



**Adult Sunday School Lesson Summary for October 11, 2009  
Released on Wednesday, October 7, 2009**

**“Recognizing Jesus”**

**Lesson Text:** Mark 5:1-13, 18-20

**Background Scripture:** Mark 5:1-20

**Devotional Reading:** Luke 7:18-23

**Mark 5:1-13, 18-20**

1 And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.

9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.

10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea.

.....

18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

**INTRODUCTION:**

## **Bound by Chains**

We live in a time when many will subscribe only to what they can observe or experience with their senses. In this day of scientific materialism, it is difficult to persuade people that there is a great spiritual war going on. Of course, it could be argued that this has never been easy to understand because it requires faith to comprehend it.

Kathy has been in a clinical depression since her mother died in a car accident over a year ago. Kathy has not been able to forgive herself for her mother's death, even though she was not to blame. "If only I had been there," she mutters. "Or if I had prayed for her safety more often, maybe things would have been different," she says as tears cascade down her face.

Kathy has tried antidepressants, but she cannot escape the pain. Her friends have abandoned her, for she has weighed them down with her worry and tears. We would not say this is a modern case of demon possession, but Kathy definitely has "a monkey on her back." Encouraging Kathy to seek medical help is important, but would we also encourage her to seek Jesus?

Then there is Tom. Tom grew up in the slums and has never been able to break the curse of poverty in his life. He never had enough to eat as a child and struggles even now to put food on the table for his own children. Tom works countless hours from dawn to dusk just to try to make ends meet. He doesn't get to spend much time with his family. Tom is not chained due to demon possession. Yet he is figuratively chained to his job and to his circumstances, which he believes will never change. In his struggle to deal with his situation, has Tom tried turning to Jesus, the one who helps people realize their blessings despite circumstances?

One of the saddest things in life occurs when, whether because of prejudice or depression or anger or even distractions, we fail to recognize that which could provide us with what we most desire. One of Satan's great wiles (tricks) is to keep us in spiritual darkness. Second Corinthians 4:4 declares that "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not."

Satan's desire is to keep people from recognizing Jesus. The good news is that Christ can break through the power of Satan and bring deliverance to the spiritual captive.

### **LESSON AIMS:**

**Facts:** to show how Jesus dealt with a demon-possessed man.

**Principle:** to show that when people recognize Jesus, He transforms them and gives them a new beginning.

**Application:** to affirm that when we recognize Jesus, we are called to tell others about our experience with Him.

### **HOW TO SAY IT:**

ABYSS. Uh-*bis*.

DECAPOLIS. Dee-*cap*-uh-lis.

DEMONIAC. duh-*moe*-nee-ak.

GADARENES. *Gad*-uh-reens.

GERASA. *Gur*-uh-suh.

GERASENES. *Gur*-uh-seenz.

GERGESENES. *Gur*-guh-seenz.

### **Need for Deliverance (Mark 5:1–5)**

#### **1. In what land did Jesus encounter the demoniac (Mark 5:1)?**

The incident we are about to read takes place after Jesus and the disciples have crossed from the western to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The western

side is populated mainly by Jews. Beyond the eastern (*other*) side is the Decapolis (v. 20, as we shall see), which means "ten cities"; this is primarily a Gentile area.

The location given as *the country of the Gadarenes* is too broad for us to pinpoint exactly where the boat reaches shore. Some ancient manuscripts give the name as "Gerasenes," and Matthew 8:28 calls it "the country of the Gergesenes." Gerasa (or Gergesa) is located some 35 miles from the southeast shore of the Sea of Galilee.

## **2. Where did the demon-possessed man have to live (v. 2)?**

Now our main character, the *man with an unclean spirit*, enters the scene. The fact that he dwells among *the tombs* (in a graveyard) surely illustrates the depths of his despair. This is not the first time Jesus has confronted a person dominated by a demon (see Mark 1:23).

Look at what this demoniac does: he turns to Jesus in the midst of his despair. This indicates at least two things. First, the demon is not able to prevent the man from going to Jesus. Second, the man has hope that Jesus can do something for him. Before we move along, we can note that the man does not suffer from mental illness. Rather, this is supernatural demonization.

## **3. What was the lifestyle of the demon-possessed man (vs. 3-5)?**

We can examine these two verses both from the perspective of the demoniac and from the perspective of those who have tried to deal with him. Those who have come in contact with the demoniac have tried to handle the situation by binding him *with fetters and chains*. Was that a cruel thing to do? Perhaps not. If the man is a danger to himself and others, then those who have tried to intervene may have taken the only action they knew for everyone's safety. Since this is a Gentile area, prayer to the true God probably has not occurred.

