

The Story of the Gerasene Demoniac

Mark 5:1-20

June 23, 2024 Pastor Jeremy Cagle

Well, if you would take your copy of the word of God, and please open to the Gospel of Mark. That's the book we're in today, as you've already heard this morning, we are in the Gospel of Mark, continuing our studies there. And as we turn there, I want to ask you a question to get you started, as I like to do oftentimes, and that is this. How many of you have heard of the name John Bunyan before? Yeah, most of us, just about every hand in the room. How many of you have also read his book Pilgrims Progress? With pictures? Yeah, that's a great one, great book. If you haven't read that, I would encourage you to do that. What you may not know about John Bunyan, though, is that the book really never should have been written because by his own account, John Bunyan was a terrible person before he became a Christian. He drank a lot, gambled a lot, and he was so prolific at swearing that one lost lady said he made her tremble even more than the people at the bars, which convicted him believe it or not. That lady's words made him feel so guilty that he turned to Christ for forgiveness, and he was saved. At which point one biographer said this about John Bunyan, they said he became the most unlikely convert imaginable.

I tell you that story, because that's what our passage is about today, as we've already read. In Mark 5, Mark is going to continue his account of the life of Christ by telling us about a man named Legion, who would become one of the most unlikely converts imaginable, because the chapter tells us he was inhabited by what? Demons, plural. Not one demon, many demons, according to verse nine. To the point that they took over his life, and they made him break the chains that bound him, caused him to yell and scream and holler, and cut himself with stones, talk about a nut, right? Until Christ came along, and He stopped it. Jesus showed up and what did He do? He drove the demons away, in order to demonstrate that no matter how deep your sin problem goes, His grace is deeper still.

If you think about it, Jesus helped a lot of people in the Gospel of Mark. This guy was not the only one, but the truth is, he was one of the worst. You couldn't get much more evil than him. But it teaches us a lesson and that is that you can never stoop so low that Christ can't reach you. His hand can touch you anywhere, no matter where it is. It's important to remember because we all have a tendency to look at some people and think that they have stooped too low for Jesus Christ. If you would have seen this man, that's what you would have said. We believe Jesus can't reach them; they're too far gone. Look at them. They have tattoos and earrings and now piercings, they cuss and drink and curse like a sailor like John Bunyan did. But let me ask you, are they worse than this guy? Probably not. Are they inhabited by a team of demons? It's not likely. So why can't Christ reach them? He can. We need to see that.

That's what this text is about this morning. In this passage, Jesus is going to deal with what's been referred to as the Gerasene Demoniac in order to fulfill another passage of Scripture that says, "The Son of Man has come to seek and save the lost." In other words Jesus did not come to save good people, did you know that? He came to save those who are bad, and aren't you grateful? Any good people in this

room? Want to raise your hand? That's encouraging to me. I know I'm bad. No one has to tell me that. I don't need a case study about that. I wake up in the morning and I sin, go to bed at night I do the same. But the truth is, that's the kind of person Christ has come to rescue if you trust in Him. If any story in the Bible tells us that it's this one; this guy had nothing but Jesus Christ. Good words, he didn't have any. Religion, he didn't have any. Righteousness, he had none. Pride in his personal holiness. No, he was demon possessed. His life was a train wreck. But it didn't matter. Christ was enough for him like He is for you and me.

And that's what we're going to talk about this morning by looking at several characters in the story of the Gerasene Demoniac. I asked you last week if the story of Jesus calming the storm was one of your favorite stories in the Bible? What about this one? Amazing story too. And we're gonna look at several characters in it.

The first one is this, the character of the man himself before he was healed. So if you're taking notes, the first character in the story of the Gerasene demoniac that we'll look at, is the character of the man himself before he's healed. Which means the story begins by telling you about the man's life before Christ stepped into it. And let me just warn you, it's not very pretty. We are talking about demon possession this morning. Anytime you do that, it's ugly. It's always rough.

