

Our Pork is More Important

Mark 5:1-20

Good morning.

Most Evangelical Christians believe demons existed at some point in time, because the Bible teaches on the subject;

However, like most super natural things, Christians differ greatly in what they believe about demons; whether they still exist, where they reside, and the amount of power they possess.

I have said many times, Christians are pendulum people; some give way too much credit to Satan and demons, while others want to believe everything spiritual can be explained away.

Biola College's New Testament professor Dr. Clint Arnold believes that Christian academia has been swayed by the "philosophical naturalism" of secular academia.

(Philosophical naturalism is the belief that everything that happens can be explained by natural causes, with no supernatural intervention.)

Biola Magazine reported the early church fathers believed powerful evil spirits were seeking to thwart God's work in the world; including blinding people to the truth of the gospel and hindering the sanctification of believers.

They also believed that Jesus gave all his followers the authority to cast out demons

Please open your Bibles to *Mark 5* as we continue that study

Last week, we studied about a Mega storm that happened right after Jesus finished teaching three parables about the unstoppable Kingdom of God.

The Lord basically took His followers from the classroom of learning into a practical life application situation;

These followers of Jesus **obeyed** and got into the boat, and they endured a loud, mighty, exceedingly great, MEGA storm; because they obeyed Jesus.

In life, we are never promised an easy trip; but, we are promised an arrival to where He directs. We are not in control; Jesus is.

During all of the storms of life, it may get windy and scary; but, if we trust and obey the Lord, we experience His perfect peace.

We need to have faith that the Lord will bring us safely to the destination He has determined we should go! Jesus will never leave nor forsake us; especially in the Mega storms of life!

This morning, we are going to hear where Jesus heals a man from an affliction that still causes great controversy today.

This man was possessed by many demons and this sort of reminds of either someone with schizophrenia or something out of the 70's show, Creature Features.

I. The boat arrives at a Gentile territory.

Read *Mark 5:1-5*

When we read this narrative, there are many questions we start to think about: we might concentrate on a tormented naked man with super-strength living in tombs. We might think on demons.

Warren Wiersbe said, *“This entire scene seems very unreal to us who live in so-called “modern civilization,” but it would not be unreal in many mission fields.*

In fact, some Bible teachers believe that demon possession is becoming even more prevalent in today’s “modern society.”

The Disciples were probably wondering why Jesus wanted to come into a Gentile area at all; let alone, a Gentile area that was well known for hog farming.

But the main point of the narrative is not about demons and their power; it is not even about the unclean pigs; but, that main point of this passage is about the freeing, almighty power of Jesus.

The **identity** and mission of Jesus, along with the way we respond to Jesus; is the main focus of this passage of scripture.

There is a lot of controversy about where this narrative took place; however, we do not need to get bogged down with that

(Pic) The city of Gadara and its surrounding area are referred to as the Gadarenes; it is located southeast of the Sea of Galilee.

The people were descendants of the tribe of Gad, who were Gentiles and they were known for raising pigs, which were unclean animals and illegal for Jews to eat or touch.

Immediately after these storm tossed Disciples get out of the tiny fishing boat, they encounter two demon possessed men.

Even though *Mark* concentrates on the one demon possessed man, we know from *Matthew 8*, there was another with him.

Matthew 8:28 there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. NKJV

Let's discuss some of this man's outward problems which were only symptoms; they were not the real problem.

Luke 8:27 And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. NKJV

This poor man had been demon possessed for a **long** time.

This poor man ran around naked and lived like a **wild** animal.

This poor man lived near decaying, dead bodies near the tombs.

This poor man was tormented and self-destructive; but, this man had supernatural **strength** as well.

According to *Mark 5:3*, this man had uncontrollable behavior and no one could bind him, not even with chains.

Jesus said in *John 10:10*, *“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” NKJV*

What a sad existence; this man probably started out as a normal member of society; but, at some point, this man became demon possessed and it became so bad, he no longer fit into society.

One has to wonder how much of the drug use and mental illness today in America, is caused by the destruction of the evil one.

II. Jesus' identity is no secret to spiritual beings.

Read *Mark 5:6-7*

Here in *vs. 6*, we have a strange occurrence, the demon sees Jesus afar off and comes and worships Jesus.

