

Series: **The Jesus Journey**

I remember sitting in my high school counselor's office, again, after having gotten in trouble, again.

"Mijo, you will never amount to anything. You will always be a disappointment."

You might have a similar story. You might know someone who people think are too far gone.

All it takes is one man to see it differently: *Jesus*.

Mark recalls a story about a man that everyone regarded as beyond hope. That is, until he met Jesus.

Text: **Mark 5:1-20**

Title: **Jesus Remembers the One the World Forgot**

The *synoptic gospels* contain overlapping material.

Usually, Mark is shortest in detail. This is the exemption.

This event is riding on the heels of a question from last week that was not answered in the text.

Who remembers it? (*'Who then is this?'*)

It's not at least until chapter 8, that the disciples finally get it (the Messiah!)

But Mark makes it clear to its readers, that Jesus is the Lord (power over disease, nature, demons)

We'll read through the story, get some context, then I have five applications to glean from the text

Mark 5:1 They came to the other side of the sea, to the region of the Gerasenes.

Sea of galilee- western side predominately Jewish, eastern side predominately Gentile



Decapolis (v20) = Ten Cities (Deca=ten polis=city)

Not only was it mostly gentile, but the bulk of Roman army was stationed there

Remember from last week, it was evening when they set off from the other side of the sea of Galilee.

That means they would be arriving to this other side while it is still dark.

Mark 5:2-4 As soon as he got out of the boat, a man with an **unclean spirit** came out of the **tombs** and met him. ³He lived in the tombs, and no one was able to restrain him anymore—not even with a chain— ⁴because he often had been bound with shackles and chains, but had torn the chains apart and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him.

To a first century Jewish reader this man is 'unclean 3 X's over: Gentile, Unclean spirit, Lives in graves

'Subdue' = *'Tame'* (you tame animals, not people!) This poor man had been dehumanized – he was beastly

Mark 5:5 Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains, he was always **crying out** and **cutting himself** with stones.

The man is madly miserable; utterly unclean; negligently naked (as we'll find out); agonizingly alone; unaffectionately unloved; terribly tormented

His life had completely fallen apart

Did he have a wife and kids missing him? Parents who grieved him? Friends who talked about him?

He is a picture of what the devil has done in the lives of many in our day-

Stolen peace; Destroyed families; Distorted the image we bear of our Creator

Mark 5:6 When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and knelt down before him.

It's uncertain whether the man did this with the little willpower he had left- or the demons.

I believe it was the demons since they recognize Jesus and because of what is said next-

Mark 5:7-8 And he cried out with a loud voice, "What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you before God, don't torment me!" ⁸For he had told him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"

Don't confuse this for worship-

Tradition tells us that if you knew the name of the spirit you were dealing with, you had the upper hand.

It is important to note this is the first of two instances in this text in which Jesus is identified as being God.

Mark 5:9 "What is your name?" he asked him. "My name is Legion," he answered him, "because we are many."

Roman legion= the largest most well-trained soldiers consisting of about 6,000 soldiers

Mark 5:10-13 And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the region. ¹¹A large herd of pigs was there, feeding on the hillside. ¹²The demons begged him, "Send us to the pigs, so that we may enter them." ¹³So he gave them permission, and the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs. The herd of about two thousand rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned there.

The demons know Jesus' name and refuse to identify themselves, except collectively

Jesus without being supplied a name drives out the legion

Why did Jesus grant their request to enter the pigs? Why not banish them for good?

1. **Their ultimate end had not yet come-** One of the signs, biblically, that God's redemptive work in the world is complete is the banishment of all evil spirits to the lake of fire. We will all celebrate together that day!

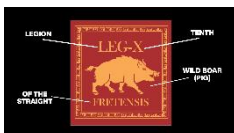
So, He allows them to continue their destructive work, but not on the man

2. **To reveal what their real purpose was-** the total ultimate destruction of their host (satan is a murderer)

Some might ask, *why did the pigs have to drown?*

Not only do demons seek to destroy all that God has made,
but they want to cause a hindrance to Jesus in the area.

2,000 pigs, that's a lot of wasted bacon= grabs the attention of the Roman legion



We know the Roman Legion stationed in the area was the
'Tenth legion of the Straight', whose seal was a wild boar.

