

## Mark 4:35-5:20

Over the last few weeks we have been looking at Jesus and how He would use parables to speak to the multitudes that were following after Him. And if you remember Jesus had been talking to the disciples about how there were some that would hear the Word of God and bear much fruit in their lives and there were others that would see the Word planted in their lives and stolen away.

Jesus then went on to tell the disciples several other parables including the parable of the lamp that was to be placed in a public place rather than hidden and a parable about the kingdom of God and how it was like a mustard seed.

As Jesus spoke in parables those with the right heart would then seek to gain spiritual understanding that could be gleaned from what Jesus had shared. Those that didn't have the right heart would hear the parable and leave unchanged.

Now today we are going to be looking at two sections here in the Gospel of Mark and I do think that these two really belong together. In the synoptic gospels (and remember when we say that we are talking about the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke) we find these same two narratives one right after the other each time...and so you get the sense that the Holy Spirit wants us to consider these things almost like one event, one thing will lead to another and you will see the significance of what I am presenting here as the text develops.

For now let's go ahead and look at verse 35 which says <sup>35</sup> On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." Once again it has been a busy day in the life of

Jesus as He now goes from teaching the multitude to getting into a boat in the evening and going to the other side.

The boat itself was probably like a fishing boat that Jesus was in and just to give you an idea of the size in 1986 on the north-west side of the Sea of Galilee in Israel they actually found the remains of a boat that were dated back to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and you can look that up online as they actually have this boat that was found on display and its dimensions were 27 feet long by 7.5 feet wide...now we can't know for certain the size but this find is a very good reference point for us to think about.

We should keep in mind that Jesus didn't have a relaxed, feel good, lots of time off kind of life. When you study the Gospels you get the idea that He went from one situation to another. The multitudes followed Jesus and you might think of the feeding of the 5,000 and then the feeding of the 4,000 or how just recently Jesus was almost crushed by the crowd or how at one point He didn't even have time to eat some food.

And so Jesus after a long day is seen in the boat and telling the disciples that they are going to "Go to the other side" and we might say the other side of what? Well just keep in mind that really this whole scene that has unfolded before us over the last several weeks in our study has taken place on the north side of what is called the Sea of Galilee.

Now the Sea of Galilee is known by a few other names as well. It is also known as the Sea of Tiberias, The Lake of Gennesareth and the The Sea of Chinnereth. And this body of water just so you have it in your mind is approximately 13 miles long by 8 miles wide so it's not a

little tiny lake. It is an interesting lake in that it is actually below sea level to the tune of almost 700 feet making it the lowest fresh water lake on the planet and the deepest point of the lake is actually 141 feet which is quite deep.

So Jesus gives the command that they are going to go to the other side of the sea of Galilee and then look at verse 36 which says <sup>36</sup>**Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.** Finally Jesus has a time of rest that He enters into and I think its interesting that it says that they took Him along in the boat as He was...that kind of gives me the idea that the disciples were almost helping Jesus get to the other side...If you remember there were at least four fishermen who were from this area and they would have known this lake like the back of their hand. They would have known the easiest way to cross and perhaps they had done so themselves on numerous occasions.

And so in my mind I think that the disciples were thinking “Lord we got this, we know what we are doing, we know how to handle the boat...you go rest and let the professionals take care of the rest.”

We also learn that there were other boats that were in the crossing of the sea next to them.

Verse 37 says <sup>37</sup>**And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.**

So the experienced fishermen now find themselves in a rather difficult situation don't they? We are told here that a great windstorm arose and I want you to know that this was not all that uncommon to have happen on the Sea of Galilee.

If you remember the Sea of Galilee was below sea level and actually the height of the land around the Sea was significantly higher and what would happen is that the wind would blow over the mountains and as it did so the air was much cooler and it would then rush down over the Sea of Galilee and it would quickly mix with the warm air of the Sea and when these two air masses collide it would create quite a storm. In 1992 for example a storm was recorded as producing 10 foot waves...and in a smaller fishing boat that would create quite an issue.

This kind of storm is probably what took place as we are told that the waves were bashing into the boat and it was filling with water. Now I can imagine in my mind's eye that the four fishermen on board would have taken charge and begun to order the other disciples in what they should do and they would have been turning the boat the proper direction to whether the storm and perhaps they would have been handing out buckets or whatever they could to get the water out of the boat.

