

THE GOSPEL *of*

MARK



THE GOSPEL of **MARK** 5:1-20

Gospel of Mark

- Primary purpose of the Book of Mark is to present and defend Jesus' universal call to discipleship.
- We are in a section of the book that highlights miracles, exorcism, and healing

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Introduction

- Acknowledging the elephant in the room
 - Discussion on the demonic is uncomfortable for most of us
 - I would have much rather talk about Jesus calming the proverbial storm in our lives.
 - Despite our discomfort, I believe this message is still important today
 - My Goal is that we would leave encouraged

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Introduction

- CS Lewis indicates that we often make one of two errors when we try to understand the demonic.

Like a pendulum

1. We can dismiss or disregard demons entirely
2. Or we can drift into a fascination or obsession

One of our goals is to gain a truthful and biblical understanding of the demonic.

More importantly

- Our passage has a greater overarching message
 - Jesus has Authority over material and spiritual

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Mark 5:1-20

Jesus Restores a Demon-Possessed Man

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 was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

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Jesus Restores a Demon-Possessed Man

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.

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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.

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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, 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.

Defining Possession

Two ways that the demonic can oppress humanity

1. Ownership and Control (uncommon)

- This man has given up control over his action and speech
- This would have happened through a willing decision to relinquish control
- Jesus is Greater than he who is in the world
 - This is not a risk for those of us who place trust in Jesus

Defining Possession

Two ways that the demonic can oppress humanity

1. Ownership and Control (uncommon)

2. Influence (very common)

- This is a daily battle
- The Demonic IS able to influence us.
 - Eg. Jesus was tempted by Satan
 - Eve was lied to in the garden of Eden
- Col 1:13 *“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves”*

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Discovery of Mark 5:1-20

1. The Spiritual is real

- *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Eph 6:12*

Richard Gallagher wrote an article in the Washington Post titled “As a psychiatrist, I diagnose mental illness. Also, I help spot demonic possession.”

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Discovery of Mark 5:1-20

In the article he tells as story of him being asked to help diagnose if someone had a mental illness or was possessed.

“I’m a man of science and a lover of history; after studying the classics at Princeton, I trained in psychiatry at Yale and in psychoanalysis at Columbia. That background is why a Catholic priest had asked my professional opinion, which I offered pro bono, about whether this woman was suffering from a mental disorder.”

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Discovery of Mark 5:1-20

“I was inclined to skepticism. But my subject’s behavior exceeded what I could explain with my training. She could tell some people their secret weaknesses, such as undue pride. She knew how individuals she’d never known had died, including my mother and her fatal case of ovarian cancer. Six people later vouched to me that, during her exorcisms, they heard her speaking multiple languages, including Latin, completely unfamiliar to her outside of her trances. This was not psychosis; it was what I can only describe as paranormal ability. I concluded that she was possessed.”

The Spiritual Realm is a real thing and yet we really don’t like to talk about it.

Discovery of Mark 5:1-20

1. The Spiritual realm is real

2. The Goal of the demonic is to destroy what God has created

- For us there are forces at work that are trying to draw you away from Jesus and his goodness.
- We see these unclean spirits causing great harm to this man through their ownership of him. Also in the destruction of the pigs
- This same evil is at work to try to influence us towards harm and destruction.
 - Temptation, lies, discouragement, devalue, degrade

Discovery of Mark 5:1-20

1. The Spiritual realm is real
2. The Goal of the demonic is to destroy what God has created

3. Jesus has authority over the spiritual

- This is the good news!
 - Last week we see Jesus' authority over the physical
 - This week we see Jesus' authority over the spiritual
 - Next week we see Jesus' authority over death

Jesus is capable of commanding these spirits to come out of the man. They also require his permission to enter into the pigs

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So What

- My desire was wrongly placed at making this a comfortable message.
- Ironically, our tendency to want to discount the spiritual, may at times be a way the demonic is trying to influence you.