But having said that, let me set the stage for us. If you look in Mark 5:1 that gives you the setting for the story when it says that they or Jesus and the disciples came to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. And to be honest, if you're reading your Bibles here, the phrase Sea of Galilee is not mentioned in here. But anytime the word sea is left open ended in Mark's gospel, that's usually what it's referring to. This is a body of water we've talked about so much in this series, I don't need to say any more about it here. So much happens around the Sea of Galilee in the Gospel of Mark. Every time you turn the page, you're bumping into it again. But let me just point out here, that when it says they came to the other side, that means they came to the eastern side. If you were looking at a map, and you want to actually want to write this verse down, Luke 8:26, says they were in the province of Galilee, when they set out on the journey, which is on the western side of the lake. If you're looking at a map, now they're heading in the easterly direction into the country. It says here of the Gerasenes, which was Gentile territory, predominantly. They're leaving the area of the Jews going toward the Gentiles.

Now why the Lord wanted to go there, Mark didn't say, but he does tell us what happened as soon as they get there. He writes in verse 2 that when Jesus got out of the boat, a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him immediately.

And as I say that, let me pause for a moment and try to paint a picture of what Mark is communicating here because a lot has happened before to really magnify the gravity of this situation. In the previous passage that we talked about a couple of weeks ago, it says Jesus and the disciples had just sailed across the Sea of Galilee, in the midst of a storm. Remember that? It was so bad that the waves were breaking

over them, the boat was filling up with water until Jesus stopped it. He said to the wind and the waves, “Hush, and be still,” which terrified the disciples. It didn't encourage them as much as it freaked them out to see a man display that kind of power. And now it says here that the terror continues because they land in Gentile territory which is unclean in the mind of a Jew. And they see a man from the tombs, which is unclean. It says here, he has an unclean spirit. Now, if you were in the disciples' shoes? What would be going through your mind right now? “No, thanks,” right? What would you say? “Let's go home, get back in the boat. I don't want any part of this. Don't need it. Don't want it, don't care.” If you notice, Christ doesn't respond that way. He sticks around to learn more about the guy.

And as He does, He finds out, if you're following along in your Bibles, the man had his dwelling among the tombs. In other words, not only is he coming from the tombs, he lived there in the subterranean caves that were carved out of rock and used to bury the dead. Isn't that strange? And it tells us no one was able to bind him anymore even with a chain because apparently, he's so out of control that people had to restrain him. And it didn't work. He tore the shackles apart supernaturally. Verse five says constantly, day and night, he was screaming among the tombs, and in the mountains, gashing himself with stones because he was into self-harm and lacerating himself. And the word “scream” here, it's probably not a strong enough term because the Greek word refers to a blood curdling yell, as if the man's soul is an agony and it's in prison and he's trying to get out. I've talked to a few pastors who counseled someone they thought was demon possessed, and they said, that's what it sounded like. It's unnatural. And that's not all, because the Gospel of Luke tells us he was naked as well. He wasn't wearing clothes. The Gospel of Matthew tells us there were two of them, not just one, which means the horrors would have been magnified. There would have been twice the screaming, twice the cutting, twice the chaos and confusion and madness.

Just as a side note, the Jewish Talmud actually laid out four tests for madness. The first one was to walk around at nighttime and the guy did that. The second one was to spend the night among the tombs and the guy did that. The third one was to tear your clothes for no reason; he did that. The fourth one was just to be destructive in general; he did that because he passed the test in flying colors. This guy was a train wreck.

Now going back to the disciples for a moment. Now, what do you think they would have been thinking about? “This guy's bananas.” What do you think they would have been saying to themselves? “We can't help this guy, Jesus, no one can. Look at him. He's just a lost cause.” This guy was a lost cause. “Leave him alone.”

As you're going to see is in the next couple of verses here, Christ doesn't do that either. He won't leave him alone. He goes on to help and to show you that you are never, and I mean, never, I mean, never too far gone for the Lord Jesus Christ, amen. Even if you're nuts, even if you're a lost cause, even if you scream and holler and cut yourself, we know people who cut themselves today, don't we? I don't think you can find a more powerful example of this in all the Word of God than this. This man truly was a

mess. He did whatever the demons told him to. They said, “Jump.” He said, “How high?” They said, “Harm yourself.” He followed. He was a captive to their will. And yet Christ delivered him anyway, just like He did with you and me.

