

Mark 5:1-20
Healing the Demoniac

From the storm at Sea, Jesus encounters a storm inside a demon possessed man.

1 They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes. 2 When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him, 3 and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; 4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. 5 Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones.

6 Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; 7 and shouting with a loud voice, he *said, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!" 8 For He had been saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" 9 And He was asking him, "What is your name?" And he *said to Him, "My name is Legion; for we are many." 10 And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

11 Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain. 12 The demons implored Him, saying, "Send us into the swine so that we may enter them." 13 Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea.

14 Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and in the country. And the people came to see what it was that had happened. 15 They *came to Jesus and *observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the "legion"; and they became frightened. 16 Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and all about the swine. 17 And they began to implore Him to leave their region. 18 As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him. 19 And He did not let him, but He *said to him, "Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you." 20 And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him;

Is anyone surprised yet at the number of references in Mark to Satan, the devil, or demons?

1:13 – Jesus led to be tempted by Satan

1:23 – man with unclean spirit in synagogue

1:32 demon-possessed were brought to Jesus, casting out demons and forbidding them to speak

3:11 those with unclean spirits would fall down before him, "You are the Son of God."

3:15 The twelve given authority to cast out demons

3:22ff – Jesus accused of being a demon

4:15 – Satan comes to snatch the seed from the first soil – on the path

5:1-20 Demoniac

In this narrative we'll see four key ideas: Separation, Reclamation, Rejection, and Proclamation

v. 1-5 The tragic condition of this man. This is a personal tragedy for this man. SEPARATION

He is described as a man with an 'unclean' spirit. So, Get the picture...

Jesus is now in a very 'Gentile' area, and as a group they were considered unclean.

To a Jewish audience the category of 'unclean' is well known and it is a serious evaluation. The OT laws were given to show what was unclean and how to get clean again. The OT had a 7 day purification process for those who touched a dead body. The Rabbis had expanded that to include anything death adjacent such as tombs or graveyards. Let's not forget that he is also living in the mountains where there was a herd of pigs. –UNCLEAN

He could not be subdued and was cutting himself with stones. This is as bad as it gets except, he didn't have leprosy. This man is the obvious definition of an alienated victim of a broken world under the sway of Satan.

As it turns out, the man didn't just have one unclean spirit, but a multitude of them.

*How would we respond if we saw this guy in the Walmart parking lot?? That's probably how the disciples felt.

**I wonder what the disciples were thinking when they saw this man approach Jesus and them.

Scripture doesn't tell us about how the people are taken over by demons, but it clearly affirms the reality of it.

*We read this account and find it bizarre and perhaps unbelievable. It sounds like something out of a Hollywood horror movie.

A man with superhuman strength is running around the tombs and mountains screaming and cutting himself with stones.

Obviously, people want to stay away and hide the women and children.

This man is separated from God and others. He is running wild among the tombs. He is the extreme case, of alienation, and yet Jesus comes to Him.

In terms of spiritual reality, his case is NO MORE extreme than ours even though we don't have all the same boxes marked. Before coming to faith in Christ scripture says that we were separated from God by our sin. We too were strangers to the promises of God and were by nature children of wrath.

**If you don't know Christ as your savior today, you are still in that state of being separated from God even though you are sitting here in this lovely sanctuary. You are as alienated as that demoniac as was I or any believer you know. The difference between the demoniac and a non-believer today is one of degree and not kind. The bottom line for both is sin that separates us from God.

An unclean Gentile demoniac who lived among the tombs and the herd of pigs comes up to Jesus. What could go wrong?? A better question is WHAT COULD GO RIGHT for him and for anyone held captive today?

NOW HERE'S THE GOOD NEWS

v. 6-10 Jesus encounters the man and his 'Legion' Jesus is on a mission of RECLAMATION

This demoniac was not an atheist; he is pleading "by God" to be left alone.

-A legion could be 4-6k soldiers i.e. a large number of demons had invaded this man's life.

6 Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; 7 and shouting with a loud voice, he *said, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!"

For some reason the man seems to have recognized Jesus. A question is called for here. Who is speaking, the man or the demon? The text is not clear, but Matthew 8 gives the phrase, "You come to torment us BEFORE THE TIME."

That would indicate that a demonic presence is speaking. They knew there was a divine timeline for God's final judgement, and they were looking for a reprieve. Jesus also knew it was not yet THE TIME, so he let them go into the pigs. That was the demons' idea.

v. 10 the demons implore Jesus...

the man or the demons implored Jesus not to send them out of the country.