We might think that Jesus was right there with them working to keep them alive but instead we read this in verse 38 which says <sup>38</sup>**But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"**

Jesus was a human just like we are. He became tired, He had physical limitations and because of the busyness of ministry this was a man that was just plain old exhausted. Wiped out from a long day of ministry and now seen at the back of the boat and notice that while everyone else was thinking life was just about over Jesus was out cold.

And the disciples they go to Jesus and they wake Him up and simply ask Him don't you even care that we are here perishing in the midst of this storm? I have to ask you something today as we are looking at this. Have you ever gone through a time in your life that you felt like God was sleeping? Perhaps you were struggling in a situation and you were at the end of your self and you had no where to turn to and you were crying out in your heart asking Jesus if He even cares about you.

It's interesting when you think about this whole situation for if you remember Jesus was the one that sent the disciples across the lake to begin with. It was really His fault that they found themselves in the midst of a storm. I would submit to you tonight that there are times that Jesus will send His children into the storm...There are times that Jesus will allow us to face difficult times and trials in order to build up our faith and help us to grow.

In the case of the disciples it may just have been that they needed to learn that without Him they were nothing. That even in the smallest of situations that they found themselves in life that they were in great need of Jesus to help them along.

Life as a believer in Jesus can be so hard at times can't it? I know that all of us have been through hard times...If you remember David had gone through multiple difficult times in his life and we talked about that last week but just listen to what we looked at on Sunday in 2 Samuel 22:7 which says **In my distress I called upon the Lord, And cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, And my cry entered His ears.**

God always comes through on behalf of His children...I will say that it may not always look the way we might think it should be but God is

always so faithful to respond to us, He is there for us and desires to work within our hearts and here as the disciples were going through this hard time if you look at verse 39 we will see that indeed Jesus did respond it says <sup>39</sup>**Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.** There is something I find interesting in this narrative. The rocking of the boat as it began its journey did not wake Jesus, the crashes of lightning and the waves could not get His attention either but the cry of His disciples woke the Lord Jesus.

That's pretty amazing really when you think about the power of the storm that was upon the disciples. And Jesus as He gets invited into the trial quickly takes care of the storm speaking to it and the result was that there was a great calm.

We ought not ever think that anything is too big for Jesus to handle. I don't care how hard of a situation you might find yourself in the simple fact is that Jesus is greater. He can and often does silence the storms of life in the most unexpected ways doesn't He? The ways of God are far beyond our ways and yet the Lord always seems to work things out for our betterment, for our growth in Him.

We should remember that trials help us to learn about the character of God...If you remember in our study of 2 Samuel 22 it was because of difficulties that David could say that God was his strength, that God was his fortress, that God was his Savior and so much more.

The disciples had to learn lessons as well and at this moment they were learning that Jesus was always with them, that He could handle anything including the calming of a significant storm at a moments notice.



Over in Psalm 107:23-29 we have the following which says Those who go down to the sea in ships, Who do business on great waters,  
<sup>24</sup> They see the works of the Lord, And His wonders in the deep.  
<sup>25</sup> For He commands and raises the stormy wind, Which lifts up the waves of the sea. <sup>26</sup> They mount up to the heavens, They go down again to the depths; Their soul melts because of trouble. <sup>27</sup> They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, And are at their wits' end. <sup>28</sup> Then they cry out to the Lord in their trouble, And He brings them out of their distresses. <sup>29</sup> He calms the storm, So that its waves are still.

We should just understand that Jesus as He did this was really once again demonstrating His incredible authority over all things including the weather thus demonstrating that He is God.

It is interesting and you might just underline in your Bible where it says that Jesus rebuked the wind. That kind of phrasing gives the idea that something was against the disciples and Jesus and I will just go ahead and tell you that I believe there were demonic forces behind this particular storm and we'll get to that a bit more here later.

We should remember that our battles in life are spoken of in the following way over in Ephesians 6:12 which says <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Go ahead and look with me at verses 40-41 which say <sup>40</sup> But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" <sup>41</sup> And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!" The

disciples in response were blown away and not just a little bit as we are told they were exceedingly afraid as they spoke to each other saying “who can this be that the wind and the sea obey Him!”

You might try to imagine the disciples as the sea is suddenly calmed as Jesus speaks to it. You can imagine they are in a highly stressful situation and they are fearful for their lives and the adrenaline is pumping and the fisherman are yelling orders and there is water just all over them from the storm and the waves and then suddenly...Stillness, peace, a calm that comes over the situation.

