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Concerning Jesus (Mark 5) -Aaron McRae

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you **think more deeply** about the sermon and **engage with others** through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and **allow God to work** in your life as you apply what you discover.

➤ CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you have a favorite quote or verse that helps guide your life? If so, what is it?

➤ EXPLORATION

This week we will look at one of the most interesting and unusual stories in the life of Jesus from Mark chapter 5. Jesus and his disciples are going to towns and villages preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God. In this story, they venture out beyond the borders of the Jewish settlements and enter into a Gentile region where a strange encounter occurs.

Mark 5:1-5 (From your bible, read aloud)

This man is described in almost zombie-like fashion: a living dead man and the people are terrified of him. They know they don't have the power to do anything about this in their own strength. But here we see the magnitude of the power of Jesus displayed. It is a reminder that the story of scripture is one of the struggle between spiritual forces. But Jesus is about to show them that he has the power to overcome evil.

"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." 1 John 3:8

Mark 5:6-10 (From your bible, read aloud)

Notice that the demon knew exactly who Jesus was and called Jesus by name.

Mark 5:11-13 (From your bible, read aloud)

What we see here is strange and and can be confusing **BUT** what we see is the ultimate purpose of evil and the demonic world having its fulfillment: death, destruction, and chaos. It is an anti-creation story within God's story of creation and salvation.

This is a wild and complicated story and there is more going on than we as modern readers may fully understand at first. There are many different ways to look at this passage. Today we look at three different ways to understand and apply this to our lives.

WAYS TO LOOK AT THIS STORY

- **A Helpless and Hopeless Situation**

This man was someone who most "respectable" people would have avoided. He was out of control and dangerous. But Jesus simply lives out his mission to reach the sick, the broken, the outcast, and the hurting with his love. He shows us that **every** person has value, no matter what. So Jesus heals and restores this man.

Mark 5:14-16, 19-20 (From your bible, read aloud)

In the end, Jesus tells the man to go and share "how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

SURPRISE: Jesus shows compassion to someone who made the people around him uncomfortable

Is there anyone you really struggle to show compassion to? Why do you think it is so difficult for you?

How has Christ shown you compassion, even when you didn't deserve it? How could this motivate your compassion toward others?

WAYS TO LOOK AT THIS STORY

• Things in Scripture That Make Us Uncomfortable

Many Christians today are comfortable with certain words found in Scripture but they are not comfortable with other words.

“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent & believe the good news!” Mark 1:15

We like words like “good news” but we sometimes struggle with words like “kingdom” which could be translated as empire or monarchy. It makes us think of the government or even politics. But Jesus uses this word intentionally. He is not just talking about faith in a generic sense. He is calling for loyalty and allegiance.

A POLITICAL/MILITARY VIEW

- Legion (5:9) = A large military unit in Roman order
- Out of the Country (5:10) = a military unit occupying a region
- Herd (5:11) = a word used to describe military forces
- Rushed (5:13) = used to describe charging soldier
- Pigs = A symbol carried by Roman soldiers

In the ancient world all of these terms were used to describe political and military actions.

“Mark’s subtle message is that Rome degrades, enslaves and disrespects people: Jesus dignifies, frees and esteems them.” Political Gospel Patrick Schreiner

You may have noticed that the demon calls Jesus by name. In the ancient world there was a superstition that if you knew the name of someone then you could wield power over them.

Mark 5:6-7 (From your bible, read aloud)

Mark 1:23-24 (From your bible, read aloud)

Mark 3:11-12 (From your bible, read aloud)

SURPRISE: The demon’s theology and understanding of who Jesus is, is better at this point of the story than the understanding of the disciples.

“You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.” James 2:19

“Enemy occupied territory – that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say in disguise & is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.”

Mere Christianity CS Lewis

Why is a full, biblical understanding of who Jesus is so important?

WAYS TO LOOK AT THIS STORY

- **The Radical Transformation Only Jesus Makes Possible for Those Who Believe**

Mark 5:15, 18-20 (From your bible, read aloud)

The transformation of this man was so radical that the people were amazed and afraid. They had never seen this kind of power before.

SURPRISE: The formerly possessed man becomes the first missionary mentioned in the gospel of Mark.

Jesus tells the man to go home to the people who knew him and knew his story and tell them what Jesus had done for him. This man had an encounter with Jesus that transformed his life completely. Jesus wants to do the same for us.

How would you describe to someone who Jesus is and what he has done in your life?

➤ TAKE AWAY

Jesus has the power to transform the life of any and every person. There is no one outside his reach. This truth gives us confidence to share the good news with those who are broken and hurting around us.

Pray together, asking God to give you the opportunity to share who Jesus is and what he has done in your life with someone this week.