The demons implored Jesus to send them into the swine. They are trying to negotiate with Jesus, and they get His permission to enter the herd of swine.

NOTE how they refer to Jesus – “the Son of the Most High God.” That is pretty theological language, because the demons recognized Jesus before the people did.

Those who have studied comparative religions have seen that even cultures with multiple gods have an idea of one God who transcends them all – the MOST HIGH God. The Gentile man with the legion of demons saw that Jesus was the Son of the Most High God.

The wind, the waves, and the demons obey the Son of the Most High God. Do we?

v. 12 – The demons led the pigs to their death. The unclean spirit asks to enter the unclean pigs. This brought the death of the pigs.

Jesus delivered the man; the demons did the damage..

**Questions remain: What happened to the demons??? What about the people who lost their livestock? We don't know...

The focus is on the MAN who is delivered!

The Grace of Salvation came to RECLAIM this man, and Jesus is still on a mission of reclamation today.

Do you know Him as the Son of the Most High God or do you see him as an example on par with other religious teachers?

v. 14ff The people who seemed to have a tolerance for the demoniac were very disturbed and afraid when the demoniac was healed by Jesus.

The response of these people is REJECTION

v. 16 the crowd that arrived got a report from the herdsmen

v. 17 v. 10 the demons implored Jesus as did the people v. 17

They began to implore Jesus to leave. They resented the loss of their livestock. Jesus is showing that the life of one man created in the image of God is worth more than 2000 pigs, even if it hurts the local economy.

They were cool with the demoniac sharing the mountain where the pigs were feeding, but Jesus was too much to handle.

These people had seen a remarkable supernatural deliverance of the demoniac, but they responded by imploring Jesus to leave.

One might say, “Well, he ruined their livelihood, so their response was normal and understandable.” On the other hand, it would have been a reasonable response to say, “This man is remarkable and what He has is more valuable than pigs. We ought to listen to Him.” They experienced the presence of The Holy and they were frightened and asked Jesus to leave.

The deliverance of the demoniac is a far greater good than the bad of losing the swine.

the smaller you define your world, the bigger your problems

If your world only revolves around your own economic benefit, then any setback becomes a big problem. But if your world is defined by the bigger picture of what God is doing now and for eternity, then our current problems get put in perspective.

The Gentile former demoniac is sitting with Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. His definition of the world just got expanded by the Son of the Most High God and he got a new perspective. His mind and his freedom have been reclaimed and he is ready to proclaim it.

How about us? You and Me?

v. 18-20 Before leaving, Jesus sends the man home to proclaim the news of his deliverance.
PROCLAMATION

This is another clear example of how Jesus came to destroy the works of the Devil. In Mark and the other gospels, we do see a significant amount of conflict with demons.

A lot of divine power is displayed in the first 5 chapters – healing, casting out demons, and power over nature. This is a full orbed manifestation of the power of God in Jesus.

The thrust of these narratives of healing, power over nature, and deliverance from demons is to highlight the power, majesty, authority, and divinity of Jesus. The intended result is that people might believe in Him and have eternal life.

Is there a “Gerasene Demoniac” in your life? i.e. someone you think would NEVER be interested in Christ or God? Don’t rule out the gracious RECLAMATION power of Christ.

I mean, most of you are saved, right? I’m saved. We may have been someone’s Gerasene Demoniac. I probably was or would have been if I’d had any real believers in my life.

Prior to our own salvation, we too are held in bondage to the spirit of this world – Satan. It’s not as dramatic or as evident as with this man, but it is just as real.

We don’t want to think that our situation is remotely like the demoniac, but he is the paradigm of spiritual deliverance, salvation and MISSION.

Two markers of gracious Reclamation in our lives are that we are set free from worldly desires, and we want to be with Jesus.

A third marker of Reclamation is to rise above the fear of Rejection as we Proclaim the Good News of Reclamation through the Son of the Most High God. That was true for this man.

Finally, note the contrast of life trajectories between the demoniac who is delivered and Jesus.

The man held captive by demons is Reclaimed, and Jesus is on a path to Separation and being forsaken by God. Like US, the demoniac is saved and freed because Jesus took what we deserved so that we might get what He deserved.

The torment the demoniac experienced is a picture of the greater torment that Jesus would experience in his suffering.

The Reclamation the demoniac experienced is a picture of the greater Reclamation that Jesus accomplished through His resurrection and Ascension,

We, who are saved by grace through faith are looking for the Greater Reclamation as we “are looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” Titus 2:12-14

--	--