

# 31.5.26 am: ABC in Legion

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Date: 31 May 2026

Preacher: Scott Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. Warm welcome to you all. Warm welcome to those that are visiting with us. Good to have you with us. And those that are watching online, we pray that we know the Lord's blessing as we gather in the name of Jesus.

Just to run through a couple of intimations, there's a creche available just in the room behind us there. Just go through this door here. Sunday school will be on this morning as well. Second singing, I'll go out and second singing for that.

Tonight the service, you'll see it on the screen, is a Gaelic service and will be taken by Donald MacDonald, Dolan and afterwards there's a fellowship. Youth fellowship are joining with us as well. And Dr. Latham will speak about his new book, When I Consider Your Heavens, How Science and Philosophy Lead Us to God. So be encouraged to come along to that this evening if you can make it.

Through the week, there is a prayer meeting on Wednesday as normal. Ladies fellowship, scrolling through the screen there, all the different things that are on. Wood to recovery on Tuesday.

[ 1 : 25 ] Also a day of prayer on Wednesday for Blythe, which will be praying for the work of Blythe. Also be mindful of Hope Explored, the last of three sessions on Thursday evening. So anyone that hasn't been along, you're very welcome to come along.

It's just a case of sitting down, watching a few videos together, going through our e-book together. It's very informal, a cup of tea biscuits. So if you haven't been here, you're very welcome to come along. Ask questions if you're interested in the Christian faith or if you have questions, just come. Friday evening, there's a Presbyterity Praise Night, 7.30 in Barvis Free Church. A mixture of English and Gaelic psalm singing and David, their own minister, will have a short address.

There are a few more questions. There are a few questions. And also just to highlight the God is Good event in Bach Free Church between 1 to 3.

So again, if you support that work, please be encouraged to go to that. Also, as I noticed there about the camps in Romania and many other things.

[ 2 : 41 ] So make yourself familiar with the email, go through them and be praying for all these things that are going on, that God would be at work.

So we're here, not to just go through into Matians, we're here to worship God. And we'll begin by singing in Psalm 40. The words will appear on the screen. We'll sing Psalm 40 from the beginning of the Psalm down to the second verse.

Verse 5, it's in two verses. So the end of the second verse. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear.

At length to me, he did incline my voice and cried to hear. He took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay. And on a rock, he set my feet establishing my way.

He put a new song in my mouth. Our God to magnify. Many shall see it and shall fear. And on the Lord rely the difference.

[ 3 : 46 ] And the work that God brings into a person. Putting a new song in their mouth. And as we'll see in our service that many will see it and fear that work of God.

So we'll stand together and we'll sing these words to God's praise. I waited for the Lord my God. I waited for the Lord my God.

And on the Lord and patiently did bear. And then to me, he did incline my voice and cried to hear. He took me from a fearful pit. And from the miry clay.

And on a rock, he set my feet. He put a new song in my mouth.

[ 5 : 34 ] My god who fades from the earth who fades from the earth who fades from the earth who fades from the earth who fades from the earth who fades from the earth



In your son. If we put our faith. In him. And we believe. In him. In him. In him. So we ask. That as we open up. The word together. As we open up the Bible.

[ 12 : 45 ] Help us to see. Jesus. Help us. To believe. If that's our prayer. This morning. We pray. For those who are not with us. We ask that you would speak to them.

We pray that your word would work in mysterious ways. Pray for those who are at home. Because of illness. Or because of old age. We pray that you would likewise bless them.

We pray for those in our community. That are struggling. That are finding life hard. That are financially strained. And we pray that you would help them.

And that we would help one another. We pray that we would be able to bear one another's burdens together. That we would learn to love one another. Help one another.

Forgive one another. Build one another up. Spend time with one another. We pray for the other churches around us in this area.

[ 13 : 45 ] We pray where Christ crucified is preached. That you would bless it. Through your spirit. That you would make hearts receptive to it.

And we pray that. You would save the lost. And that we as your people. Would be praying for those. Those who as we understand. Have turned their back against your word. And Jesus Christ. That you would soften the hardness of their hearts.

That they would come. Bowing the knee to Jesus. Accepting that sin has got the better of them. Knowing that they need someone to wash them clean.

And so we pray for the gospel across our land. Across our nation. That you would bless it as it goes out. This day, morning, evening. Whenever it is.