We have stated this before; only God is to be worshipped and if any man or even an angel accepts worship they are blaspheming; Jesus didn't stop the demon from worshipping Him.

But why would a demon or a fallen angel, who followed Satan in his rebellion against the Lord, then come and worship Him?

There are two schools of thought for this:

J. Vernon Mc Gee believes the man inside worshipped Jesus, not the demon; as a spiritually split personality.

(However) Demons, as well as Satan himself, are **created** servants of the Most High God; so, they cannot help themselves but to fall at Jesus' feet and worship.

Philippians 2:9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

Philippians 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

Philippians 2:11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. NKJV

Mark 5:7 is a demonic statement of faith; there are no atheists among demons because they know the absolute power and authority of Jesus Christ.

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble! NKJV

The Disciples may have not realized who Jesus was, but these Demons understood who He is full well.

In this narrative from *Matthew 8:29*, it is the first time in the New Testament the name *Son of God* is used.

Not only did these Demons realize who Jesus was; they also knew their future destiny, and prophecy of the End Times.

*Matthew 8:29 “Have You come here to torment us, before **the time**”*

In *Matthew 25:41*, we read "*Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire **prepared** for the devil and his angels: NKJV*

Hell was originally created for Satan and his demons; but if you desire to go there, Jesus will not force Himself upon anyone.

But there is a set time for the Great and Awesome Day of the Lord and even the Demons realize it.

These demons implore Jesus not to torment them.

III. Moving day.

Read *Mark 5:8-13*

Jesus commands the demons to come out of the man and then He demands to know their name; the demons simply answer that their name is Legion, because there were many.

A legion in the Roman Army was 4,000-6,000 men; we don't know the exact number of demons; but, there were a lot of them.

We do know that there were many demons possessing this man with overwhelming power, destroying his life and property.

The number of demons possessing this man, filled 2,000 pigs.

Someone once said, "*Satan will take a man or a pig; and if he gets a man, he will turn him into a pig.*"

Jesus has a mission and no one, including these demonic forces, can hinder the plan of God.

Luke 19:10, "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." NKJV

Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee and endured the storm; not only to teach His followers a great lesson on trust; but, He also had a mission to **save** this desperate man's life!

The demons don't want to be bound, because they realize they need a host body because they are spiritual beings.

Some demons are held until the Last Days; but, others, for reasons unknown to us, are allowed to be free and to torment and cause destruction.

Jude 6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; NKJV

But understand this; all principalities and powers are subject to the Lord, whether they like it or not.

Notice the demons say, *“Please don't send us to the place of torment yet, let us go into those swine”*

David Guzik said, *“This was the unclean spirit speaking, not the possessed man. The demon did not want to leave his host.*

“Demonic possession is when a demonic spirit resides in a human body, and at times the demon will show its own personality through the personality of the host body.” (Guzik)

The demons knew they needed a body to dwell in and Jesus gave them permission.

The pigs, having more sense than the people, don't want the demons inside of them, immediately killed themselves by running off a cliff.

In ***Luke's*** account;

Luke 8:35 Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

Luke 8:36 They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed.

Luke 8:37 Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned. NKJV

IV. What is more important in your life?

Read *Mark 5:14-17*

Later in *Mark* we will hear; *Mark 8:36 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?*

Mark 8:37 Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? NKJV

While we all need to eat and make a living; unfortunately, many believers worship the “god” of money more than the Lord God.

The Lord, in an act of mercy and grace, freed this man by casting the demons out of him and sending them into a nearby herd of pigs.

These two miserable men were healed, set free and clothed, but the people of Gadara are mad and want Jesus out of their lives.

The people see what Jesus has done for these men and they beg Him to leave, they want no part of the Son of God.

Notice, first the demons beg to be left alone by Jesus and now in the face of this miracle these people ask Jesus to leave.

We must understand, when someone rejects Jesus Christ it is demonic in nature. But the town's people here are scared...

Luke 8:34 When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country.

Luke 8:35 Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. NKJV

The townspeople heard of this miracle and begged Jesus to leave and never come back! **Why?**

First, according to ***Isaiah 66***, some Gentiles offered swine's blood as some type of ritual.

These people were previously scared because of the demons within the man; but now, they are scared by the power of Jesus casting the demons out into the swine.

