

Jesus: Master of the Demoniatic

Last week we saw a section of Mark's gospel that started in chapter 4:35 and flows through to chapter 5:43. This section describes very graphically to us the power of the Servant of the Lord, Jesus the Son of God. This section contains four great miracles of Jesus. The first was Jesus calming the storm. So we saw that Jesus is the **Master of the Deep**. Today we will see He is also the **Master of the Demonic**. The third miracle shows He is the **Master of Disease** and the final miracle shows Jesus is **Master of Death**.

In each of these four great miracles, Mark presents Christ Jesus to us as the one who has power to overcome all hostile forces against God and man. To put it very practically to us today: what Mark is showing us, and consequently the Holy Spirit is showing us, is that man's extremity is God's opportunity: a storm that seamen couldn't overcome; a demoniac that no one could tame; a disease that no physician could cure; and a death that no parent could prevent. Jesus demonstrates His power over all situations, problems, difficulties and dangers.

Today we will take a trip to the cemetery. We will watch as Jesus demonstrates His power over the spiritual realm. We will watch Him deliver a man from a hopeless case of demon possession and bondage. As we watch the Lord deliver this poor soul, we need to keep in mind that He can move in our lives with the same power. He can break the chains that bind us and He can set people free!

Listen to the text, **Mark 5:1-20**:

- 1 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.**
- 2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,**
- 3 who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains,**
- 4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him.**
- 5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.**
- 6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him.**
- 7 And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me."**
- 8 For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!"**
- 9 Then He asked him, "What is your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name is Legion; for we are many."**
- 10 Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.**
- 11 Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains.**
- 12 So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them."**

- 13 And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.
- 14 So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened.
- 15 Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.
- 16 And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine.
- 17 Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.
- 18 And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him.
- 19 However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."
- 20 And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

Let me share three *parts* of this encounter:

I. The Condition of the Man (v. 1-5)

Verse 1 tells us that after the storm, "**Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes,**" or Gerasenes as some translations have it. Now this was a locality midway along the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, and it was mostly inhabited by Gentiles. This demoniac may well have been a Gentile, the farmers herding the swine may well have been Gentiles, because they farmed swine.

It may also have still be dark. Remember that they set off across the lake at evening. The storm arose in middle of the night. And now verse 2 says, "**And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.**"

What was this man's condition? First we see:

A. The Man's Defilement (v. 2) –

Mark tells us that this man had **an unclean spirit**, he was held fast in the grip of the devil. Demonic forces master his life and he is in a state of hopelessness and helplessness.

The phrase, "unclean spirit"—is used some thirteen times in the gospels. It means "to be demonized." It has the idea of being under the control or influence or dominion of an external force of some kind. Someone has defined demon possession in this way: "In some way that we cannot totally explain, a demon (or demons) possesses, inhabits, or controls a person's body or faculties against the person's will for its purpose of doing its will in the material world and to destroy and torment its host physically, mentally, and spiritually."

Then, in verse 9 we find out that he is not just the home to one foul spirit, but he is possessed by a Legion of demons. A legion in the Roman army could be from 2,000 to 6,000 men.

In verse 13, Mark tells us that when the demons left this man, they entered a herd of pigs that numbered 2,000! This man was totally under the control of the devil!

This man's case may seem severe. And it was. But his spiritual condition is just an intensification of the same condition of every lost soul in the world, Ephesians 2:2 tells us that all of us "**walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.**" We also were at one time under the dominion of the devil.

Let me ask you, do you believe the devil is a real personal being who also commands evil spirits that can possess people? I ask this because most people in our society do not believe that. One commentator I read on this passage said that it doesn't really matter whether this man was possessed or not, he believed he was possessed, and Jesus delivered him from that belief. Well, I'm sorry, it does matter whether he was demon-possessed or not, for three reasons: **first**, Jesus believed he was demon-possessed, that's why He delivered him.

Secondly the trustworthiness of Scripture is at stake if this man wasn't demon-possessed, because the Bible tells us he was. **Third**, whether or not this man was demon-possessed affects whether or not we believe it is possible for someone to be demon-possessed in the day and age in which we live.

We must beware of two opposite errors about the devil: one, the error of not believing in him; and the other of an excessive, unhealthy interest in him. C. S. Lewis put it well when he said: 'They', that is the demons themselves, 'are equally pleased by both errors, and hail a materialist and a magician with the same delight'.