[ 14 : 41 ] That it would bear fruit. That it would not return empty. As your word promises. And so we pray. Knowing that you are a God.

You are faithful to your word. Be with us. And help us. Give us understanding. Give us listening ears.

Help us not to be distracted. Speak to us. We pray. In Jesus name. Amen. I'll just ask.

Some of the younger ones. If you want to come down to the front here. Say a few things to you.

Let's come and take a seat. How was yesterday? You all okay? Good? Good. Now if I was to ask you to think about something powerful something really strong if you're if you work in a garage or if you drive a lorry you might think of a big big lorry would you be powerful lorry if you had some cows you might think of a big powerful bull really strong bull if you worked on a fishing boat you might think of how powerful the sea is big waves or the wind or something like that all these things are very powerful but

I couldn't bring a big I couldn't bring in a big lorry it wouldn't fit in and I couldn't bring a big bull on I think DJ got one the other day but I couldn't bring him in either to show you something powerful so what I ended up bringing was a bottle of soap because I tell this this sees it it's powerful sees on it you see it there it's it's perfect kills things what does it kill Johnny how much of bacteria 99.99% so it kills this kill all the wee germs that stick to your hand it's telling you it's powerful to do that but it sees it doesn't last how long does it last for two hours does it it doesn't it only lasts for two hours and then you're back to square one you have to wash your hands again no do you think this can wash away think this is powerful enough to wash away sir do you think no no no it's not you're right can't wash away sir but imagine if it could wash away sir all the wrong things that we've done when we've not been listening to mum and dad be when we've been naughty to other people been bad all these things that we do wrong every day all the time we do wrong things all these sins if you could see them sticking to your hands and this bottle said it's got the power to wash away sir do you think it's good enough if it would wash away all of our sin it would say a hundred percent all anything that's a hundred percent is full it'll do everything but does this say it washes all of it away it's not a hundred percent of it what number is it ninety nine point nine nearly most of it wash away god god can't look at any sin at all no sin absolutely no sin so if this was powerful enough to wash away ninety nine point nine percent of sin is it good enough no no because it's still a wee wee wee bit left isn't it and even if it could it's only going to make it good for two hours isn't it yeah and then you're going to be you're going to be like this square one aren't you so we need something more powerful to wash away our sin do you know what is more powerful to wash away our sin what john jesus yeah jesus is the only one i can wash away our sin and how much of our sin can he wash away how much sun can he wash away how much sun can what do you think 100% you're bang on 100% 100% and how long do you think that that that that that that that that that that that that that that that that





the storm.

[ 35 : 40 ] And then we have Jesus' power. And then we have Jesus' power here, suppressing evil, conquering evil. And then what Mark's going to do, he's going to go on and talk about Jesus' daughter who died and show that Jesus has the power over death.

But I think short of resurrecting someone from the dead, this must be the next best thing.

This demon-possessed man, radically converted. Not from death to life, but from being possessed inwardly.

He's sitting there in his right mind. He's sitting there in his right mind. All happening on the inside. Great conversion has taken place on the inside.

People love doing this with cars, boats, houses, whatever you're into. They love taking out, getting an old car, taking out the engine, everything, changing it all new.

[ 36 : 49 ] Getting an old house, taking everything out of it, putting it all new inside. We love doing that. We have projects with that. People will come and see what you've done.

People will maybe speak about what you've done. And they're interested in what you've done and how you've done it. And the people were interested about this conversion that took place in this man.

The outside was the same. But inside, they spoke about something that was of great interest to them. Great change.

Jesus essentially took this, what we'd call a wreck. And restored, converted, converted him on the inside.

And that's that great inward change I want us to think about this morning. And we'll do it by thinking of it as simplicity of ABC. When we think about this story and this demon-possessed man.

[ 37 : 56 ] A is going to be a beaten man. B is going to be before Jesus. And C is going to be clearly converted. A beaten man.

A beaten man. Before Jesus. Clearly converted. And the fact that we're using ABC. Conversion isn't always that simple.

In our own experience. And we can often make it very difficult. But what do we say first about this beaten man? ABC.

Now if you look at your Bibles from verse 1 to 5. It tells us all about this man. The first thing it tells us about this man is that well, they had crossed the sea in the Gerasenes.