What were you like when Jesus saved you? You are a mess, too. You were a captive to Satan's will. Now, to be clear, you may not have been possessed by a demon, but it doesn't matter really; you were still under their sway, which is why it's easy to relate to this guy. I think so many times we get this backwards because we hear a story like this, and we think we can't relate to this. Which is why we have a tendency to look at certain people and say, “Jesus can't save them. They have tattoos, Jesus can't save them. They have earrings, Jesus can't save them. They cuss and drink and curse like a sailor, Jesus can't save them.” That's a wrong way to look at this because that's not the way God treated you and you were in that place. He showed you grace so you should do the same thing for others.

The reason I'm making a big deal of this point is because you do need to remember that Christ is doing this in front of these 12 apostles. And as such, they would have hardly ever wanted to show grace to someone like this. It's not on their radar. If you would ask a Jew at this time, “Why are you saved?” He would say, “Because I avoid people like this.” And if you were to go to him and say, “Why are you going to heaven?” They would tell you, “Because I stay away from people who are demon possessed. My parents stayed away from them, my grandparents stayed away from them, we are a demon free family, thank you very much.” But here the Lord turns that on its here and He demonstrates it takes more than that to be pleasing to God. You have to show kindness toward folks like this.

Hosea 6, writing to the Jews, says, “God desires mercy, and not just sacrifice.” And what that means is that God doesn't care about all the rules you keep on the outside, if your heart is cold toward your fellow man on the inside. That's what has to change first. If you're wondering what that looks like, practically, it means if you see a man that acts like this, show mercy to him. If you find a woman who cuts herself, and shouts all the time, give her grace.

That brings us to another character in the story and that's the character of Christ. So first, we looked at the character of the man himself before he was healed. But secondly, in the story of the Gerasene, demoniac, we're going to look at the character of Christ. He's the one who changes everything here. So far, the story has been nothing but dark. This is when it turns around.

If you look in verse six, it says, “Seeing Jesus from a distance, the man ran up and bowed down before Him.” And that doesn't mean that the man ran up to Jesus and really bowed down on one knee. There's more to it than that. It means he ran up to Him and bowed down by falling flat on the ground with his face to the floor and his body lying prostrate as a sign of submission. Remember, he's full of demons. That's what they're doing. And as such, verse seven says,

And shouting with a loud voice, he *said, “What business do You have with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!” For He had *already* been saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!” And He was asking him, “What is your name?” And he said to Him, “My name is Legion, for we are many.”

That might be the most frightening part of this passage when he gives his name. Some scholars have pointed out that was really unusual thing to say because the word Legion is actually a military term that refers to a unit in the Roman army that had a lot of soldiers in it, just like the guy did. That's why the demons used it in reference to him because we don't know how many demons there were in the poor fellow. But there's lots. So they call themselves *legiōn* in Greek, to express that. Which really makes the passage confusing because if you've read through this before, you know at times, it seems like the man is talking and other times it seems like the demons are talking, with a mixture of I's and we's thrown in together with no really clear distinction, because that's what possession is like. The evil creatures speak through the mouthpiece of the human.

But nevertheless, verse 10, says they implored Jesus not to send them out of the country. And this is where a parallel passage might help you. Because Luke 8:31, says the demons implored Him, not to send them into the abyss. They're not begging Christ, to allow them to stay in the land of the Gerasenes per se; they just don't want to go into the place of spiritual torment. Instead, they asked Him to send them into a herd of pigs that are feeding nearby, which Jesus does in the following verses. And then this doesn't come across well in English, but this part of the passage is very graphic in Greek. It reads like several snapshots in a movie. Because Mark says at this point, the demons come out of him, enter the pigs, they rush down a steep bank, and they're drowned. Boom, boom, boom, boom, snap, snap, snap, just like that. It's like one thing just snowballed into the other, causing them to commit suey-cide. Suey-cide, get it? If you didn't get that joke, I didn't get it either when I first heard it in seminary. They do a swine dive and drown their bacon in the water. Okay, I'll stop. There's many of these.

