

“Controlled Chaos”

Fresh off of calming the chaos of the great storm on the Sea of Galilee – Jesus steps out the boat and is met by “a man who had demons.” Right then and there – many people will turn away. Their enlightened minds will not allow a simple rebuking of wind and waves, spoken by a man – to be true – even if it is Jesus, the Son of God.

Fables! Man-made stories! Impossible! And then a demon possessed man – how can anyone believe such things to be true? Ah, but they are – absolutely true. Yes, incomprehensible to our rational minds – but true none the less.

The waves were pouring into the boat – and the winds were capsizing the boat – and this man was possessed by demons. The devil, and all his wicked angels are not fictional characters – they are real, present, and active.

Don’t let your intellect get in the way of God. To reject His miracles is just a step away from rejecting Jesus as true God and true man – for that too is impossible for us to understand. Yet God the Holy Spirit is working through the Word of God to create a faith in you that says – “Amen, this is most certainly true.”

Look at the bulletin cover for today depicting this demon possessed man. He’s a picture of utter chaos. It’s a shocking sight. If you saw a man like that today – you’d grab the hand of your child and turn around, or at least, give him a wide berth.

The same devil is present and active in the world today – like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He seeks to draw us away from the “good” that Christ gives – dragging us into the darkness of his chaos.

He stirs up this chaos with his lies – after all, he is the deceiver, the father of all lies. He’s a trickster, always trying to fool mankind – and he’s good at what he does. His work doesn’t always look like the man on the cover of the bulletin – more often than not, he’s very subtle in what he does. The Bible says that he comes as an angel of light.

In other words – he appears to be “good” – but he keeps using the same trick he used with Adam and Eve. He dangles things before our eyes as good and desirable – he promises good things and life – but his lies only lead to death.

The devil takes that which God creates as “very good” and works overtime to corrupt it – to spoil the “good” life that God desires for you. God tells you what is “good” – and the devil substitutes his own word (which may appear and sound good) – but are chaos.

One of the most apparent examples is God’s “good” gift of Holy Marriage – a gift that the devil has been chipping away at for a long time. He’s convinced many to believe that marriage is “not good” – a jailhouse, a prison – something that takes away our freedom, the control of our lives. But God says that marriage – the union of one man and one woman for life – is good.

No doubt you who are married have received these “good” benefits – rejoiced and celebrated this gift. But at the same time, you see how the devil works to steal away the blessings – the chaos he brings to marriage – the division he causes.

Having spoiled this gift of Holy Marriage in the minds of many – the devil does not stop there. He attacks another important part of creation – the fruit of marriage – the “good” gift of children.

Children today are under attack by the devil who is confusing and warping God’s creation of us as male and female. He deceives us into believing that we can determine whether we are male or female – as if we were in control, as if we are the Creator, as if we are God. It’s utter chaos – and our children are caught in the storm – being broken apart and destroyed.

Just as Jesus stepped from the boat into the chaos of this demon possessed man – so Jesus steps into our world, into our chaos – to drive away the devil so that we might have peace – and receive the good gifts He intends for us.

The demon possessed man asks an intriguing question – “What have you to do with me, Jesus, the Son of the Most High God?” What does Jesus have to do with you? He redeems you – He breaks the chains of the devil’s lies and deceptions – He sets you free to live, and to rejoice and make use of the good gifts that He gives to you.

God's Word is the light of His truth that drives away the dark and deceiving lies of the devil. What He did for this man in our text – He does for you in His Baptism. You too are now found to be in your “right mind,” sitting at the feet of Jesus – hearing and believing every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

You confess that the union of man and woman in Holy Marriage is “good” – to be male or female as the Lord created you to be is “good” – and this is true of every word that God speaks. It is true. It is good. It is for your benefit.

Notice how the world reacts to Jesus work of setting things straight. Rather than rejoice with the man who has been restored – they are more fixated on sending Jesus far, far away from them. “Depart” they say, go away, we don't want you around.

Why? Because His work destroyed their herd of pigs, their livelihood? Sure, the devil is very effective at leading us to prefer our livelihood over Jesus and the gifts that He gives. But there is more going on.

They are duped into believing that Jesus is the source of chaos, when He, in truth, is the One who brings peace. They see Jesus as uncontrollable – and the devil knows that us sinners love to be in control – even if it means rejecting the one true God.

Dearly beloved, Jesus sets you free from your sin and its bondage – redeems you from the devil and his lies – so that you may receive His good gifts, and live in His kingdom. Like the man in our text – Jesus has given you a new life to live, as husband, wife, male, female – as a forgiven and free sinner who confesses God's truth.

What is “good” is for you to live by faith in Jesus' Word – and living holy lives from that Word. That's how you “declare how much God has done for you.” Confessing that, in Christ Jesus, God has destroyed the power of the devil – freed you from the chaos of your sin by His redeeming blood – and given you a new life of peace.

That peace He gives to you this very day – forgiving your sins, guiding you by the light of His Word, and blessing you with Christ and His gifts of life and salvation. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.