And the commentators tell us this. I mean, this man was a Galilean. He's from, not a Galilean. He was a Gentile. The disciples are probably relieved that they made it to the other side of this lake.

[ 39 : 00 ] Through this storm. They've come to the other side. And they come to this Gentile land. Where they meet this demon-possessed man.

Now if he was a Gentile, he's outside the promises of God. They thought. They understood that he wasn't in God's family. These people. They weren't to receive the privileges from God.

They were almost on the outskirts. People God wouldn't have favoured. And above that, we'll see that he's least favoured by even his own people.

He's the man that, in fact, everyone wanted to forget. But as we read through Mark's Gospel here, it's almost as if Jesus makes a point of going over to see this man.

He just goes over to see him. Does this work in him? And then he sees back. Everyone else wanted to forget about him. But Jesus did not forget about this man.

[ 40 : 09 ] And verses 2 to 3 picture them arriving on the shore. They immediately meet this man.

Coming from the tombs with an unclean spirit. No one could bind him. Not even with a chain. As we go on, we'll see that this demon-possessed man, the demon in him, was called Legion.

And obviously this man, he's obviously a bit of a worry to the people. But he's not the kind of guy you'd like to meet walking home when you're shopping. He'd take everything off you.

And he'd scare you. And so what the people had tried to do was try to control him. Try to chain him up. Try to bind him. Because they're worried to society.

Get him out of here. They didn't want him there. He's an ongoing problem, though. He kept breaking free from the chains.

[ 41 : 17 ] Shackles. The strongest things that they had couldn't even hold this man. It's almost as if they had given up trying to control him.

It's almost as if he was beyond help. It's almost as if they'd bind him up. And they'd come back and say, we got him. And then the next day, you'd hear him say, legions on the loose again.

Weerspie describes him as a wild animal. Just they couldn't control him. The power that possessed him was too much.

No one could help him. Worst of all, he couldn't help himself. A beaten man. Beaten by the evil that was in him.

Now, we'd probably say that we're not like legion. We're not 100% wild animals.

[ 42 : 26 ] Some of us. Maybe 10% of us. Maybe a wee bit of us. But whatever evil is in us, it's going to spoil the whole. So we were saying that the 0.1 of sin is sin.

That makes us sinners. Stains the whole person. We still need to be cleaned.

We're 100% a sinner. With 0.1 of a sin. Or 99.9. And in that sense, we're all beaten by it.

It's taken over. It controls us. We can't do anything about it in and of ourselves. We try to control it. But it's the very thing that controls us.

What's controlling you this morning? What sinful things controlling you? What's the thing that you can't stop doing, that you should? What's the thing that with the best will in the world, you just keep going back to again and again?

[ 43 : 47 ] The devil uses these things to tempt us, to control us. It might be in a way that people see.

The likelihood is it's not. Working slowly and silently. In us, in our minds, in our thoughts.

And this sin just gets the better of us. Each and every one of us. It takes over. It almost has that controlling power. That we struggle to defeat.

It always comes back. It never leaves us alone. Even things that you've done in the past. Maybe something that no one knows about. And the guilt of it rests in your mind.

It almost comes back with the guilt and shame at night time. Controlling you.

[ 44 : 50 ] And you feel beaten by it. It can't get away from it. We think we can help ourselves.

We can't. We think we can help others. And often we can't. We can't. We can't. When it comes to sin. We're beaten.

We're helpless. We're just as very much a lost cause as Legion. But Jesus came to help the helpless.

And in fact, the best way to comfort him is to tell him we're beaten. Sin's got the better of me.

I can't help myself. Sin's got the better. No one else can help me either. I'm a sinner. I need to be saved. And I need someone to wash me clean.

[ 45 : 58 ] I need someone to take it away. Because I can't get it off my hands. It keeps coming back. So we need to come to Jesus.

That's our A, a beaten man. B is before Jesus. We see this man coming before Jesus. Sees him from afar.

Recognizes him crying out with a loud voice in verse 7. What have you to do with me, Jesus, son of the most high God? Bang on the money.

Recognizes exactly who Jesus was. The devils know him. And we enter into this strange conversation, don't we?

It's almost these cosmic powers of the evil spirit and Jesus talking with one another. Jesus addresses this man.