I ask you the question: is it only incidental that with the rise of paganism, occultism, Satanism, over the last number of years in our society, that there has also been a rise of drug abuse, pornography, and sexual immorality?

We need to wake up today as God's people to the force that Satan is in our world today. Never underestimate the destructive power of Satan and his demons. Our enemy would destroy all of us if he could. 1 Peter 5:8 says, "**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.**" Now I know that this demoniac is an extreme example of what Satan can do - he ought to reveal to us the danger of dabbling with dead things, with sinful things, with Satanic things. It ought to cause believers in Christ to resist the devil, that he will flee from us - have nothing to do with him!

That's the man's defilement from demons, which leads to:

B. The Man's Depravity v. 3-4 –

This man had an unclean spirit that characterized itself with moral filthiness, and he often caused much harm to himself and others. This man **had his dwelling**

among the tombs. The demons in him drove him away from the living and he spent his life among the dead in the cemetery.

Mark also tells us that the people around him tried their best to restrain him. They would catch him and bind him with shackles and chains. These manmade devices could not hold him. He broke right through them with what appeared to be super-human strength.

Of course, man has his methods of trying to conquer and cure all the problems that plague humanity. Man has his **jails**, his **prisons**, his **institutions** and his **asylums**. Man pushes his **pills**, his **potions** and his **psychology** as the answer to man's dilemma. The problem with man's efforts to cure humanities problems is that man's efforts only treat the symptoms, not the cause of man's situation.

Man acts like he acts and does what he does because he is a sinner! Lost people choose darkness over light because they hate the light, **John 3:19-21**. Lost people choose sin over the Savior because they are evil and totally given over to the pursuit of evil, **Rom. 3:10-23**.

Let me just add that believers are not exempt from the temptations of evil. Any time a believer begins to desire the works of darkness he needs to examine his heart. Look at your spiritual condition when you find reasons for avoiding the light! When you can't sit through a preaching service, you have a spiritual problem! When you find reasons to avoid the house of God, you have a spiritual problem! You are beginning to revert back to the old ways of the old man. That is a dangerous and frightening place to find yourself!

C. The Man's Desperation v. 5 –

Can you imagine the terror this man caused? He is up there in that cemetery. He is naked. He is running around like a wild man day and night. He cuts himself and his body is covered with blood and scars. He screams and yells in his torment. We do not know whether this man cut his body in an effort to find relief from his demons or whether the demons caused him to do it. We do not know why he shrieked, screamed and cried in those tombs. It may be that he did these things because he was desperate to be free. It may be that he did them because he was compelled to do them. What matter is this, he is in a desperate situation and he needs help!

Whether you are lost and bound in sin or whether you are saved and out of God's will there is only one cure for your condition! You need Jesus! He is the antidote for the poison of sin! He is the cure for your condition! He is the solution to your problem! Get to Jesus and get the help you need!

That is the man's condition! It is horrible, but it could serve as a template that could be laid over millions of other lives. Some of us have been right where this man was: defiled, depraved and desperate! Some of us have family members and friends that are still in that condition. They need help and there is only one who can give them the help they really need. **His name is Jesus!**

So next, let's consider Jesus, the Master, and how he confronts this man.

II. The Master's Confrontation v. 6-13

A. v. 6 The Master's Compassion –

First we see the Master's compassion. Everyone in that region feared this man. They fled in terror when he came near. They trembled in their houses at the sound of his shrieks of torment. Children were warned to beware of that crazy man in the cemetery. Everyone avoided this man. Everyone, that is, but Jesus!

Jesus Christ did not avoid this man; He made a special trip across the sea and braved a storm simply because He wanted to deliver this one man from the grip of Satan.

Everyone else feared, avoided and despised this man; Jesus had compassion on him! Jesus cared about the condition he was in and Jesus was moved to do something about it!

Thank God for the boundless love and endless compassion of the Savior! Praise the Lord, there are no hopeless cases with Him! We see people and sometimes we think that some are a lost cause. We may wonder if they can or will be saved. But even in this very room there are some of us that others had written off as a lost cause. You are here and saved today because the Savior had compassion on you!

He loved you in spite of your sins and He came to where you were to deliver you from the bondage that gripped your heart and life. He loved you enough to die for you on the cross, **Rom. 5:6-8**; and He loved you enough to come and set you free. No one is beyond the compassionate touch of the Master! Not Matthew at his tax booth. Not Saul of Tarsus with his agenda of hate and destruction. Not the Ethiopian eunuch with his religious confusion. And not even you with all the baggage you carry. There is a compassionate Savior waiting to set you free!

Jesus sees people with a different set of eyes than we do! We see their problems, He sees what He can make of their lives! We see may see a drunk, He sees a deacon! We see a drug addict, He sees a preacher! We see a harlot, He sees godly mother! That is how lives are changed when they come to Jesus! He will take what you give Him and He will give you something much more precious in return!

Give Jesus your Jacob, the schemer; He'll give you back an Israel, a prince with God. Give Jesus a Simon, the cursing fisherman; He'll give you back Peter, a mighty preacher. Give Jesus John, a hot headed son of thunder; He'll give you back John, the apostle of love. Give Jesus your Saul, persecutor of the church, He'll give you back Paul, the missionary apostle. You give yourself to Jesus; you'll be amazed at what He'll do with you. It's amazing what Jesus can do when a life is placed in His hands.

This man, who ran from everyone else, ran to the Lord Jesus and fell at His feet. The demons that drove this man away from all human relationships drove him to the feet of Jesus. Why? They did not fall down before Jesus to worship Him as Lord; they merely fell down in acknowledgement of His deity. They were bowing in subjection to the Lord of Lords!

Jesus confronts the demons, ordering them to release their captive, **v. 8**. The demons acknowledge the deity and authority of Jesus, **v. 7**, and they beg Him not to “**torment**” them. That is, they beg Him not to send them into the abyss, **Luke 8:31**. The demons then request that they might be allowed to enter into a herd of swine that was feeding nearby, **v. 11-12**. Jesus gives them permission and they leave the body of the man and enter the swine, **v. 13**. When they do, the swine cannot tolerate the demons and kill themselves by running in to the sea, **v. 13**. This is a strange passage, but it teaches us some important truths.

First, it teaches us that all spirits are subject to Jesus. They recognize His authority, **v. 7**. They must have His permission to do the things they do, **v. 10-13**. Jesus is the Master even of the demons! That gives us hope today! It often looks like the devil is winning this thing. If you think that, then you need to read **Rev. 20:10**. That verse tells us that Satan will be cast into the lake of fire. Jesus wins!

This passage also teaches us that there is a cost to sin, here it is pigs. Our society can't accept that: they don't want to admit there is a cost for sin.

Then thirdly we need to see that what this shows us about these pigs is that the soul of a man was worth, to Jesus, all the pigs in the world. The soul of one man was more important than 2000 pigs, and this was a dramatic sermon to these farmers, to the demoniac himself, to the disciples: that the wages of sin is death - society doesn't want to hear that! They say: 'Be gone with your gospel! Be gone with your Jesus!'. Staggering, isn't it?

B. **v. 13 The Master's Command** – Every effort of man had failed this poor soul. Everything he had tried to retain a grip on his own sanity had proven useless. But, one word from Jesus and He was free!

That is the glory of salvation! Man can try his religious works, but they will all fail to save. Man can try his pop psychology, but it will fall far short of changing the heart of a sinner. Man can try his pills, his programs and his practices, but they will never change the lives of lost, hell bound sinners.

There is one solution to the problem of sin and His name is Jesus! There is only one hope for the fallen soul and His name is Jesus! There is only one hope for those trapped in a life of sin and **hopes name is Jesus, John 14:6; John 6:37**.

III. The Miracle of a Changed Life v. 14-20

A. He Was Changed By Jesus v. 14-16 –

When the pigs ran down the mountain and killed themselves, the servants who were tending the herd went to town and told their masters what had happened. The townsfolk came to see for themselves. When they arrived, they heard all the details and they could see the evidence of a changed life right before their eyes.

V. 15 Jesus Changed Him - No longer is he running around, crying out and cutting himself. Now, he is calm and seated beside Jesus! What a change! (III. That's how it works! You cannot meet Jesus and remain the same. He changes all those who come to Him, **John 3:3, 5; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:10!**)

V. 15 **Jesus Clothed Him** - No longer is he naked, but now he is clothed! (Ill. This is just further proof of his change! What we need to notice here is that what Jesus does in the heart of a man is **ALWAYS** worked out on the outside of a man, **Matt. 12:35!**)

V. 15 **Jesus Calmed Him** - We are told that he is in his right mind! Where there has been turmoil and agitation, there is now perfect peace! He has been changed spiritually, physically and mentally!

What a picture of the total change that salvation brings to the converted sinner! Jesus literally gives everyone He saves a brand new life!

B. He Was Committed To Jesus v. 17-18 –

The people of that region were afraid of Jesus, **v. 15**, and they demanded that He leave their country. For these people, this episode was just too much! They might have been able to handle a little preaching, but when Jesus started changing lives and costing them money they wanted no part of Him. So they drove Him away.

By the way, there are a lot of people like that around today! Just give them a Sunday morning service and they are satisfied. But when the Lord wants more they rebel and push Him away.

Most folks want just enough Jesus to make them feel good and to keep them out of Hell. Jesus isn't a good luck charm! He is a life-changing, eternity-altering Savior. He wants more than just a few hours a week. He wants everything you have and everything you are to be laid on the altar of surrender.

Look at the contrast! The townspeople want Jesus to leave. The man who has just been saved wants to be with Jesus. That's what salvation will do for you! It will ruin you! When you get saved and your heart is right with the Lord, you will love Him, His house, His Word and His people. Wherever Jesus is, that's where you will want to be too!

C. v. 19-20 He Was Commissioned For Jesus –

Jesus refused the man's request to go with Him. Instead, Jesus sent him back to his home to tell others what the Lord had done for him. And, that is precisely what he did. We went into "**Decapolis**", which means "**the ten cities**" and he preached the Gospel of grace to all who would listen!

Can you picture in your mind how this scene must have played out? The people see him coming. They cringe in fear, children hide behind their mothers, doors are slammed shut, and people run in fear to hide from the mad man.

But wait! Something is different today. Yes, it's still him. He still bears the scars in his body, but the look in his eye is different. He isn't screaming, he is preaching about a man named Jesus. He isn't running around like a wild man; he is calm and sane and he is talking about how Jesus has changed his life. He isn't naked; he is clothed and peaceful and changed. The people listen to his story and they are touched; some are no doubt saved. What a difference Jesus makes!

Nothing is more powerful than the testimony of a changed life!

Jesus mastered the demoniac, transformed his life and He do the same for you! One of the most notoriously bad characters that ever lived in New York was a man named Orville Gardner. He was the trainer of prize fighters and companion of all sorts of hard characters. His reputation was so thoroughly bad that he was called "**Awful Gardner**."

He had a little boy, whom he dearly loved, and this boy died. A short time after his boy's death, he was standing in the bar of a New York saloon, surrounded by a number of his companions. The night was sweltering, and he stepped outside the saloon to get a little fresh air. As he stood out there and looked up between the high buildings at the sky above his head, a star was shining down upon him, and as he was looking at it, he said to himself, "**I wonder where my little boy is tonight?**" Then the thought came to him quick as a flash, "**Wherever he is, you will never see him again unless you change your life.**"

Touched by the Spirit of God, he hurried from the saloon to the room where his godly mother was. He went in and asked his mother to pray for him. They spent the whole night in prayer and toward morning "**Awful Gardner**" found peace and gained the victory.

Gardner was the victim of an overwhelming appetite for drink, and had in his house a jug of whiskey at the time. He did not dare to keep it and did not know what to do with it. Finally, he took it down to the river, got into a boat and rowed over to an island.

He set the liquor on a rock and knelt down, and as he afterward said, "**I fought that jug of whiskey for a long time,**" and God gave him perfect deliverance. He did not dare to break it, lest the fumes should tempt him. He did not dare to leave it, lest someone else get it. Finally he dug a hole and buried it. He left the island a free man. "**Awful Gardner**" became a mighty preacher of the Gospel.

What has you today? Are you lost and in the grip of sin? Jesus can set you free! Are you out of God's will and trapped in pride and bitterness? Jesus can set you free! Do you need His touch? Do you need His compassion? Do you need His life-changing power? Friend, what you need is but a prayer of faith away! Come to Jesus! Come home! Obey His voice.

He weathered the storm on the sea to get to this man. He weathered the storm of Calvary to get to you. He is calling. Come to Him now.