

Sermon for the Second Sunday after Pentecost

'And he said "Legion, for we are many."'

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Thus saith the Lord: *'I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, "Here I am," to a nation that was not called by my name. I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people.'* But they only replied *'Keep to yourself, do not come near, for we are too holy for you.'* Therefore the Lord has promised *'I will not keep silent, I will repay.'*

The Lord has come, *'not to bring peace, but a sword.'* *'To cast fire one the earth.'*

Our Lord Christ is not a harmless God. Neither is He a harmless man. The Son of Man bears no sword; but the sword of his mouth shall slay all His enemies.

Know this of the Son: that He is power, dreadful and almighty; terrifying and unassailable. And know that it is for this reason that you love Him. You do not love Him because He is simply kind and charitable; that He is forgiving and heals the sick. You love Him for the same reason the princesses of old loved the heroes that murdered their captors, their rapists. You love Him because He is violent, but He has come to do violence on your behalf.

For when He is kind to the woman caught in adultery, is He not attacking those who lift up stones against her?

When He is charitable to those thousands who are without bread in the wilderness, is He not rebuking the earth that refuses her fruit to fallen mankind?

When He is forgiving, is He not throttling the throat of the accuser, Satan himself, who daily casts your reckless iniquity before your mind's ever seeing eye?

When He heals the sick, is He not making war on Death, the final enemy, and all the power of sin which delivers frail humanity to the teeth of Sheol?

He who declares *'I am the Lord'* has come to break the Leviathan, the Whore of Babylon, the Great Dragon, the Serpent of Eden; the Father of Lies.

Christ is in the *'country of the Gerasenes'* and there He *'met a man from the city who had demons.'* Such is no coincidence, for our God seeks out the demons that dare defile His image.

The Lord asks the demon *'What is your name'* the demon responds *'Legion, for we are many.'*

Indeed, many are the devils that savage our souls and maim our minds; That turn our own flesh, flesh perverted by our Original Sin, against us; that drive us to lust, to addiction, to hatred, to self-destruction. Indeed, this is the desire of the whole demonic horde, not that they destroy us, but that we will to destroy ourselves.

The demons plead: *'I beg you, do not torment me.'* *'And they begged him not to command them into the abyss.'* So the Almighty casts them into a herd of pigs, which shall find their end in the deeps of the sea, there to await their final end, there to away *'the abyss.'*

It is no coincidence that Christ *'met a man from the city who had demons'*, for our God seeks out the demons that dare defile His image.

For know you not that, having the Spirit descend upon Him in the Jordan, the Lord *'immediately was cast out to the wilderness to be tempted by the devil for forty days'*?

There He fasted, there He waited, there the Lord endured the words of Satan. And what were those words? *'Is it not written?'* *'Are you not the Son of God?'* *'Did God not say?'* The devil speaks no original words; he is not creative; indeed he cannot create, for there is only one Creator. He only twists the words of God to

serve his own hellish purpose.

Yet against these perversions, Christ replies with the Word of His Father, the Word of God, the '*sword of his mouth.*'

From the desert is Satan driven, and the Lord returns to the land of Israel, to teach, to preach, and to destroy. Yes, destroy; to lay waste to sin, death, and all hell.

A war has commenced, the prince of this world against the Crucified. In the Lord's first coming, the invasion against the Evil one began, and ever since the Church has carried on the struggle; conscripted by the font, strengthened by the Eucharist, armed and guarded by the Word; armed to strike at the enemy in battle after battle, ten thousand million every day, a battle continuous in every Christian heart. A battle desperate, but a battle triumphant.

Triumphant I say, for the Lord who once came to make war on '*Satan and all his angels*' will come again. And as during the great war of the last century, a general of this nation declared 'I have returned, the hour of your redemption has come.' So shall the Lord in glory, a light terrifying, a fire consuming, a heart bleeding, a grace embracing, return to redeem us in the dark night of our struggle.

He shall return, surrounded by endless ranks of angels, burning seraphs and harrowing thrones; dominions and powers, and all the cloud of saints, robed in light, guarded by St. Michael, to bring justice to the earth. And we, who in that day, continue the war in this waking life, shall turn and join them, the heavenly vanguard, led by our eternal King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus shall break through the ranks of the redeemed, the baptized, and the heavenly, to treat with His enemy, as honorable kings of old once did before the final battle.

In panic, Satan and his demonic horde shall see Him, and ask '*What is your name?*'

And even as Satan twisted the words of God to accuse Christ in the wilderness, so shall Christ twist the words of the demon for his heavenly purpose and

accuse Satan in Armageddon.

With all the righteous of creation behind Him, and the myriad blessed about Him, He will answer the damned simply:

[My name is] *'Legion, for we are many.'*

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*Preached by Pastor
Fields*

*Sermon texts: Isaiah
65:1-9; Galatians 3:23—4:7, Luke 8:26-39*