



# 52 THE PURSUIT OF JESUS

## Can Jesus Turn My Storm Into A Story?

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### OPENING

This week we are continuing our Quest 52 series in our year-long Pursuit of Jesus. We are studying Section 2 of our journey called **The Power of Jesus** in this 15<sup>th</sup> week of 2022, and asking ourselves if Jesus can turn our storms into our stories. During this year of pursuit, we will see vividly the power of Jesus and will have the opportunity to be changed forever.

### SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>

**Mark 4:35-41** That day, when the evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" they were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

**Mark 5:5-20** They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one could bind him to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills, he would cry out and cut himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!" Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man and told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region. As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him,

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<sup>1</sup>Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture referenced here is **NIV**

but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." So, the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

## **OBSERVATION**

There are two types of storms we are going to look at this week: One was a storm nature brought upon Jesus and His disciples on the Sea of Galilee. The other was an internal storm brought on by suffering and emotional chaos. The first story caused terror among the disciples while Jesus slept on a cushion at the back of a boat. His great power over nature was evident when He calmed the waves and the danger was gone immediately. Talk about power! Wind and waves obey? But why are we surprised? So do the planets, and the sun and moon, and gravity etc. When we look around us we see all of Creation obeying Him.

**QUESTION: When have you been in physical danger and God intervened to save you out of it?**

The second storm was inside a demon-possessed man. He had suffered for a long time as demons raged within him – he had no ability to save himself. The people who lived in the Decapolis, the cities that were east of the Sea of Galilee, suffered as well as no one could contain him - not even with chains. The demons recognized Jesus as the Son of God and begged Him to let them enter a herd of pigs that ran off a cliff into the sea. A great ending for the demons, but the people who owned the herd were not pleased. Eventually, the man who was healed became an influencer in the ten cities as he told his story about what Jesus did for him.

**QUESTION: Why do you think Jesus went to Gentile cities to perform this miracle of healing?**

**QUESTION: Why do you think the demons chose pigs to enter?**

## **APPLICATION**

Now we assume that most of us have never been possessed by demons or had them speak through us but what about being tormented by an addiction, destructive habit or past wounds? When asked how they are doing these are the ones who answer, "I'm fine." Their pride keeps them from telling about the struggle they are experiencing inside. It feels like a legion of opposing voices, fears and condemnations warring inside their minds. When Jesus looked upon the demon-possessed man He saw a person created in God's image, who was being desecrated by evil. He sees the same thing in each of us. No matter who we are, what we've done – whether a young woman disgusted with herself after a night out filled with regret; or a man held captive by sexual desires; or a young person oppressed by depression; or a stay-at-home mom addicted to drugs. Jesus sees so much more than we see. A reminder to all of us who struggle: Don't give up. Jesus is greater than whatever is tormenting us.

**QUESTION: What are you dealing with today that needs healing?**

**QUESTION: Where are you looking for relief from that torment? What do you believe Jesus is willing to do for you?**

After his encounter with Jesus, the naked, crazy demon-possessed man had been re-storied. His story was then of a man on whom God had shown mercy by rescuing and restoring him. His internal storm had been turned into a redemption story! The man's story was his greatest tool in showing Jesus to the people in his world. Every one of us has access to families, jobs, neighborhoods, schools and communities that most of the rest of us don't have. These are worlds that are uniquely ours to influence for Jesus.

**QUESTION: What is your story?**

**QUESTION: For those of us who have not been re-storied by Jesus, what will it take to let Him rescue us from past hurts, regrets, mistakes, and give us a new story?**

**QUESTION: What areas of your life afford the opportunity to be an influencer for Jesus through your story?**

If Jesus has re-storied us, we don't have to hide from our pasts. What we have gone through actually grants us access to share Jesus with those who may have experienced something similar to our stormy past. "People who

suffer want people who have suffered to tell them there is hope.”<sup>2</sup> We don’t have to worry about having all the answers or being a Bible scholar because God’s Word has written a new story on our hearts and changed our life for others to see.

**QUESTION: What has the Lord done for you?**

**QUESTION: How has He shown you mercy?**

#### **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, we struggle with so many fears and doubts and anchors of past sin when all we have to do is accept Jesus’ gift of Salvation and follow Him. Open our eyes and ears, Lord, to the truth of Your Word and lead us by Your Holy Spirit to redemption and a future in Your Kingdom. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

#### **QUESTIONS**

**QUESTION: When have you been in physical danger and God intervened to save you out of it?**

**QUESTION: Why do you think Jesus went to Gentile cities to perform this miracle of healing?**

**QUESTION: Why do you think the demons chose pigs to enter?**

**QUESTION: What are you dealing with today that needs healing?**

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**QUESTION: What has the Lord done for you?**

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<sup>2</sup> Suffering and Sovereignty of God.