From the demoniac's perspective, the shackles and chains only have added to the alienation and ostracism that he has felt, despite any good intentions. In any event, the efforts so far have been in vain, since the man has been able to break the restraints. It is probably the supernatural power of Satan that has enabled the man to do this.

Mark 5:5 completes the terrifying description of hopelessness. There was no reprieve for this man. He was always in his misery. The words "night and day" are added to emphasize this. He is pictured restlessly roaming about the caves and mountains, tired from sleeplessness but ever moving, suffering a kind of living death.

The demoniac's cries were no doubt loud and piercing as he cut himself with stones. The parallel of Matthew 8:28 tells us that the man's behavior is such that "no man might pass by that way."

This description should put us on the alert in our spiritual warfare today. Of course, not all self-destructive behavior or apparent mental illness is due to demonic possession or influence, but these factors cannot be dismissed out of hand in some circumstances. And at the very least we need to be aware of our malicious foe's devices and stay close by our Saviour.

## **Action of Deliverance (Mark 5:6-13)**

### **4. Why did the demoniac run to Jesus and bow down to Him (vs. 6,7)?**

It is interesting that the demon-possessed man seems to have been "drawn two ways. For it would seem to have been the self in him that ran to Jesus and fell at His feet, as if in some dim hope of rescue; but it is the unclean spirit who is doing the speaking in verse 7 (through the man) as verses 8, 9 will show. The man himself sees in Jesus some hope. But the evil spirit has a mind of his own, crying out *with a loud voice*. The demon knows that his judgment is coming, thus he asks not to be tormented.

The punishment of which this demon speaks is that of the eternal *torment* that stands waiting at the final judgment (compare Matthew 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 20:10). The spirit that torments the man now fears torment himself.

#### **5. What was Jesus' command to the demon (v. 8)?**

The phrase *for he said* indicates that Jesus' command *Come out of the man* occurs before the demon's cry in verse 7. Thus the cry of recognition and terror in verse 7 is a result of the command here in verse 8. Clearly, Jesus realizes the urgency of the situation. He doesn't allow the man to be tormented further; relief quickly comes.

#### **6. Why does our Lord ask the question "What is thy name" (v. 9)?**

Clearly to elicit from him an answer that would reveal the multitude ("legion") of the evil spirits. A *legion* is a military unit composed of about 6,000 men! It is a term familiar to both Jew and Gentile. We should not see the asking of the demon's *name* to be a critical, necessary step in the man's deliverance. Jesus easily can cast out demons without requesting their names. Perhaps Jesus asks *What is thy name?* in order for the truth to be recorded—that the man has suffered with many demonic spirits, not just one. Any illusion that the man was speaking for himself was discredited.

By revealing the name of the evil power, people will know how great a deliverance this truly is. This possibility makes sense in the light of the fact that Jesus will (in v. 19, below) ask the healed man to testify to others.

#### **7. Why did the demons not want to be sent out of the country they were in (v. 10)?**

By begging not to be sent *away out of the country*, the demons show their fear of being sent "into the deep," as Luke 8:31 clarifies. The word translated as "deep" in that passage is the Greek word *abyss*. The same word is translated as "bottomless pit" in Revelation 9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3.

When we read those passages, the reason for the demons' fear is crystal clear! By begging not to be sent away, the demons recognize that Jesus is the one who is capable of sending them anywhere He chooses.

#### **8. Why did the demons ask to be allowed to possess a herd of pigs that was nearby (vs. 11, 12)?**

The whole episode of the demons and the swine is a strange one. Why did the demons want to possess them? Perhaps they thought this was their only hope of staying in the area. The pigs were handy; so their presence prompted the demons' request. It is also possible that if they thought they were going to go down, they foresaw a possibility to destroy something in the process. This would be consistent with demonic malice; after all, they know their cosmic effort to thwart God is doomed to failure, and that does not stop them. They seem to take pleasure simply in causing harm, and the destruction of the pigs would have the added "value" of bringing some disfavor on Jesus from the pigs' owners.

#### **9. What reasons might Jesus have had for granting this request of the demons (v. 13)?**

By this Christ shows of how little worth are earthly possessions when set in the balance with the souls of men. The recovery of this demoniac was worth far more than the value of the two thousand swine.

The fact that the exorcism causes 2,000 pigs to stampede over a cliff is a clue about the amount of torment the man has been suffering. The stampede in and of itself is (or should be) a testimony to those residing in the surrounding area.