[ 47 : 08 ] The spirit, rather. And the spirit's pleading with him not to send me away into another country or into nothing, into the abyss some translations have.

And in this conversation, we understand the name of this demon possession. My name is Legion, for we are many in verse 9.

Begged Jesus not to send him away. Now when we talk of Legion there, it's a military term. And it speaks of the size of an army.

And all the commentators will say to it, represent about 6,000 soldiers a Legion. And I thought, well, this man's fully possessed by this Legion.

And I think, well, we're not quite so possessed. What's the smaller sizes of soldiers? The next one down would be a cohort.

[ 48 : 13 ] That's about 480 men. The next one down would be a century. That's about 80 men. Who a centurion would come out. And there's another one.

The smallest unit of eight men. It's got a funny name. A contubernum. Eight men. And these are like, they would share a tent. It's almost like a wee family.

So we might not have a Legion in us. We might just have the smallest of armies working away in us.

Legion here, the strength of this power, wants to be sent into the pigs. It doesn't want to be sent away. It's almost as if it has to. It wants to possess something. It wants to control something. Jesus sends them and allows them to go into the pigs. It's interesting to note that actually, well, even though so strong an army, he still had to acknowledge Jesus was in control.

[ 49 : 24 ] It's much like Job. God allowed the devil to attack Job.

God had control over everything. As Jesus does here. He has control over this Legion. And he granted their desire to enter into the pigs.

You can almost picture this. I don't know if you can picture this. It's quite a funny scene. 2,000 pigs. It's quite hard to picture in and of itself. But they become possessed with this Legion.

You can just imagine them being startled. The noise coming off them. You're seeing them up on the hill. And you're seeing them trampling on down. And you're seeing what's going to happen. You're seeing they're not changing direction.

There's a cliff there. And they're trampling on and trampling on. The momentum's carried. And then just push. One, two, three. Thud, thud, thud, thud.

[ 50 : 26 ] All come off this cliff into the sea. I think the lesson here is that Legion destroyed what it possessed.

Evil will destroy what it possesses. Sin will destroy us. But it's not about the pigs.

It's about this man. Jesus valued this man more than 2,000 pigs. For certain. But I'm sure the men of the town.

Would have valued one pig. More than the man. Jesus looked on this man with compassion.

Jesus looked at this man and he saw him. He's completely helpless. No one else can help him. No one else can do anything with him.

[ 51 : 29 ] Jesus saw a lost, defeated soul needing to be saved.

And Jesus still wants to help lost, defeated souls this morning. Whatever reason you're here today. Before Jesus. Do you know that you're beaten by sin? Maybe you know it more than anyone else. This man didn't have the capacity to ask. Because of the possession. But God has not allowed us to be so possessed.

And so we have the capacity to ask for help. We have the capacity to come to Jesus. The only one that can help us and wash us clean from our sin.

[ 52 : 40 ] He had the capacity to help this gentile. Who had no family heritage. Who had no family heritage. About believing. That God would send us some.

Maybe we've got no family heritage. Of our mothers and fathers being Christians. But Jesus is saying to you.

I know you have a problem. I know you're a sinner. And maybe you're seeing it yourself. And Jesus is saying to you this morning. I can wash you clean.

I can do a great work. In converting your soul. And taking away that. That beatenness. That tie. That bondage. Maybe. We need to hear that this morning. Whatever percentage of sin is in us.

[ 53 : 40 ] Whatever army size possesses us. Jesus. Is stronger. Meeting with Jesus changes everything.

The old sinful man's. Ripped out. And replaced. With the new man.

Jesus is the one that can change us. Change our heart. Bring in conversion. That takes us to our last point.

Clearly converted. That's from verses 14 to 20. We've had this legion. Beaten by sin. We've seen him before Jesus.

But we see him clearly converted. Now when we come before Jesus. Something's going to happen. When Jesus speaks to us.

[ 54 : 42 ] One of two things normally happens. We either listen. Or we ignore it. We either receive Jesus. Or we reject him. Now Jesus did a great work of conversion.

In this man. And as we said at the beginning. When we do that in our own things. Projects.

Sometimes people want to see it. Some people want to come and see what's being done. And the people certainly wanted to come and see this conversion.

The herdsmen went away and told everyone about what had happened. And verse 14 tells us. People came to see it.

