine** The Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal has launched a special appeal encouraging all parishes in Ireland to have a special collection this/next Sunday to support the appeal. To donate please use the link on our website: <https://clareanglicans.ie> or go direct to: [www.christianaid.ie](http://www.christianaid.ie)

#### Burren Walk

A sign-up sheet is at the back of church for those who would like to take a short walk through the Burren, with the well-known local guide Pius Murray – around 5km of easy walking.

#### Living the Questions - Course

Start date to be confirmed, but please put your name down on the sign-up sheet if you are interested so I can gauge numbers.

**Book Club?** There is a sign-up sheet if you might be interested in joining a church book club.

**Website:** [clareanglicans.ie](http://clareanglicans.ie)

**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans](http://www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans](http://www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans)

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# 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Trinity 2022 (Year C)

## Collect

God of truth, help us to keep  
your law of love and to walk in

ways of wisdom, that we may find true life in Jesus Christ  
your Son. Amen

**Suggested Hymns** - For the online service you might like  
to view these hymns with lyrics on YouTube.

1) For the healing of the nations

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXtflE6jSYQ>

2) O Jesus I have promised

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trs17OEH7E>

3) Lord Jesus think on me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtPD24Bvn38>

4) Faithful Shepherd feed me (644)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RL1szhDHGD0>

## Isaiah 65.1-9

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

I said, ‘Here I am, here I am’,  
to a nation that did not call on my name.

I held out my hands all day long  
to a rebellious people,  
who walk in a way that is not good,  
following their own devices;

a people who provoke me  
to my face continually,

sacrificing in gardens  
and offering incense on bricks;

who sit inside tombs,  
and spend the night in secret places;

who eat swine’s flesh,  
with broth of abominable things in their vessels;

who say, ‘Keep to yourself,  
do not come near me, for I am too holy for you.’

These are a smoke in my nostrils,  
a fire that burns all day long.

See, it is written before me:

I will not keep silent, but I will repay;

I will indeed repay into their laps  
their iniquities and their ancestors’ iniquities together,

says the Lord;  
because they offered incense on the mountains

and reviled me on the hills,

I will measure into their laps  
full payment for their actions.

Thus says the Lord:

As the wine is found in the cluster,  
and they say, ‘Do not destroy it,

for there is a blessing in it’,

so I will do for my servants’ sake,  
and not destroy them all.

I will bring forth descendants from Jacob,  
and from Judah inheritors of my mountains;

my chosen shall inherit it,

and my servants shall settle there.

## Psalms 22.19-28

O Lord, do not be far away!

O my help, come quickly to my aid!

Deliver my soul from the sword,

my life from the power of the dog!

Save me from the mouth of the lion!  
From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.  
I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:  
You who fear the Lord, praise him!  
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him;  
stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!  
For he did not despise or abhor  
the affliction of the afflicted;  
he did not hide his face from me,  
but heard when I cried to him.  
From you comes my praise in the great congregation;  
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.  
The poor shall eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek him shall praise the Lord.  
May your hearts live for ever!  
All the ends of the earth shall remember  
and turn to the Lord;  
and all the families of the nations  
shall worship before him.  
For dominion belongs to the Lord,  
and he rules over the nations.

### **Galatians 3.23-29**

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore, the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

### **Luke 8.26-39**

Jesus and his disciples arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me'— for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times 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 wilds.) Jesus then asked him, 'What is your name?' He said, 'Legion'; for many demons had entered him. They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So, he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they 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. Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So, he got into the boat and returned.

The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.' So, he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

### **Post Communion Prayer**

Eternal Father, we thank you for nourishing us with these heavenly gifts; may our communion strengthen us in faith, build us up in hope, and make us grow in love; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Commentary**

#### **Isaiah**

This book can be divided into two (and possibly three) parts. Chapters 1 to 39 were written before the exile, from about 740 BC to about 700 BC. These were difficult times for the southern kingdom, Judah: a disastrous war was fought with Syria; the Assyrians conquered Israel, the northern kingdom, in 723 BC, and threatened Judah. Isaiah saw the cause of these events as social injustice, which he condemned, and against which he fought valiantly. "O that you would tear open the heavens and come down" (64:1): thus the people of Israel pray that God will reveal himself to them as in days of old. God answers, speaking through the prophet, "I was ready to be sought out" (65:1) but no one has sought my help. Instead, Israel was disobedient and self-centred; they will be punished, but God will preserve a faithful line, chosen by him.

#### **Psalm 22**

Jesus quoted the opening words of this psalm on the cross. In his suffering, the psalmist feels deserted by God, despite his cries for help day and night (v. 2). Even so, he convinced that God is "holy" (v. 3). His forebears trusted in God (as he does), and God helped them (v. 4), so may God help him now (v. 5). His misery is aggravated by those who mock him; they see his suffering as a sign of God's ineffectiveness: they jeer and grimace ("make mouths", v. 7) at him. But he is convinced that God has been with him since his infancy (vv. 9-10); only God can help him now. His detractors behave like savage animals, seeking to devour him (vv. 12-13). (Bulls from "Bashan" were particularly strong.) His suffering (vv. 14-15) may be physical and mortal: his dry "mouth" may be due to fever; it leaves him weak. His detractors are so sure he will die that they have already auctioned off his clothes (v. 18). May God help him soon (v. 19). When God restores him, he will spread the word of God in the community and will praise him in the "congregation" (v. 22), the Temple. God will rescue him, and all "nations" (v. 27), and those who have died (v. 29). "Future generations" (v. 30) too will be told of God's saving deeds, and will proclaim them.

#### **Galatians 3:23-29**

Some Jewish Christians have visited Galatia and argued that a right relationship with God comes through Mosaic law, but Paul argues that it is God's promise(s) that establish this link. After all, Paul has written, God's promise to Abraham predated the Law by centuries (v. 17). The Law was "added" (v. 19) because people deviated from God's ways. It also came through a "mediator" (Moses), while the promise came directly (v. 20). The Law doesn't "make alive" (v. 21), give life, so it doesn't yield oneness with God. All of scriptural (Old Testament) tradition locks people into sinfulness, but God's (new) promise of the gift of Christ is freely given to "those who believe" (v. 22): it is different; it gives life.

In v. 23, by "before faith came" Paul means before the Christian era, before the fulfilment of God's promises. The word translated "disciplinarian" (v. 24) was used of a slave who supervised a child outside school hours. We were restricted in our development until Christ came. Living under the Law prepared the first Christians for Christ, for oneness, through faith, with God; however, now they are no longer subject to the Law. Baptism has implications for daily living (v. 27).