I do think that's how it is when we ask Jesus into the situations that we are going through in life. Jesus can bring peace when there shouldn't be any, He can make a crooked trial as straight as an arrow. I like what 1 Peter 5:10 says when it says <sup>10</sup> **But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.** I love that because to me it means that the trials and the difficulties have an expiration on them. Many trials end quite quickly as we walk with Jesus while others persist on through life but just remember there is an end date to them a time when Jesus will truly calm every storm that we are enduring in life.

Jesus did ask them why they were so afraid and why they had no faith...If you remember what was it Jesus said to them before they left? He said “Let's go to the other side” It was a command, it was spoken as if it would be and the disciples should have clung to those words even in the most difficult of circumstances.



You and I should remember that Jesus similarly will carry us through to the other side as we go through life. Jesus is faithful to work in us and through us and He will get us to our final destination.

Perhaps tonight you are here and you are facing a storm in your life. Perhaps you feel like the boat you are on is sinking. I believe Jesus would say “fear not” to us tonight, I believe that perhaps He is just waiting on you to call out to Him for His incredible love to surround you and work in you and perhaps He just wants to see your faith in Him in action and just understand that the Lord He will respond to the cries of your heart you only have need of trusting that He will do the work that He has promised taking you to the other side.

And just remember that the trials the disciples went through revealed who Jesus was to them just a little bit more. These men were on a journey to discover just who Jesus was, they were still wondering about Him and learning about Him and eventually they will come to the place that Jesus will say to them “Who do you say that I am?” And Peter he will have gotten it by that point and he will say “you are the Christ the son of God.”

Well let's move on here if you look with me at what happens next in verse 1 of chapter 5 which says **5 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.** After a difficult journey across the lake they now come to the other side to a place that was called the Gadarenes. Now Gadara which was a city about 6 miles away from the lake was on the south side of the sea of Galilee meaning Jesus and the disciples had travelled from north to south from Capernaum to this area and it was an area that was known to have mostly Gentiles living in it.

Gadara was also known to be part of what was called the Decapolis which was a group of 10 cities that had come together as an alliance in what is known as the territory of the half tribe of Manasseh which was east/south east of the Sea of Galilee. During this time it was an area that held its allegiance to the Roman Empire.

So the disciples and Jesus they arrive here and you can imagine they are all sopping wet, they are probably exhausted from the trip, they are in wonder at what the Savior has done and I am sure they are thinking let's rest and recover and yet look at what happens in verses 2-5 which say <sup>2</sup>And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, <sup>3</sup> who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, <sup>4</sup> because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. <sup>5</sup> And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

As soon as they arrive its as if the disciples and Jesus go out of the fire and into the frying pan. We are told that a man with an unclean spirit came before them and what we have here in this account is actually probably the most detailed information that we have about demon possession in the Bible.

We are told here first of all that he had an unclean spirit and that just let's us know that this was a demonic situation and certainly anything that has to do with the kingdom of Satan is going to be unclean...this means simply that it was not of God.

We also learn here that this man had his dwelling among the tombs and I do think that often times those who are possessed or those who are dabbling in the things of Satan often have an attachment to the realm of the dead or a fascination with the dead. I suppose that makes sense when you think of the victory that Satan found when he led Adam and Eve to sin against God...The first and foremost consequence of their sin was that they would die...So of course Satan likes to hang around death and darkness.

Then we are told that no one could bind the man not even with chains and that he had such incredible strength that he would tear the shackles and chains apart. I don't know all the details but my previous church that I was a part of had an incident with demonic activity several months ago and one of the things that happened during this was that multiple grown men were struggling to hold this individual in place while others prayed over them.

We are then told that no one could tame this individual. Can you imagine having someone in your midst who is unreasonable, violent, unruly and unaware of how they are harming others? I am not an expert in demonic possession but I would venture to say that there are times that the world puts someone away or they heavily medicate them and it may just be that demonic activity is present in that individual.

The world so often has no answers for people that are under the influence of Satan but we will see here in this narrative that Jesus will have the victory in this man's life.

I want to be careful here that we don't place every individual that may fit into some of these difficulties in life into this box that they are

demonically possessed. The human psyche is a difficult thing to diagnose and work through and sometimes individuals have a tremendous amount of trauma in their lives and they simply don't know how to work through it and so they will resort to being unruly or cutting themselves or any number of things.

