

July 2, 2023

Miracles: Casting Out Demons (Mark 5:1-20)

The authority and power of Jesus set me free.

INTRO: Miracles of Jesus: in the gospels we see Jesus performing miracles Jesus to make His identity power and authority known.

- In His miracles Jesus healed people and revealed His Lordship ruling over natural and the supernatural realm. There are at least 11 examples of Jesus casting out demons. People are often fascinated with the supernatural evidenced by the number of movies, television series and books.¹

The lighthearted, comical side of the paranormal -- Ghostbusters.

Ghostbusters Video: (1 min)

- Whether you relate to the comical version, scarier versions, or have a philosophical view, you can read about the spiritual realm of light and darkness in Scripture.
- CS Lewis advises two extremes to avoid.
- **CS Lewis quote: “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.”
- A win for Satan and his following is for us to ignore him or to be overly fearful of darkness.

This is why we are looking at the biblical text of Mark 5, we can learn life lessons about the power and authority of Jesus over spiritual darkness and how He uses His authority to set the captives free.

Prayer

- Jesus often referred to demons as “unclean spirits” or “evil spirits.”
- Everybody in Jesus’ day knew he cast out demons. Demons afflicted many throughout the Judean region.

Setting: Southeastern region by the Sea of Galilee know as the **Decapolis (Federation of 10 cities)** occupied by Gentiles and heavily influenced by the Greek Culture.

Jesus is on a mission of cosmic proportions.

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- ¹References: Luke 11:14 (mute man); Matt 8:15 (many); Mark 1:34 (many); Luke 4:41 (many); Mark 1:39 (many); Luke 4:35 (man); Mark 5:8 (man); Mark 9:25 (man); Mark 7:26 (woman); Mark 16:9 (Mary Magdalene)

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Jesus is telling us the:

****The Gospel is for EVERYONE!**

- Every man woman child, teen, elderly, every background, ethnicity, philosophical academic, afflicted, sick, rich, poor, middle class
- Meanwhile, the disciples are being trained in evangelism and mission.
- End of Mark 4 Jesus after a full day of ministry inviting His disciples to get into a boat in the early evening, to cross to the eastern side of Sea of Galilee and to go to the Gentile region.
- Met with a raging storm; disciples believe they are going to drown.
- Once they reach the other side and are on shore, they breathe a sigh of relief, climb out of the boat.
- It's dark – they find themselves in a graveyard of tombs where lepers, outcasts, demoniacs often live in isolation.

Mark 5:1-20

5:1 So they arrived at the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gerasene.[a]
 2 When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil[b] spirit came out from the tombs to meet him. 3 This man lived in the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a chain. 4 Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. 5 Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones.

- According to Jewish law, man practically radioactive with uncleanness,
 - He lives in a graveyard, he's possessed by demons, and he is a gentile.
- He's afflicted. Perhaps townspeople have tried to tame, to subdue him by tying him up; he's causing a raucous with crazed shrill shrieks sounding thru the countryside. No one can contain him.
- Scriptural characteristics of demon possession: severe personality change—his identity swallowed by the demons inside him, anti-social behavior, spiritual insight beyond human capabilities, superhuman strength breaking chains and shackles, agonizing torment evidenced by his shrieks that would make one cringe.

6 When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him, ran to meet him, and bowed low before him. 7 With a shriek, he screamed, "Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, don't torture me!" 8 For Jesus had already said to the spirit, "Come out of the man, you evil spirit."⁹ Then Jesus demanded, "What is your name?"

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And he replied, “My name is Legion, because there are many of us inside this man.” ¹⁰ Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place. Afraid of the “distant place,” they beg for permission to enter the pigs.

- Lk 1:30 more insight: demons beg not to be sent to the bottomless pit, a place of confinement for banished angels.

¹¹ There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. ¹² “Send us into those pigs,” the spirits begged. “Let us enter them.”

Demons know the identity of Jesus, Son of the Most High God.

- Demons are addressing Jesus as the “Most High God,” the champion God.
- Many gods in the Greek culture of Gerasene
- James 2:19 . . . you believe that there is one God. Good for you! **Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror.**
- Demons recognize the supreme authority of Jesus Christ.
- Who are demons? Satan’s followers: Matt 12:24 indicates a hierarchy: Satan is named the prince of demons
- Angels were created by God -- there was a REBELLION in heaven.
- Just like there are evil people, there are evil angels who fell from heaven.
- Satan is a an angel who rebelled against God.
- Ez 28:14-15 describes Satan’s fall from heaven . . . on the day you were created, I ordained and anointed you as the mighty angelic guardian. 15 You were created until the day evil was found in you . . . so I banished you in disgrace from the mt of God.
- Hierarchy of good angels -- Michael and Gabriel are named – archangels. Servants of God: sent to care for people who will inherit salvation. Heb 1:14 And fighting the spiritual darkness.
- The rebellion of angels continues.
- In the clash of spiritual light and spiritual dark powers: the demon shrieks “Why are you interfering with me . . . in the name of God, I beg you, don’t torture me!”
- Legion was possessed by 1000’s of demons: singular and plural pronouns, difficult to discern which voice is speaking.
- The man is being tormented day and night
- When the demons meet Jesus, the Light, the Truth – they are tormented
 - The tormentor pleads not to be tormented
 - Asks permission to be sent into the herd of pigs

¹³ So Jesus gives them permission. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of about 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water.

