

## FOLLOW SERIES SLIDE

This morning we are going to encounter one of the craziest stories in the Bible. Mark 5:1-20 tells the story of Jesus' most intense encounter with a person oppressed by demons, and it raises all kinds of questions.

- What are demons?
- How can we recognize demons?
- What should we do if and when encounter a demon?
- Why is this so important?

These are extremely important questions, but it is so easy for us to get caught up in the sensational details that we miss the message above the details, which shows us the radical love of Jesus Christ.

Verse 19 must be underlined, highlighted, circled, starred, crossed (whatever you like), as the story ends with Jesus saying: "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

This story reminds me of the words of Chad Johnson, when he said:

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**"Christians are called to love everyone on a scale only Heaven could weigh." - Chad Johnson**

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That's what is happening here. That's why I want to speak to you about a...

**"Love of a Different Kind"**

**Mark 5:1-20**

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**Mark 5:1-20 (Text displayed)**

These words teach us how...

**The Point: The merciful love of Christ overpowers demons to bring people freedom.**

## STORY

After Jesus calmed the storm by commanding the wind and the waves, he and his disciples made it to ["the other side" (cf. 4:35),] the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. This was Gentile territory, not Jewish land. In a real sense, Jesus mission to other nations begins right here (see also 7:24-30, 31-37; 8:1-10)

As soon as he steps off the boat, the mission begins! Verse 2

Let this picture sink into soul.

- Jesus meets a man who lived among the tombs (*verse 3*). For Jews, "graveyards were considered places of contamination" and rendered a person unclean. (Wright) Most Jews would run the other way, not Jesus.
- More notably, Mark says he lived "with an unclean spirit." As we saw in chapter 1:23, Mark often uses this language to refer to demons.

**What are demons?**

**“Demons are evil angels who sinned against God and who now continually work evil in the world.” - Wayne Grudem**

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While most translations, including the ESV, use the words “demon-possession,” the word would better be translated “demonized.” This man was oppressed by demons, even clearly inhabited by demons, but demons cannot possess anyone. Demonization can range from mild to very strong, and here we have the latter.

- Verse 3. His erratic and abnormal behavior caused people to view him as a threat. That’s why they tried to bind him with chains, but...
- His supernatural strength enabled him to rip the chains in two, break the shackles, and overpower anyone who tried to “subdue him.” The word “subdue” is often used for taming wild animals (Osborne).
- Not only that, verse 5 says he cried out night and day, under demonic torment and unbearable emotional pain. Think about it: he’s isolated (separated from his loved ones), naked and utterly ashamed.
- The end of verse 5 brings the gravity of his plight to the next level: “he was always . . . cutting himself with stones.” He was self-destructive and suicidal.
  - Suicidal thoughts are demonic in nature. I’m not saying our sinful nature does not produce plenty of evil thoughts, even thoughts of harm, but any thought to destroy life, any life at any time, including our own, is demonic in nature, from the pit of hell.
  - Now, why do I pause to address this. The National Institute of Mental Health tells us suicide rates have increased 40% over the last 20 years in America, and the CDC reported a 60% spike among those between aged 10-24!!
    - Source: [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide.shtml#part\\_154969](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide.shtml#part_154969)
    - Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr69/NVSR-69-11-508.pdf>
  - I plead with you: if you ever have a suicidal thought, and especially if they are recurring, cry out for help. We will not judge you; we will help you!

Like Jesus, we will step into your pain! That’s what happens in verse 8. Out of his great love and compassion, Jesus starts speaking to and commanding the demon: “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”

Jesus launched the confrontation which led the demon-oppressed man to run and fall at his feet. Verse 6.