I would also say that I personally believe that there are times that people just have a malfunction in their brains or a sickness in the brain that causes them to behave in ways that most people do not. We do live in a fallen world where there are all kinds of difficult things that people go through.

What I will say with all confidence is that Jesus is the strong man when it comes to all of the above scenarios. Jesus can set people free from the kingdom of Satan and we might remember what the Word says in Colossians 1:13-14 which says <sup>13</sup>**He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,** <sup>14</sup>**in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.** The blood of Jesus Christ has broken the power of Satan's kingdom and He can and does set people free.

In the end whether it be demonic possession, whether it be mental instability, whether it be trauma that has enveloped a persons life Jesus is the One that does the work to deliver people and if you are here today and you find yourself just in a terrible spot mentally or even under the possession of demons I want you to know that if you like this man come before Jesus that Jesus will as you cry out to Him do a work in your life.

And I do believe that as we look at this that we can see that this man wanted to be set free and at the same time we'll see the demons

showing up speaking and causing problems. I believe that this man was desperate for freedom and he somehow knew Jesus had come and here he is before the Lord and then watch what he does in verses 6-8 which say **6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me." 8 For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!"**

Notice this man saw Jesus afar off and perhaps he was up in a high place and he saw the storm and perhaps this man saw the storm become still suddenly and then Jesus coming and perhaps he knew in his heart that this man has power.

If you remember earlier I mentioned that I believe the storm that Jesus rebuked and the situation Jesus faced as he arrived on the other side were connected and what I think is that the storm was Satanically inspired to either try to kill Jesus and the disciples or attempt to keep them from getting to this man...and I might mention that the only thing Jesus does on this side of the Lake is to set this man free and then they return.

I would say that it is possible that Jesus will send you into a spiritual storm or a trial in your life that when you get to where the Lord needs you that you might be able to minister to just one individual. That's hard to grapple with but the reality is that Jesus will use His people to reach the world and often times there is a spiritual trial that you and I must go through in order to enter into that ministry.

And so this man comes and worships Jesus and then I believe that the demons take over here and they begin to cry out to Jesus asking what

do we have to do with you...and notice that they knew just who Jesus was calling Him the Son of the Most High and imploring Jesus that He would not torment them...Understand the demons know just who Jesus is and they know His authority and they are fearful of Jesus...and so these demons who had destroyed this man's life are now seen frightened and powerless before the Lord.

Look at verses 9-13 which say <sup>9</sup>Then He asked him, "What is your name?"

And he answered, saying, "My name is Legion; for we are many." <sup>10</sup> Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.

<sup>11</sup> Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. <sup>12</sup> So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them." <sup>13</sup> And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

Jesus does something here that I think is interesting as he actually has a conversation with the demon or demons as Jesus asks them what their name is...and the response was that their name was Legion and notice the demon makes the statement that they are many.

Now there is a little debate here about how many demons were within this man and if we take what the demon said literally we could say that up to 6,000 demons were in him for a legion in the Roman military was around this many soldiers...I suppose I have a personal opinion



about this that the enemy is a liar and perhaps this demon or demons were attempting to scare those with Jesus or even Jesus Himself by trying to look much larger and stronger than they actually were.

If you have ever seen a cat fight in your life then you know that the cats before they fight try and make themselves look as scary and mean as possible...They make all kinds of noise and they contort their backs in all kinds of angles and they make quite the scene right before they go at it...and I think the demons may be trying to lie here and seem much larger than they are...Having said that I have no Biblical evidence for this its just some food for thought and it may very well have been a legion of demons within this man...I just have a hard time believing anything a demon might say.

Now the demons as they spoke with Jesus they in a desperate attempt to stay in some kind of body which is what demons like to do beg the Lord that they might go into a herd of swine that were near the mountains...and notice Jesus at once gave them permission and the swine in response threw themselves over the cliff in a point of desperation.

I suppose we should remember that the enemy is only out to steal, kill and destroy we should never fall for the enemy presenting things to us in pretty little packages for he always wants to destroy us.

We might wonder how this man ever came to be possessed...We don't know for sure but I believe often times people become possessed when they open a spiritual portal in their lives...and they might do that through something like a Ouija board or a séance or the worship of other gods who are not gods at all but demons or they may be into astrology or having a so called imaginary friend that is introduced to

them in their minds and I will say that often times these dark things that are in the world may seem harmless at first and they may seem almost adventurous but always always always we must remember that the enemy will take things step by step until you find yourself like this man who was possessed by multiple demons.

Listen do not mess around with the dark magic or the false religions of this world...It will bite you, it will work to destroy you and I want you to know that the dark things of this world are just as real as Jesus is real...I am thankful though that Jesus is far stronger as evidenced by this scenario and He does have the ability to set those free who cry out to Him.

So this man whom no one could tame has now been set free and you would think everyone would rejoice in this but watch what happens here in verses 14-17 which say <sup>14</sup>**So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened.** <sup>15</sup>**Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.** <sup>16</sup>**And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine.** <sup>17</sup>**Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.**

Those who were in charge of the pigs knew they had a problem especially if they were hired to watch the pigs for now the pigs are all dead...and if they are all dead they haven't done their job and so you can imagine as this happened and they knew what had transpired that

they ran back to the city and just let everyone know it wasn't their fault and probably something like this had never happened previously.

Those that heard in the city then went to Jesus and what did they do but they asked Jesus to leave the area...I think it's sad that they took no real notice of the man that they had run out of town. There he was in his right mind and they should have rejoiced that a man's life had been dramatically changed and yet they just worried about their livelihood in my opinion.

I want to just mention the glory of Jesus setting someone free. Look where this man who was possessed was...and then look at where he is. Now the man has clothes on and he is sitting in his right mind. No longer does the enemy have hold on this man. No longer can the enemy destroy this man's life. Here he is at peace in his life having been set free by the grace and love of Jesus Christ.

For this man his personal storm in life has been settled and if you think about what Jesus and the disciples went through that this one man could be set free then I think we can get a glimpse at the incredible spiritual battle that Jesus went through for you and I that we could be set free from the power of Satan and the death that you and I should experience because of our sin.

Jesus went through great suffering that we could be set free. He was beaten, He was bloodied, He was ridiculed, He was abandoned, He was judged falsely, He was forced to carry a cross, He was pierced through with nails in His hands and His feet and He died upon the cross all that we might be set free. Jesus purchased us who come to Him in faith with His blood and His blood certainly does set us free.

Have you cried out to Jesus in your life that He might save you from your sins? Have you cried out to the Lord that He might set you free? There is only one that can truly liberate us and it is Jesus Christ and His death upon the cross. If you are here today and you need to cry out to Him I would say do it now, do it in your heart and we'll pray with you as the service concludes tonight.

Look at verses 18-20 as we close out tonight they say<sup>18</sup> **And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. <sup>19</sup> However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." <sup>20</sup> And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.**

Jesus is always a respecter of persons. He won't force Himself upon any ones life that doesn't want Him around and so as the people ask Him to leave Jesus does just that. I would say the same is true for you and I. I believe the man with demons was desperate for Jesus to liberate Him and this man came running to Jesus and the Lord certainly responded.

I want to just point out to you that when the demons made a request of Jesus to go into the pigs what did the Lord do? He gave them that request...And when the people of the city asked Him to leave what did Jesus do? He left...and when the demoniac who had been set free asked to go with Jesus and be with Him always what did the Lord say? The Lord said no...It's kind of funny how the Lord works in our lives and opens and closes doors I mean here is this man just wanting to be with Jesus...and yet the Lord had a greater purpose for Him as the

Lord said go and tell your friends what great things God has done for you.

And this man we are told went throughout the Decapolis telling of the goodness of the Lord.

Jesus had a greater purpose for this man, a greater ministry than to be with the Lord directly...and you and I as we spend time with Jesus we also are to go and tell the world of all the great things Jesus has done. Are you doing that today in your life? Has Jesus set you free? Has He forgiven you? Has He worked greatly in your life? Then you should be sharing that with those around you.

Let's pray in closing tonight and if you would like prayer in your life for the things that are happening I would just let you know that coming to Jesus in faith is the way to find yourself and I just encourage you to come and receive prayer if you need to be set free today.

Let's pray.

## **Mark 4:35-5:20 “He Rescues Us”**

### **Cross References**

#### **Chapter 4**

##### **Verse 38**

2 Samuel 22:7

##### **Verse 39**

Psalms 107:23-29

Ephesians 6:12

##### **Verses 40-41**

1 Peter 5:10

#### **Chapter 5**

##### **Verses 2-5**

Colossians 1:13-14