With all seriousness, I mean, some people have wondered, well, how could Jesus be so cruel to the animals and let them suffer like this and I have to admit, the passage doesn't really get into that. But what we do know is that Jesus was not the one to kill the pigs; it was the demons who did that. They're very destructive creatures. They go into the man and start to destroy his body; they go into the pigs and do the same. By the way, you do wonder how many demons were in the man if they just killed 2,000 Pigs like that.

And furthermore, we also know this one act would have been used as a way to help the guy because it would have provided proof to anyone watching that the demons had left him and gone into something else. The point of the passage really is that Jesus rescued him. You see that, even though the verses are kind of obscure at times, and we can't explain everything in here, it goes back to one thing, and that is that the Lord delivered him from the hand of the evil one. Whereas the man couldn't do it. Christ did. He stopped his suffering in an instant.

I mean, again, if you go back over this, look at how the demons respond to Jesus. Verse six says they bow in His presence. In fact, it says they run up to Him and bow. They don't wait. They don't hesitate. They race in His direction and fall over in a sign of humility because they're in the presence of a higher power. And it says they called Him "Son of the Most High God" because they know who they're dealing with. Jesus is no normal man. He's the Great and Holy One, so they talk to Him with the utmost respect. Demons do not curse Christ here. And as it happens, they implore Him, that's the posture. They're not commanding; they're begging. They're not making demands; they're pleading with Him. In order to demonstrate Jesus was higher and they knew it. That's why He delivered him.

Listen, let me point out to you, as you come to the end of these verses, this man was not saved by therapy. And he was not rescued from the grip of the demons after being institutionalized and put on meds for several years, the way certain some people would do today. The victory came from one thing and one thing only, and that was Christ alone. It all goes back to Him. I don't know about you, but when I was studying this passage this week, it really made me think about Chilliwack because things are getting pretty dark and demonic around here. Does anybody drive around with your eyes open? When you go to Walmart, what do you see? You see rainbow crosswalks, at Walmart. You go downtown, what do you run into? You run into people passed out on drugs and alcohol in broad daylight. Who's responsible for that? The demons. It's not God's work. It's their work. What's the solution for that? Well, it's not therapy. It's not meds. It's not enough. It's a spiritual battle, and you need spiritual resources to deal with it. And that's why they need to hear about the Lord Jesus Christ. If you want to know how to defeat the darkness in Chilliwack, the answer is simple. Put Jesus in there, and He'll do it. Amen. Tell them about the Saviour.

And that brings us to another character in this story and that's the character of the people who live nearby. A third character in the story of the Gerasene demoniac is the character of the people who live nearby. As Mark's writing this, he's looking at it from the perspective of all these different individuals. And now he's reminding you that this didn't happen in private. It took place in the country of the Gerasenes. So the question is what did they do when they first found out about it, were they excited? Not exactly. Verse 14 says the herdsman ran away. Not encouraging, is it? That's the men who were attending the pigs, must have missed a few men, by the way, if there's 2,000 pigs, that's a lot of herdsman. But when they saw it, they respond the only way they know how, and that is to get out of there as quickly as possible. So they could go and report it, it says in the city and the country. Matthew 8:33, says they reported everything, which means not only do they report the death of the pigs, they report the death of the pigs, the man's conversations with Jesus, and how the Lord sent the demons away, because it was their herd. They had to give some kind of account for it.