(*Some commentators believe Jesus is making a political statement here)

Not only that, but it would also be a hit to the local economy (pig farmers/ranchers)

And that's exactly what we see happens-

Mark 5:14-17 The men who tended them ran off and reported it in the town and the countryside, and people went to see what had happened. ¹⁵ They came to Jesus and saw the man who had been demon-possessed, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind;

Problem solved right?...only problem is... they didn't like the solution

and they were afraid. ¹⁶ Those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and told about the pigs. ¹⁷ Then they began to beg him to leave their region.

They cared more about their pigs than about the poor man. They would rather have their swine than the Savior.

Mark 5:18 As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged him earnestly that he might remain with him.

He went from demon possessed to disciple

3 requests were made of Jesus- the demons, the crowd, the man

Jesus granted all but the last. And we see why-

Mark 5:19 Jesus did not let him but told him, "Go home to your own people, and report to them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you."

This is the second time the deity of Jesus bleeds through. Jesus identifies Himself as The Lord who has done this.

He sends him home, to his parents; to his wife; to his children; to his friends and neighbors.

It moves me to imagine what that must have been like!

Mark 5:20 So he went out and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and they were all amazed.

This man was transformed from madman to minister... and then transformed his community.

He didn't need to go with Jesus to follow Him. He was free to follow Jesus where he was, as who he was.

At the end of Mark 7 Jesus returns to the area, but this time they don't ask Him to leave.

Mark 7:31; 37 Again, leaving the region of Tyre, he went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the region of the Decapolis. They were extremely astonished and said, "He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

With our remaining time I'd like to highlight 5 lessons

1- Where the Holy Spirit does not abide, demons seek to reside

There's two ways this plays out:

First, for believers, the areas in which we are fighting the Holy Spirit for control over, is exactly where demons want to influence you. (relationship, vices, idols, etc)

If you don't want to give God control of a certain area of your life, you are conceding it to demons

Secondly, for those not yet Christians, listen well-

Jesus gives us some insight into how demons work- what we find is that they need 'uninhabited people'

Matthew 12:43-45 "When an unclean spirit comes out of a person, it roams through waterless places looking for rest but doesn't find any. ⁴⁴ Then it says, 'I'll go back to my house that I came from.' Returning, it finds the house vacant, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵ Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and settle down there. As a result, that person's last condition is worse than the first...

You can clean yourself up, many do! But unless you are inviting the Spirit of God in, you are who demons love to inhabit.

Satan might be more reluctant to use a legion of demons today, but he will gladly use a legion of cravings, captivations, and destructive impulses to trap souls in bondage

I want to make it clear: **Christians cannot be demonized because our house is occupied by the Spirit of God.**

1 Corinthians 6:19 Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit **who is in you...**

Romans 8:9 You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God **lives in you....**

Romans 8:11 ... the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead **lives in you...**

John 14:17 He is the Spirit of truth... he remains with you and will be **in you.**

2 Corinthians 13:5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves. Or do you yourselves not recognize that **Jesus Christ is in you?** —unless you fail the test.

It doesn't mean we can't be harassed or tormented- but it means they have no claim over us

2- If you fear the power of demons, remember, they fear the power of Jesus

In v.7 they ask God not to torment them.

Matthew 8:29 "What do you have to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time? "

They know they're ultimately done. They are terrified of Jesus.

This is a comfort for all who belong to God's family- you have no need to fear

3- Jesus has compassion for those who have been has cast aside— and is able to free them where others have failed

Luke tells us that this man had been possessed for **a long time (8:27)**

People had tried to 'help' the best they knew. But eventually, everyone gave up on this man.

Their solution was to bind the man and walk away

But Jesus draws near and sets him free

(5:1; 5:21- it appears like Jesus only came over to this side, for this one man!)

We have more in common with the man than we think;

He lived among the dead, was naked, bound, crying out night and day, hurting himself.

-We too once lived dead in our sin

-we too were in a sense naked, bearing our shame

-we too were bound by sin (addiction, habits, behaviors, mindsets)

-we have all cried out in misery, even if quietly to our pillows

-we have hurt ourselves every time we chose sin and our own way

David E Garland- *"The power of the gospel is also for us. We are just as battered, though we may do a better job of hiding it behind our coherent words, our well-kept homes and our smart attire. But deliverance can also come to us when Jesus lands on the shores of their lives."*

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

4- Jesus does not stay where He is not wanted

In the beginning of this narrative the man is the crazy one. By the end, he's the only sane one out of all of them
They came to the conclusion that they would be better off without Jesus than with Him

Wade Johnston- *"These who had previously bound the insane now became insane themselves and chose to remain bound, sending freedom away."*