- This is not an act of worship but submission to a higher authority. Who has the authority? JESUS!
- That’s why the demon cried out with a loud voice (in verse 7), “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.”
  - Here’s an interesting question: Who’s speaking, the demon or the man? Most likely, and this is how it often works, the demon speaks through the man.
  - He begins by acknowledging Jesus’ identity: “Son of the Most High God.” No other “so-called god” can touch our God’s position or authority [see 1:24, “Holy One of God,” and 3:11, “the Son of God”].
  - And we learn how ridiculous and childish demons can be when they say: “I adjure you by God, do not torment me.”
    - Think about it: this demon invokes the name of God to the Son of the Most High God. Ridiculous! Just annoying really.
    - And then, with an incredibly arrogant and hypocritical request, he says: “do not torment me.” The tormenter says, “Don’t torment me.”
- In verse 9: Jesus asks: “What is your name?” The demon replies: “My name is Legion, for we are many.” This tells us this man is not inhabited by one demon by many demons, perhaps thousands. [See Luke 8:2 where Mary Magdalene was freed from seven evil spirits]. I believe Jesus asks this question to help everyone understand the nature and power of his authority.

The demons know they are done, so they try to negotiate.

- First, they beg that he not send them out of the country (that's v. 10). "Jesus, we know if you want, you can send us miles and miles away, anywhere, so they beg Jesus to send them to the pigs."
- Verses 13. Just as they were trying to destroy the man, they succeed in destroying the pigs.

If you're anything like me, you're thinking: "This is one of the craziest stories in the Bible."

Let's summarize: what do we learn about demonic manifestation? How can we recognize the presence of demons?

- Demons often reveal themselves with abnormal behavior (wailing, crying out, supernatural strength).
- Demons seek to destroy often causing intense physical, emotional or psychological pain.
  - The intensity of suffering and the level of oppression were indicators of demonic activity.
  - **"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10)**
- Demons know Jesus' identity and fear his power. [And they fear his power in us, which should lead us to ask: "How much power is in us?"]
- Demons can be supernaturally discerned. Jesus steps off the boat and goes to work!
- Demons are stubborn, and typically must be commanded to leave. Even Jesus commands the demons multiple times.

You say, Tanner...

- Do you believe demons still exist? Absolutely. Why would we think they turned in their resignation letter after the 1<sup>st</sup> century (see Rev. 12:12 - Satan is working with "great wrath, because he knows that his time is short.")? Part of their greatest work is to make us think they're not working.
- Do they exist in our city? Look around.
- What should I do if I meet one? Pray and cast it out. Jesus provides the model, again and again: Tell it to leave, IN THE NAME OF JESUS.
- Why should I have confidence I am able to do that? You have Jesus! He has given us his authority (see Luke 10:19; Matthew 28:18-20)

What do we see in vv. 1-13?

### **1. The love of Christ drives out the destructive influence of demons (5:1-13)**

T: And that is exactly what Jesus does. This is love of a different kind, the kind that commands demons to leave, the kind that is NOT OKAY with this kind of suffering, which is what we see in vv. 14-17.

### **2. The love of Christ brings radical healing & freedom (5:14-17).**

Verse 14 tells us the herdsmen flee and tell everyone what happened everywhere (in the city and the country). The people naturally want to see it for themselves.

Now, verse 15. "And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had the legion, (listen) sitting there, clothed and in his right mind."

Take this in...

- The isolated man, living among the tombs . . . now experiences friendship.
- The unbindable man . . . is now “sitting there” calm.
- The tormented man . . . now experiences peace.
- The man who was shamed by his actions and nakedness . . . is clothed.
- The man crying out night and day . . . is now “in his right mind.”
- The man who inflicted pain on himself, cutting himself with stones . . . is now healed.

Hello & Welcome to the kingdom of God! Hello & Welcome to Jesus Christ! He is in the business of setting people free!

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**“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.” (Isaiah 61:1)**

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This is “Love of a Different Kind.” The quality of his love, the radical nature of Jesus’ healing power and the accompanying freedom is off the charts!

God made us to live free (s/o NH), and help others live in freedom. Jesus wants us freed from...

- ...Our sin... When Jesus is speaking about how we practice sin and show that we are enslaved to sin, he says: “Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” (8:32) HE IS THE TRUTH (John 14:6).
- ...And the influence of Satan... “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.” (1 John 3:8)

Why does this story matter? Why must join in the work of Jesus against the schemes of the devil and his demons? Reason #1) People are suffering. Reason #2) God hates it and wants to set them free.