Notice also the direct result of the demonic possession of the swine: death. One may presume that this had been the demons' goal for the man himself. The demons had wanted to make the man miserable, but undoubtedly they also sought to destroy his life. He had cut himself in the process of being tormented by devilish powers. But Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

### **Result of Deliverance (Mark 5:18–20)**

Mark 5:14–17 (not in today's text) shows us the fear that is displayed by the people of the surrounding area. They ask Jesus to leave. They apparently value pigs over people. What a blessing they were throwing away! What a picture of spiritual blindness!

### **10. What instructions did Jesus give the man He healed (vs. 18,19)?**

We see in verse 18 that the man who "had been possessed with the devil" wanted to stay with Jesus. Perhaps the man wants to ensure that his deliverance will be permanent. But the man's deliverance does not depend on being physically present with Jesus. Whomever the Son sets free is free indeed (John 8:36).

The plea of the healed man would touch our hearts, and we should desire to follow his good example. There should be nothing more precious to us than the company of Jesus.

However, Jesus has other plans for the man. Jesus "suffered him not," which means he did not grant the man's request. Instead, he directed him to become a witness for Him. The term rendered "thy friends" refers primarily to a person's family, although it can point to a wider group of acquaintances. It is not clear how many friends the man had left. He was to tell his family and friends about how much the Lord had done for him.

Jesus' instructions here stand in contrast to His command to the leper (in last week's lesson) not to speak of his cure (Mark 1:43-44). Perhaps this incident may "soften up" the area for Jesus' return in Mark 7:31. It was important to let the people hear such a witness for the Lord regarding "compassion."

### **11. How did the former demoniac respond to what Jesus told him, and what was the result (v. 20)?**

The man is completely obedient to Jesus' command. There is no record that he questions what he is expected to do. This should cause us to do some self-examination: Do we ask skeptical questions when the Bible tells us to follow a certain path? Do we trust and obey, or do we try to "explain away" the Lord's directives for our lives?

When we obey the Lord, we can trust that He will bring good out of our situation. The results of the man's obedience speak volumes. The former demoniac took Jesus' instructions to heart. He became a zealous evangelist for the Lord. He apparently went beyond just his circle of family and friends in his desire to let the whole region of Decapolis know about Christ.

Here again the healed man serves as a good example for us. He shared the truth about Christ, and he did it with zeal out of a heart of love and joy. This should be our mission and our spirit as well.

No doubt the uncontrollable hostility of the demoniac had made him infamous throughout the land. When the people saw the change in him and heard his explanation, they were understandably amazed. What a marvelous testimony this was to the power of Christ! He truly can transform lives.

Today we are not to keep quiet about Christ. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19,20) requires quite the opposite. But many will see the gospel first in the examples of what Jesus has done for us in our personal lives. Make sure they see Christ in your daily actions.

**PRACTICAL POINTS:**

1. Satan offers power but at the price of hopeless degradation (Mark 5:1-5).
2. We need not fear Satan or his demons, for they fear our Master (vs. 6-7).
3. Satan seeks the control that Christ desires and Christ alone deserves (vs. 8-10).
4. Christ's power guarantees that even demons cannot do whatever they like (vs. 11-13).
5. Our lives are not on course if we do not have a strong desire to be with Jesus (v. 18).
6. Genuine love for Jesus is measured by obedience to Him (vs. 19,20).

**CONCLUSION:****Breaking Through Boundaries**

The story of the demoniac demonstrates the extent of God's mercy. It is freely available. It breaks traditional boundaries. It reaches to individuals on the fringes of society.

As recipients of God's grace and mercy, our aim is to reach those whom the world has forgotten, those who have encountered the trials and tribulations of this life and have been marginalized. Embracing a call to compassion is to love the unlovable, to reach the unreachable, to touch the untouchable.

Consider the problems of the poor. Proverbs 19:7 tells us that "all the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? He pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him." How many people shut their eyes to the poor? But the poor are the very people who need a touch of God's grace the most. And keep in mind that "the poor" does not refer only to those who have little money. There are also those who are "poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3).

The Lord has done great things for you. Don't keep quiet! While those around us may not be in physical chains, they can be chained in other ways (such as by life circumstances). When we see others in chains, we can be the love of God to them in their hour of greatest need.

**PRAYER:**

Father, may Jesus' instructions to the man released from demons be Jesus' instructions to us as well. May people know without a doubt what great things Jesus has done for us because we have modeled and spoken of those things. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**THOUGHT TO REMEMBER:**

Proclaim what Jesus has done for you.

**ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON:**

Next week's lesson helps us see that when we come to God, we must plead for His mercy. He will respond with His deliverance. Study Mark7:24-30 "**Pleading for Mercy.**"

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