And as they do that, verse 15 says the people come to Jesus. They want to see it for themselves. And they observe the man who had been demon possessed. And let me skip a little ahead here, a little further down, it says, "they became frightened." That's the same word that described the disciple's reaction to

Jesus calming the storm. Jesus is scaring everybody here. They acted the same way the herdsmen did because not only does Jesus heal the man, but He heals him so perfectly, that three things happen in this text. If you look back at the part that I skipped over, it says that the man was sitting down instead of running in and out of the tombs. They hadn't seen him do that in a long time. And it says he was clothed instead of naked. Some commentators pointed out that maybe one of the disciples gave him a robe, we don't really know. Someone did. That robe, by the way, would have covered up his cuts and lacerations. It would have made him look like a human again. And he was in his right mind instead of being nuts, indicating that there was a total change in him. You could go to this guy and have a conversation. His life did a 180 right before their eyes. And these people from the surrounding regions. They didn't know what to do with that. It's just too much.

So verse 17 says they began to implore Jesus to leave. That's in a continuous tense. That means they implored Him over and over and over again to leave. They just asked Him repeatedly to go away. It's fascinating. Wouldn't you think they were asking Him to stay? You think this was the only demon possessed person they knew? Probably not. So after Jesus healed him, you would expect it to say they begged Him to remain with them so He can help. All they want to do is get rid of Him.

If you think about it, this really shows you how powerful the miracle was. Because the history books tell us that the country of the Gerasenes was a pretty wicked place and there's evidence in archaeology of people worshipping demons. So the sight of a man cutting himself and yelling and screaming was not all that unusual. That's how they worshipped demons back then. They would have seen that before, but what freaked them out is that Jesus stopped it just like that. That's what terrified them. They couldn't believe He could do that, so they had to reject Him because He made them nervous.

Before we're too hard on them, let me just say they're not alone in this because how many of you know someone who has rejected the name of Christ because Jesus made them nervous. You ever met somebody who turned their back on Him because He startled them. We've all done that. We've had people tell us in church that when they got saved, the change in them was so drastic, it terrified their spouse. They didn't want to have anything to do with it. They started reading their Bible out loud and when the spouse, the wife or husband said, "Stop, I don't want to hear that." That's what these people are dealing with here.

I might add, it's not the only time it happened in the Bible. A lot of people responded like that to Christ. What did the scribes do when they see Jesus healing people back in Mark 3? They're startled. They say that He is possessed by Beelzebub and casts out demons by the ruler of demons, because they didn't want to have anything to do with that, either. But what about the Pharisees when they see Jesus saving Matthew, the tax collector? They say, "Why does that man eat with sinners," and they kind of mock it. Which was really a way of just pushing it aside because He was changing lives, and they didn't want to have anything to do with that, either. What about the Sadducees, or the chief priests, or Herodians, or the lawyers or rabbis? They all witnessed Jesus' power; it shook all of them to the core. What makes this

story so unusual, though, is the fact that listen to this, it's not the demon possessed man who asked Jesus to go away. It's the normal folks. Can you believe that? It's not the crazy guy who rejects Him. It's everybody else. They thought they didn't need Him. They're fine. I'm good. That's what made all these other people turn their back on Christ in the Bible. The Scribes thought they were good. The Pharisees thought they were good, Sadducees, chief priests, Herodians. They all have the same problem. That was pride, which is why they did not end up on good terms with the Lord.

When you come to the end of the story. This guy is the only one on good terms with Jesus, which has a tremendous plot twist isn't it? How ironic. He starts off with the demons, he ends up wanting to be with Christ. He begins close to the devil; he's going to finish closer to the Son of God because he was humble. Are you humble? Do you know you need the Lord Jesus Christ? If you do, He'll save you. If you don't, He won't.

He brings you to this final character in the story, and that is the character of the man after he was healed. We've looked at the character of the man before he was healed. We've looked at the character of Christ. We've looked at the people nearby, but let's look at the character of the man after the healing.

It's a good way to wrap this up because he really did change because Mark goes on to tell us in verse 18 that as Jesus was getting into the boat, in order to leave like the people asked Him to. By the way, this shows you the grace of Christ, He didn't have to leave. Who's gonna make Jesus leave? You? Them? It was His kindness to leave. And it says the man who had been demon possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him. Now that is in the continuous tense, just like you see in verse 17. In other words, while the townspeople are imploring Jesus over and over again to leave, the man is imploring him over and over again to go with Him. He could not have been any more in stark contrast to these people because he knew that he needed Him. After all Christ had done for him, the guy felt like he couldn't face another day without being by His side. And this is one of the scenes that really touches your heart in the passage because the way it's written makes it almost sound pathetic, like the guy is pleading, appealing, begging to Christ. "Let me sail with You. I don't know where You're going. I just want to go with you. I have no idea where your boat's gonna end up. Just put me in."