The story tells us that not everyone loved the radical love of Christ. The end of verse 15 says, “they were afraid.” Verse 17 tells us that “they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region.” WHAT?! WHY?!

The kingdom of light is glowing before their eyes, and they are saying, “No thank you.” Like the disciples in the boat, they were overwhelmed, but their fear caused them to drive Jesus away, not draw near. Why?

- Some point to the financial ramifications. Kim Huat Tan says, “To those who have eyes only for economics, two thousand pigs are worth more than one formerly insane man.”
- That’s likely part of it, but think about what this says about Jesus, and what this means for us: “In the eyes of Jesus, the rescue and restoration of one person is more important than vast capital assets.” - James Edwards [That’s how he feels about you!]
- Another related perspective is put forward by Mark Strauss: “Jesus is seen as a dangerous disruption to their peaceful lives. The inbreaking power of the kingdom of God does not bring a comfortable life and the status quo but rather a radical transformation of individuals and societies.” - Strauss

T: We have to decide. Is Jesus worth the cost? Is the love of Christ which brings radical healing and freedom worth the cost? Finally...

### 3. The love of Christ moves the freed to bring freedom to others (5:18-20).

The people of the Decapolis may be begging Jesus to leave, but the man healed of all his demons begs to go with Jesus.

This is the right response of someone who has encountered Jesus: I want to be *with you*. This is the first step of discipleship (Mark 3:14). Jesus, I want to be with you, focused, face to face.

But Jesus surprises us with his strategic purpose in verse 19. “And he did not permit him. But said to him, ‘Go home to your friends and tell them how much *the Lord* has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.’”

- Jesus makes him a missionary. “You go tell your friends, who I am and what I’ve done for you. Tell them about the radical mercy you have experienced through my love and grace.”
  - Some of you may be thinking, “Why does Jesus tell some people not to tell but others to tell?” We’ve talked about the Messianic Secret. He tells some to not spread the news yet because of the Jews’ misunderstanding of the Messiah as an earthly, conquering king. These Gentiles would not have had the same misunderstanding.
- Verse 20 describes his efforts: “And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.”
- He didn’t just go to his house and tell his family. He went throughout the entire region, the ten cities of the Decapolis!

Jesus tells us to do the same. Has God had mercy on you? How much has he done for you? Jesus is saying: “Go! Tell people in your life who I am and how much I’ve done for you.” (Mark 3:14; Matt 28:18-20)

What a great week to hear these words from Jesus? This is why we pray, give and share to support the work of missions all over the world in Multiply March! This is why we tell others the good news this Easter season!

Who’s in your network? What friends can you tell? Who’s the one person that God may be bringing to your mind to invite to our Easter celebration right now?

I dare you to ask God to show you.

I dare you to ask God to help you.

I dare you to step out and love people in Jesus’ name, so that more and more people can experience his love!

- **“Take a risk. Your Father is the King of the Universe.” - T.J. Tims**
- **[www.rhc.church/easter](http://www.rhc.church/easter)**

Live with a “Love of a Different Kind.”

*Conclusion:*

If we were to fast forward to the beginning of chapter 8, we would find Jesus back in the Decapolis, with a crowd of 4,000 people gathering to hear his teaching and experience the power of his kingdom. There is little doubt that many in that crowd were compelled to come by the loving words of this one, freed man.

Don't underestimate how God can use one person for his name. Don't let this moment pass by without saying, "Oh God, make me that one person. Empower me to tell others of your mercy and how much you've done for me!"

Do you need some confidence to stand against the schemes of Satan's team? Do you need some confidence to tell how much God has done for you?

Jesus rode in on the back of a young donkey with shouts of salvation on Palm Sunday, but Palm Sunday led to Good Friday. What happened at the cross? Colossians 2:13-15 tells us...

**"And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him." (Colossians 2:13-15)**

Jesus has already won the victory. We get to walk in it and shine forth his kingdom of light.