And what did they see? Verse 15 tells us. They came to Jesus. They came before Jesus. They saw the evidence.

They saw the demon possessed man. They saw him there. Sitting there. Clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

[ 55 : 50 ] It tells us. Rather than being filled with joy, that Jesus had resolved their problems. They actually tell Jesus to depart.

They actually tell Jesus. Get out of here. I wonder why. Was it because Jesus was stronger than them Jesus managed to do what they had been trying to do the whole time was it because he had destroyed their dinner their economy, their pigs all gone not entirely sure why they had seen enough this power they didn't want it get away whatever you are they probably didn't understand that Jesus was going to come the Messiah would come they probably weren't taught it they didn't expect it whatever this man is whatever he's doing the door just stay away they rejected Jesus they rejected his power they're the ones that everyone else considered wise they were the ones that were trading in their town selling the pigs they weren't wise enough to accept Jesus they didn't want to know they saw all the evidence there as well they saw the man sitting there clothed in his right mind they probably spoke with Jesus they probably spoke with the man himself probably stuck their head over the cliff what's going on here their heart just said no

I don't want it and I think that's why Jesus did what he did next the man who had the legion he wanted to stay with Jesus verse 18 tells us that he wanted to go with him and Jesus got into the boat this is one of the rare occasions normally when Jesus did a miracle he told them don't say anything don't tell anyone about it it's one of the rare occasions where Jesus says actually go and tell everyone as we said it was a Gentile region they didn't have the understanding that a king was coming a messiah someone I would save their hearts were obviously hard to it to receive Jesus they were straight out rejecting him and maybe the most effective way that this word would work was through one of their own that Jesus would leave them there to go and tell them about himself that's exactly what he did verse 20 it tells us he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him and everyone marvelled you see leaving this man there was evidence that it wasn't just a temporary remedy that Jesus had done it wasn't just like the medicine was going to wear off two hours later wasn't just a magic trick this man was there year after year showing and witnessing the lasting power of Jesus living in peace living in his right mind clearly speaking and conducting business with the people and every day it would have been evidence

Jesus has saved me and maybe the people of the time would often remember that man was mad no one could control that man no one could help that man remember Jesus came and healed him it tells us that everyone marvelled marvelling isn't enough it's a good starting point maybe you've seen this in someone else that you know of maybe you've seen a change not outwardly but in someone's life initially you were like what's happened you're almost afraid of what was going on and then you marvel how can it be possible then you see it's not just a phase it's not just a passing moment it's a lasting thing it's an effective thing it's a powerful thing they live like they're free it's amazing grace that saved a wretch like me

I once was lost but now I'm found was blind but now I see that would have been his words that would have been his witness every believer is told to go and tell to be a witness wherever God puts us not that the people would only marvel but they would come to believe and trust in Jesus we can't do it ourselves we must come to Jesus to be the one that says actually I'm beaten by sin to be the one that comes before Christ and if we do that with all sincerity with genuineness confessing my hands are dirty and I need someone to clean me

[ 63 : 38 ] Jesus will do a work of conversion a beaten man before Jesus clearly converted it's every believer's story the story of the demon possessed man but is it yours as Jesus' word stands before you this morning are you going to receive it or are you going to reject it that's the challenge so we'll conclude there and we'll sing the words of amazing grace mission place 31 amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me I once was lost but now I'm found was blind but now I see it was grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved how precious did that grace appear the hour

I first believed through many dangers toils and snares I have already come tis grace has brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home when we've been there ten thousand years bright shining as the sun we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun remember the

evil it'll lead to destruction certainly lead to destruction but Jesus will bring salvation and life for us all so we'll stand together and sing these words in a moment a missing miss how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me

I once was lost but now I'm found was blind but now I see what is that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved how precious did that grace appear beyond thy mercy through many dangers spoils and scares I have already come tis grace has brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home when we've been there ten thousand years bright shining as the sun we know that is to sing

God's and when we've first begun we'll conclude with a word of prayer Lord we pray that you'll draw near to those that feel beaten in their hearts and that they would hear the promises of sure salvation and forgiveness for those that come that you would do our work of conversion change us for your glory for your praise we pray bless us Lord in our gathering as we part one with another in Jesus name Amen that that