Verse 19 says the Lord did not let him because He had other plans. And here's the plans. He says, "Go home to your people, and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had mercy on you."

I love that word "mercy." This phrase "your people," it's broad, it could refer to a lot of things. It could refer to the man's family or friends. It could refer to his neighbors or acquaintances. But the idea that whoever it was, Jesus wanted him to go to them, and tell them about Christ's miraculous work in his life. Because the land of the Gerasenes, again, this is Gentile territory. This is not Jewish, which means they didn't have access to the Scriptures, they didn't have access to the temple, the priests, rabbis, sacrifices, any of that. They weren't in total darkness, many of them worshipping demons, living like

total pagans. And so the Lord is calling this guy to go to that and bring the light of Christ to them. Not an easy task.

You guys know, I'm a church history fan, and when you read church history, you find some fascinating stories of people going into dark places. St. Patrick was one of them. When he went to Ireland, the place was just totally corrupt. People lived like animals. That's like this.

Look at what he does. Verse 20, says he went away, and began to proclaim in the Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him. He probably didn't give them the most clear, systematic theology presentation. He didn't pull up Louis Berkhof and quote from it or something like that. He just told them what Christ did in his life.

And that phrase, Decapolis is helpful because it gives you insight into where the man was from, it referred to a district on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, that had ten cities in it. Damascus was there, you've probably heard of Damascus before. So was the town of Pella, which is not as well known. The interesting thing about the region is that you're going to find it later on in Mark 7 and in Mark 8 because it says there, a few chapters later, Jesus will go back again there. And this time, His reception will be different. Because instead of people turning Him away, they're going to flock to Him to such an extent that He's going to perform the feeding of the 4,000 there. He did the feeding of the 5,000 in Israel, He will do the feeding of the 4,000 in the Decapolis region because this guy did his job. The reason so many people will come to Jesus from that region is because he told multitudes about Him. And he's so effective at it that verse 20, here in chapter five, says everyone was amazed. And that means they were they were dumbfounded. This guy told them, "I was possessed, and now I'm not." He went to them and said, "My life was under the sway of demons. Not anymore. Look at me, I changed. I'm different. I'm a transformed man. And it's all because of the Lord Jesus Christ." What a testimony.

By the way, let me also say this man's work and his life in this story is significant for another reason, because so far in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus has stayed pretty much in the country of Israel. In chapter one, He was baptized in the wilderness; chapter two, He ministered in Capernaum; chapters three and four, He's traveling throughout Galilee, preaching and teaching and doing miracles for the Jews. Now, at this point, He goes beyond that to demonstrate that His ministry was going to go beyond as well. It would go to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. It was pretty shocking at the time. As far as the Jews were concerned, God wasn't that interested in Gentiles. And even if He was, they could come to us. We're not going to them. Christ shows us that was not His attitude here. Here He goes into their territory to rescue this man and use a Gentile to reach other Gentiles.

That's what Jesus does to us today, doesn't He? How are you saved? Probably through a Gentile, right? Why? So you could go out and reach other Gentiles. The method hasn't changed. It would be nice to get in the boat and go with Jesus. Wouldn't be wonderful to throw all your problems away and just go with

the Saviour forever and leave this crazy mess behind here in Chilliwack. That's not what God's called us to do. He wants us to go and share the light of Christ with those around us as well.