People will tolerate Jesus as long as He does not intrude in what they value

We don't want a Jesus who asks us to give of our time, treasure or talents

We don't want a Jesus who disagrees with our political views

We don't want a Jesus who shows kindness to those we feel should be shown harshness

We don't want a Jesus who doesn't align with what we want

And so, we fashion our own Jesus

William Barclay- *"The Pharisees banished the disturbing Christ- and still men seek to do the same"*

5- Your witness is a weapon against satan's slander

The mission Jesus had for this man wasn't to go to a foreign country, or to do some extravagant deed;
it was to go be a missionary to his family and his people. To be a witness and share his testimony.

That's challenging for many of us- but that is where we are called

Revelation 12:11 They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony...

Your Jesus story is your sermon; Your testimony is a trophy of grace.

Call to Action-

Live sent where you are

You are not stuck, you're planted, with a purpose

Christ must always begin with someone.

One person in a family. One person at the workplace. One person in a neighborhood.

Why shouldn't it be you? Why shouldn't it be us?

Receive the Restoration Jesus offers

Jesus has a better story for you. Perhaps others have written you off, maybe you wrote yourself off-

Jesus isn't done writing your story

Moreover, Jesus has infused Himself into your story

Jesus would take on our shame, our nakedness, our torment, our graves, our chains-as His own

Wade Johnston- *"He was bound to the cross to break all that binds you and to give the world back to you again, a free gift, a place to live in Him and under His mercy. Even more, He gives you new clothes to go with your new life—His righteousness, an imputed gift, from Him to you, so that now you live, not to find love, but as one loved, not to be free, but as one perfectly free in Him."*

BULPEN-

Decision- ask for hand raise to

Salvation, rededication, membership, etc

Then, ask them to fill out form

Ask to give to an elder or drop in offering box

God reveals Himself even to those who do not seek Him

Isaiah 65:1-5 "I was sought by those who did not ask; I was found by those who did not seek me.

I said, 'Here I am, here I am,' to a nation that did not call on my name.

²I spread out my hands all day long to a rebellious people

who walk in the path that is not good, following their own thoughts.

³These people continually anger me to my face, sacrificing in gardens, burning incense on bricks,

⁴sitting among the graves, spending nights in secret places,

eating the meat of pigs, and putting polluted broth in their bowls.

⁵They say, 'Keep to yourself, don't come near me, for I am too holy for you!'

These practices are smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all day long.

Anyone else would have run away from this man, but Jesus stands His ground

There's a lesson for us to have no fear of demons because Jesus has power and authority over them

The disciples were afraid, but they stayed with Jesus; the crowd was afraid, and they shooed Jesus away

Jesus does not stay where He is not wanted.

Yet He would not leave them without a witness

The people value the pigs more; Jesus values the man's soul

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Ephesians 2:1-2 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins ²in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient

Demons hate God- every human is made in His image; therefore they seek to dehumanize those made in the image of God- hate, racism, abortion, genocides, addiction, and even indwelling (possession)

Regarding this narrative being a political commentary about the Roman Empire:

To the Jews pigs were symbolic of paganism and specifically of Rome

The emblem of the Roman legion stationed in Palestine was a wild boar.

The problem wasn't the man, but the power behind him; the problem wasn't Rome, but the power behind them

It wasn't just individual or even political, it was spiritual.

The issue is when we take up fights against individuals, or politics and miss the spiritual.

Jesus fought the spirits, but helped the man.

Chad Bird- *“Many 1st century Jews awaited a messiah who would flex his celestial biceps, body slam Rome, and beat his chest to the applause of the liberated masses. Just as David iced Goliath and sliced off his head, so the New David would be an *butt-kicking, pagan-thrashing, political powerhouse who would make Israel great again by decapitating their Roman overlords.”*

But then Jesus comes and rather than overthrow Rome, he is crucified by them.

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens.

Richard Hays- *“When Jesus then powerfully dispatches the demons into a herd of unclean pigs who plunge to their death in the sea, Mark hardly needs to explain the joke. It is a kind of political cartoon, in which the Roman army is driven out by Israel’s true king, sent back into the sea from which their invading ships had come”*

Psalm 146:3-10 (NIV) Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save.

⁴When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing.

⁵Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God.

⁶He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them— he remains faithful forever.

⁷He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free,

⁸ the Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous.

⁹The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

¹⁰The Lord reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord.