

GADARENE DEMONIAK

Date: March 24, 2020

Scripture: Mark 5:1-20

Good morning Eleven22! My name is Cris Garrard, I'm the San Pablo campus pastor and I'm excited this morning to share with you from the gospel of Mark. As you know, this Lent season we are working our way through some of the miracles of Jesus that are shared with us across all of the gospels. We are looking at how each of these miracles points us to the greatest of all miracles, which is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Today we are going to focus on this miracle out of the book of Mark 5:1-20.

5 They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. ² And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. ³ He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, ⁴ for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. ⁵ Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. ⁶ And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. ⁷ And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." ⁸ For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" ⁹ And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." ¹⁰ And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. ¹¹ Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, ¹² and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them." ¹³ So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered

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the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.

¹⁴ The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. ¹⁵ And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. ¹⁶ And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. ¹⁷ And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. ¹⁸ As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. ¹⁹ And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." ²⁰ And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.

Mark 5:1-20

May God bless the reading and hearing of His Word today.

So here we find Jesus, arriving on the shores of the Sea of Galilee having sailed over with His disciples during the night. Mark's descriptive language paints a vivid picture for us of this encounter. This man, who was possessed by an unclean spirit had been thrown out of the city and was now living in a graveyard outside of the city, gross, unclean, smelly, it was a place of death and decay. It wasn't enough to be cast aside by his community, but those who we might say should have cared and loved for him, they bound him, they tied him up. And when ropes couldn't hold him any longer they used shackles and chains, but he broke free from those too. And so when he saw Jesus from a far off, he ran to Him, fell at His feet. Jesus telling the unclean spirit to come out of the man and the unclean spirit begging Jesus not to torment them.

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As the conversation unfolds, Jesus asked him his name and the unclean spirit replies and says, "My name is Legion, for we are many." Jesus commands the spirit to leave the man and allows them to enter a nearby herd of pigs. Details are important and Mark wants us to know that we are not talking about just a few pigs here; we're talking about a lot of pigs. Mark says there were 2,000 pigs.

The pigs run down into the water and drown. What a sight this would have been. And those charged with caring for the pigs become fearful and they ran and told everyone in the city and everyone in the country what had happened. As you would expect, a crowd then comes to see what had happened and when they arrive, they find Jesus and the man. The man is in his right mind and fully clothed.

The response of the people when they saw this was fear. They were afraid. They began to beg Jesus that He would leave them, but they were not the only ones that were begging Jesus that day. As Jesus is leaving, the man that was healed begins to beg as well, but he begs to go with Jesus, to follow Him and to be with Him. Jesus's direction to the man is for him to stay in that area and to tell everyone of God's mercy and what had happened to him. As Jesus and the man depart and go separate ways, the man does as Jesus commands and the result is that everyone marvels.

Church, as I was reading through this, how incredible it must be to have been this man. A man living in torment, a man living outside of his community, a man that was cast away, a man that was in bondage. When he sees Jesus from far off, he runs to Him, calls out to Him and falls at His feet. And as Jesus heals him the transformation is not just internal it's external, it's visible to all of those who knew him. Mark's telling of this experience for us is an encouragement and it's a challenge and warning to some.

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Three interactions with Jesus in this encounter and three different responses.

First, the unclean spirits saw and knew Jesus for who He was. The Son of the Most High God. And their response was not just to recognize, but to respond to Jesus's authority. They knew He had the power over them and they begged Him. Jesus showed the unclean spirits mercy, He did not send them out of the country, He allowed them their request. He allowed them to enter into this herd of pigs.

Church, how gracious is it that our God has mercy even on those who have chosen to reject Him. Those who have turned their back on Him. Those who have gone in their own direction. To those that He still has authority over and compassion for.

Second in this story, the people of the city and country who saw Jesus and the result of His power and they were afraid. They begged as well, they begged that Jesus would leave. They didn't want Him around anymore. Jesus had disrupted their livelihood, He disrupted their routine, He disrupted their day to day life, He disrupted their local economy. He had come in and turned things upside down and it made them fearful. Well, Jesus didn't stay where He is not wanted and so He begins to board the boat to depart from the area. How sad is this, the same can be said of people today. Through Jesus, God offers anyone who would believe in Him, eternal life.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

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God offers everyone the full measure of His mercy and grace and they beg Him to leave because they don't want to let go of their comfort, they don't want to let go of their routine. They don't want to let go of what they perceive is their safety. As it happened then so it happens now, Jesus does not stay where He is not wanted and what breaks His heart and what breaks our heart is that is the response that people give even today and they're willing to let Him depart.

Lastly, the man who experiences the mercy of God through Jesus's work, his response is the response that we all want. The hope that we would respond in the same way is that He wants to be with Jesus. He is radically changed. Both on the inside and out. His mind is renewed, his health restored. He is free from the bondage that has been holding onto him. He puts on clothes and he sits in the presence of Jesus. The people that come and see him they know that something is different. And as Jesus is departing His charge to the man is not that of His disciples, which is "Follow me", but it is to go. Quite possibly this is the first recorded missionary. Even before the Great Commission, Jesus commands this man to go to his family, to go to his friends and to go to everyone that he sees to tell them of the great thing the Lord has done and the mercy he has been shown.

Church, my prayer for you today is that you would encounter Jesus in a real and mighty way and that you would respond. That you would respond as this man, the man who received the mercy, the man who Jesus said go and tell everyone about God's goodness and grace. This man truly lived a life that was sent.

Would you pray with me?

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Heavenly Father, today we thank You for your mercy and grace. Jesus we love You and as the man in this story, we are thankful for the way that You have radically changed our lives. May we today tell others of Your love and Lord may we see them surrender to You. Thank You Lord that we are sent by You. May You be glorified in all things. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