**The enemy's mission is to destroy.

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy

- Demons are destructive: they led the pigs in a stampede over the edge.

*Demons want to drive us over the edge with

- o despair, paranoia, addictions
- Legion is a graphic example – most disturbing in the NT.
- We don't know how he became this way, or why he was possessed in such a way.
- Most Evil spirits today are covert, undercover: they don't want to be recognized
- Hide behind materialism, addictions, obsessions, self-hate: these habits destroy people, destroy families
 - o Unclean spirits behind: Ouija boards, tarot cards, horoscopes, ghosts: evil spirits have influence.
- For most of us, the pull of our flesh is strong enough to give way to sin without evil spirits.
 - o Anger, complaining, being critical, selfishness, self-righteous pride.
 - They are often our blind spots. These sins seem not to hurt us as much as others. What we would consider “smaller sins” create wedges of disunity in families and churches – another win for the enemy.
 - o Self-evaluation: When you find yourself consistently losing control: on edge of anger, the edge of frustration with little patience, or continual thoughts of lust or self-harm, this indicates a STRONGHOLD.
 - The enemy is an opportunist looking for your weakness, looking for a foothold.
 - Satan takes a natural desire in us and supercharges it to create something beyond our control (Rooted 100). This is a stronghold.
 - He will instigate every scheme to chain us to a stronghold.
 - Evil spirits build strongholds that are difficult to break.
 - o Eph 6:12 ¹² for our^o struggle is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present^o darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
NRSV

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- We live in a spiritual world and unclean spirits have influence and power. I've seen this in my life in fear.

STORY: When our girls were small, Brent and I were preparing for a trip but one of the girls had a touch of pneumonia. A close friend came to stay with me for the week while Brent was out of town. During the week, I discovered this person was afflicted with an evil spirit. I went several nights without sleep. I was not strong enough to confront them; I was too afraid. I let my fear of darkness disable what I had learned about the authority and power of Jesus and His Word. I was chained to fear, it was a weakness and the enemy capitalized on it. When the person left, I plastered the names of God all over my entry doors inside and out.

****Jesus sets the captives free. (Lk 19:10 and Lk 4:18)**

***He sees you. He pursues you.**

- I was chained to fear.
- Walking under His authority and power Jesus, chains are broken. I don't need to be afraid – because He confronts the darkness.

His authority and power can set you free.

- While other people see a crazed man screeching, overcome with demons, Jesus sees the man He created. The person created for a purpose and mission.

¹⁴ The herdsmen fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened. ¹⁵ A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons. He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid. ¹⁶ Then those who had seen what happened told the others about the demon-possessed man and the pigs. ¹⁷ And the crowd began pleading with Jesus to go away and leave them alone.

- Townspeople are upset. When Jesus heals a man they lose a significant income. There's not going to be any bacon with flatbread, or pulled pork for a loooonng time.
- The townspeople are more afraid of Jesus than they were of the demon possessed man. They fear what they don't understand.
- Jesus had cost the people of Gerasene 2,000 swine, what would His presence cost if them if He stayed?

***Would you rather have Jesus stop interfering in your life, or have Him do His work to set you free?**

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Story of Amanda: I didn't believe I could ever totally be free.

- The Cosmic Mission of Jesus includes You!
- Tell your story of how Jesus has set you free. Tell your family, your friends, take every opportunity to tell others what Jesus has done for you. .
- Your story has eternal impact for you and someone else.

Jesus wants to set you free from every obsession, addiction, from every demon, whether a weaknesses of the flesh, or those influences of demonic darkness.

Jesus was the only One who has power over darkness. He is the deliverer, the healer, the one who breaks strongholds. His authority sets you free, guards you, protects you.

¹⁸ As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹ But Jesus said, "No, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been." ²⁰ So the man started off to visit the Ten Towns[□] of that region and began to proclaim the great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed at what he told them.

Action Steps to live under the authority and power of Jesus.

1. Tell others, family what Jesus has done – how He set you free.
 - a. The healed man of Mk 5 did what Jesus said – told his family. Matt 4:25 says gospel spread throughout the 10 cities federation.
2. Gather often with the faith community where the Holy Spirit is present.
3. Choose a verse each week – pick up the sword of the Spirit.

Jesus does not want us to live in chains of addiction or to be paralyzed with fear. His authority and power guards you and keeps you free.

Benediction: Jude 1:24 To Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— ²⁵ to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

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