

The Gospel of Mark

Walking with the Servant Saviour

Lesson 7 Mark 5:1-20

Day One: One Man's Encounter with Jesus

The trip from Capernaum across the Sea of Galilee was a harrowing one, but it allowed the disciples greater insight into the one they now called Master. The unexpected storm and the surprising calm had tested their faith and prompted a revelation. Landing on shore in the region of the Gerasenes, they were immediately brought back to reality when confronted by evil.

Read Mark 5:1-20, along with Matthew 8:28-34, and Luke 8:26-39.

The *country of the Gadarenes*—or Gerasenes—was located on the eastern shore of the lake and several miles from where the Jordan River emptied into the Sea of Galilee. It was situated in close proximity to where the steep hills meet the water's edge. It was mainly Gentile territory with a minority population of Jews living there.

1. Once the boat landed on shore, who did Jesus immediately encounter? v. 2

2. Recall Mark's description of this individual in the following verses:
 - ❖ v. 3:

 - ❖ v. 4:

 - ❖ v. 5:

3. What differences or similarities did you notice between Mark's account and that of Matthew's and Luke's?

Mark describes this man as having an unclean spirit, pointing to the severity of the man's condition. Unable to be a normal part of society, he overpowered any attempt to restrain him. As a result, this hopeless individual sought shelter among the tombs of the dead.

4. Recall what you learned about demons (unclean spirits) from Lesson 2, Mark 1:21-28.
5. When this demon possessed man saw Jesus, what did he do? v. 6

According to Jewish laws he was ceremoniously unclean in several ways: *he was a Gentile, he was demon possessed, and he lived in tombs*. Any civilized person was justified in turning his back on such an individual, but not Jesus. He saw the man as a unique creation of God, needing a healing touch.

It's hard for us to imagine the living conditions of this poor man and the chord of fear he struck in those who encountered him. With his body covered in self-inflicted wounds, wearing nothing or mere rags, unwashed and with a long beard, he went about inflicting harm on anyone he met. He is the perfect visual example of what evil accomplishes.

Looking closer . . .

The Bible teaches that Satan is a thief and a liar and, as such, he targeted this unnamed man for destruction. Jesus on the other hand, thought the man was worth saving!

- ❖ Using your own words, contrast the difference between good and evil as stated by Jesus in John 10:10.
- ❖ According to the above verse, what is Satan's intended end for each person?

Heartbeat . . . “*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they might have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*”
John 10:10

Day Two: Merciful Deliverance

What to look for . . .

It’s hard to comprehend that human beings can be so spiritually blind, but that evil spirits can have a clear understanding of the truth and who Jesus is! Recognizing His authority, the demons in Mark 5 actually went so far as to beg for His mercy!

Read Mark 5:1-13.

If the possessed man in our story were insane, he would not have recognized Jesus; but when he saw Him, he ran and fell to the ground to worship Him. His humble position demonstrated his desperate circumstances. His next outcry proved the fact that evil spirits had overtaken him.

1. How did the demon confess Christ? With what words it confront Jesus? v. 7

2. What did Jesus command the demon to do? v. 8
 - ❖ When that one demon did not immediately obey Jesus, He asked for its name. What did the demon’s answer reveal? v. 9

The demon invoked Jesus’ divine name in an effort to control Him, but it failed. Jesus mastered control over the group of them by discovering their name, and forcing them to submit. (Note: A *legion* was the largest unit of a Roman army, consisting of between 3,000 and 6,000 men. This gives us a good indication of how powerful this force of evil became inside this man. He was not possessed by merely one, but many demons intent on his destruction.)

3. What did the demon beg Jesus to do? v. 10

4. In order to remain in that location, there was a second plea. Who made it and what was it? vv. 11-12

5. Twice the demons pleaded for mercy, and the second time Jesus granted permission. What was the result? v. 13

The demons' action proves their determination to destroy! If they could not destroy a human being, they would destroy the pigs. Jesus' action proved His intent to set free those whom Satan has marked for destruction. It is worth noting that Jesus did not order the demons to destroy the swine, He merely gave permission for them to enter the pigs. He was no more responsible for the loss of such a large herd than His is for the existing evil in the world today.

Selah...

It took the power of almighty God to overrule a legion of evil forces and free a man from Satan's grasp. It takes the power of God working in *you* to expose and push against the evil of this world to triumph over it! Every time you testify about Christ, use your spiritual gift, or reach out to help someone, you force evil to retreat. What will you do this week to make a difference?

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Three: Awestruck or Fear Struck?

What to look for...

The news spread quickly that day when the hired hands that cared for the pigs ran off to tell the townspeople about the strange things that had transpired. That brought out the curiosity-seekers who wanted to see for themselves. The amazing transformation of the wild man produced different public responses than we might expect!

Read Mark 5:14-17.

1. From your reading of the story, what responses would you expect from the following individuals?

❖ *The herdsmen?*

❖ *The townspeople?*

❖ *The owner of the pigs?*

The herdsmen who reported the story no doubt evoked strong feelings in the people. Running out to the hillside to see what happened, the people witnessed for themselves the man sitting, clothed, and in his right mind, and the swine floating dead in the water.

2. If you could sum up the people's response in one word, what would it be?

3. Based upon their response, what would you say they were most concerned with?

4. **Personal:** Look around at your life for a moment. Are you more *awestruck* by the presence of Jesus and what He has done in your life; or are you *fear struck* by the disruption to your "normal" life pattern and what His presence will cost you personally? Please explain.

These townspeople actually begged Jesus to depart from their region! Have you ever turned away from Him or uttered these words: "*Please go away?*" Unfortunately for them, Jesus listened and did as they asked. They were more willing to give up Jesus than face the reality of change.

3. Can you speculate as to why Jesus asked this man to be a missionary in his own hometown?

The Lord had done great things for this man and he would be able to tell his story in a way that no one else could! His was asked to “live Christ” among his own people. Has God done great things for you? The difference Jesus makes in our lives should motivate us to speak out on His behalf. No one else can tell our story the way we can.

4. **Personal:** Where is it that God has asked you to “live Christ?”

Selah . . .

Compose a paragraph summary of what Christ has done in your life. Think about who you were before and who you are now in Him. What difference is there?

Review this week’s memory verse.

Day Five: Praying God’s Purpose

It’s time to do some *prayer walking*—not in the literal, but the *spiritual* sense. The Holy Spirit will lead you today as you consider three points from your lesson, write them in the form of a prayer, and lift them to the Lord. If practicing the presence of God is new to you—be patient—it will come, and you will be blessed!

“ . . . We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”

Romans 8:26-27 NLT

A prayer of acknowledgement . . .

Jesus Christ thought you were worth saving! If you had been the only living being on planet earth, He would still have died for you. How has your personal encounter with Christ affected your perspective?

A prayer of commitment . . .

The heart attitude is what motivates you to serve God. Put yours into words and pray it back to Him.

A prayer of enabling . . .

God has placed you in a “mission field” where He wants you to testify about His Son, and you need His help to do it! Let your gratitude dictate your prayer to Him today.

Write out this week’s verse from memory:

Notes