Some of you hear that and you say, "Well, I can't do that Pastor Jeremy. It's embarrassing to talk about my former life." Maybe, let me ask you this. Was it more embarrassing in this guy's life? Probably not. Did you wear clothes, you're a step above him. It shouldn't be too much of a problem because wherever this man went after this, he would have to be really humble. It'd be hard work to tell his story. Someone would say, "What did you do before?" "I was demon possessed?" "What was your job?" "Didn't have one." "What were your days like?" "I screamed and hollered and cut myself." And they would have looked at him like, "What?" But that was the point. Jesus delivered this man to make him a trophy of His grace. And that's why the Lord is delivering sinners today.

I think sometimes we forget this because we have a tendency to downplay the grace of God in salvation. And we have a nasty habit of saying, "I wasn't that bad. I went to church. I don't need His grace so much." Friends, let me tell you this, you were saved by the grace of God, or you're not saved at all. Amen. Don't buy the lie it happened because you went to church or something like that.

Let me give you a wonderful verse that talks about this. Titus 3:5 says that "God saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His" what? Many of you know this verse. "Mercy." What did Jesus want this guy to go tell everybody about? How God had shown mercy. Whether you grow up in church or not, you're saved by mercy. And whether you're delivered from demon possession or not, it's the same way. The only thing you can point to for redemption is the sovereign kindness of God.

And that's what we're going to talk about next time we're in the Gospel of Mark as well because Mark 5:21, tells us how the mercy of Christ continues. Because after Jesus does all this, He's going to get into the boat, and go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. And He's going to meet a man named Jairus, whose daughter will die, and Christ will raise her from the dead. And let me tell you, she will contribute nothing to it. She will do nothing because dead people do nothing. She'll be raised by the sovereign kindness of God.

It's been said every time Jesus came across a funeral in the Bible, He stopped it because He resurrected someone because He's a good and a gracious Saviour. Please come back and join us as we look at that together next week.

But having said that, I really can't end this sermon without going back to the way we started it and telling you a little more about John Bunyan. In one of the books I was reading about him this week, it told me that before he was converted, John Bunyan was a tinkerer by trade. Some of you might know that. It refers to someone who fixes pots and pans by carrying around a heavy anvil on his back in order to sit it down and hammer out the deficiencies in it. And some believe it was that anvil that Bunyan used

in the book *Pilgrims Progress*, to represent the great burden that Pilgrim carried until he came to the cross. At which point, it was taken away. Not because Pilgrim did anything other than look, to the Saviour. It's a wonderful picture the gospel.

That's how you were converted. When you looked to Jesus through faith, God took your burdens away. And He took them away whether they weighed 100 pounds, 200 pounds, or a million pounds. And He took your sins away, whether it was this much, that much, or that much. That's the kind of God He is, tender and compassionate. Have you thanked Him for that lately? You should. We're all unlikely converts, aren't we? Which is why it's given to us simply because of His love.

And let's pray and thank Him for that this morning.

Heavenly Father, we do thank You this morning for Your love and grace to us in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the reason we have to thank You for that Father, is because when we read the story of this terribly wicked man, we do see ourselves in him. You have been so good to save anyone, including us. When we think of our sins, when we think of our life, it is humiliating, the things we did against You. You have continued to show grace to us.

For those who are saved, You have shown grace in drawing us to the Lord Jesus Christ, You have forgiven our sins, You have pardoned, You've chosen us from before the foundations of the world. All of that is because of You. And You are the One who deserves all the glory. Father, would You give us a tender heart as we remember this? Pride is a problem for each and every one of us. We all want to think at times we don't need You, we're okay, but we are not.

Thank You for the story of this man. We don't even really know his real name. So many things about him are obscured in mystery, but we know one thing: he was changed by the power of Christ. Lord, that's what happens in our lives today as well. And I pray for those who are in this room who have experienced Your power, they would be encouraged and blessed by what they've heard.

For those who are lost Lord, I would pray Father that You would begin to stir something in them to remind them of their need of a Saviour. They're like this man too. I think sometimes it's easy for people to walk through these doors and puff themselves up and think this does not apply, but it applies to all of us lost and saved. The lost need to know that they need Christ. Would You draw them to that today, Father? Thank You for our time together. May we go from this place and be a light for the gospel like he was. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.