

# Speaking to the soul



## Rejecting Jesus

The herdsmen fled to the nearby town, telling everyone what happened to the demon-possessed men. Then the entire town came out to meet Jesus, but they begged him to go away and leave them alone. Matthew 8:33-34

Jesus' healing ministry triggered a complete range of reactions. Many people understandably responded with joy and relief, but in the town in our reading it was completely different. Jesus had just healed two demon-possessed men. So far so good. But the demons had entered a herd of pigs nearby who had then hurtled down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned. This was not good news as far as the herdsmen were concerned. In an instant they had lost their livelihood, so they and the townspeople begged Jesus to leave them alone.

Jesus always brings change; something that is welcomed by many but never by all. The apostle Paul said that "anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" (2 Corinthians 5:17). When Jesus becomes the Lord of our lives, priorities, relationships, plans and attitudes all change, which is bound to stir up many issues and questions. Jesus' desire is only ever to bring life and fruitfulness to us, but the adjustment can be tough.

Sad as it is, we should never be surprised when people reject Jesus. Everyone has their own personal choice to make. Towards the end of Moses' ministry, he posed a challenge to the people of Israel. He said: "Today I have given you the choice between life and death...Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!" (Deuteronomy 30:19). The choice was theirs and the Old Testament reveals that some chose life and others chose death. It's just the same today. The choice is yours. Jesus offers you and me his life, but he will never impose it on us.

## **QUESTION**

How do you respond when people reject Jesus?

## **PRAYER**

Lord Jesus Christ, thank you that you offer me the gift of life.  
Help me to receive it with joy and conviction. Amen