Jesus showed up, revealed to this man the truth and set him free from the bondage of Satan.

The scriptures specifically states the man was now seated at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in, and his right mind.

There is another reason these town people want Jesus to leave.

Remember, these people made a living by raising pigs, which were unclean and illegal for Jews to eat or touch.

These people are mad and scared when they see these demon-possessed men healed and their swine were all killed.

Money and profit were more important to them than saving a soul or having God the Son in their midst.

Greed was these people's "god", so they wanted nothing to do with Jesus.

These folks are mad because of the loss of money from the loss of the pigs...but again,

***Mark 8:37 Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?
NKJV***

A changed life scared these town's people, because it made them face the reality that there is a God and they had to make a **decision** of what they were going to do about it.

Other than eternity apart from Christ, the main consequence of not serving the Lord is bondage; Jesus set these two men free.

True freedom is not self centered and we learn that someone has to die to themselves in order to accept Jesus and His free gift.

Ephesians 2:1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,

Ephesians 2:2 in which you once 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. NKJV

A changed life scares the world because it proves Jesus is real and demands a personal **decision** be made with that information.

And notice, the whole city asks Jesus to leave.

They have witnessed the grace and love of God, but their agenda and wealth was more important than seeing people set free.

Matthew Henry said, “*There are a great many who prefer their swine before their Savior, and so come short of Christ, and salvation by him.*” (Matthew Henry)

Jesus is a gentleman and will not force Himself on anyone; a person must **willingly** die to themselves and accept Him.

V. Practical Application.

Read ***Mark 5:18-20***

The man, who was healed, now out of a grateful response, wants to be next to Jesus and leave with Him.

Just like a lot of people who get saved would desire to be taken out of this world and get to heaven instantly; no battles, no storms; just take me with You Jesus.

But Jesus has a purpose for him and wanted this man to stay in his home town and proclaim the Gospel to those close to him.

I love to support mission's work' but, the Gospel is needed here as well.

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." NKJV

First Missions' is to reach our Jerusalem and Judea, and then to reach our Samaria, and finally to reach the ends of the earth.

Jerusalem and ***Judea*** represent local people who were like them ***Samaria*** represented people who were in close proximity but different culturally...and finally, the world needs to be reached with the Gospel.

Jesus told this man to go home and tell your family and friends about the healing and the change the Lord has done for you.

This guy was perfect example of ***2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. NKJV***

This man was set free; once under demonic power has a new life. The old life is gone; and our new life has begun!

From the mega storm to rescue a demon possessed man;

The Holy Spirit reveals Jesus, the Creator God who came in human flesh; the Lord of the Storm and the conqueror over the powers of darkness.

No one else could set this man free from the demons that held him captive; Jesus came to set us free from sin and bondage!

What will you do with Jesus, the "King of Kings, the Lord of Lords"

Will you beg Jesus to stay or beg Jesus to leave?

There are a number of things we learn from this passage.

1. Man, apart from Jesus Christ is **powerless** to deal with sin and darkness found within people.

If men fail to follow Jesus; that decision will rob them of their sanity and self control.

All society could do to correct this behavior, was to lock them up and keep them away like these demon possessed men on the outskirts of town.

2. These demons had to obey the absolute authority of Jesus.

Notice there was no epic battle, Satan and his demons are no match for the Creator Jesus Christ; He simply said, "**Go**".

These demons had to ask permission from the Lord.

3. Satan only places people in bondage; he cannot give any **good** gifts.

Warren Wiersbe said, "*Satan will take a pig or a man; and if he gets a man, he will turn him into an animal*"

4. Some men worshipped pigs and money more than celebrating the freedom seen in Christ. **Mark 8:36-37**
5. Jesus came to men living within a tomb without an **invitation**. **Ephesians 2:13**

Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. NKJV

Jesus is always available and present; but, a person has to be willing to accept Him for themselves.

The end of this place was a complete destruction; when Israel finally fell completely to Rome in 70 AD, the Romans began their final assault in Gadara.

What is important in your life; your Pork or the Lord

Timothy Keller said, *“Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And the compelling reason for maybe choosing some sort of god or spiritual-type thing to worship...is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive.*

If you worship money and things, if they are where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough” ...

Spurgeon, *“To dwell with God is better than life at its best; life at ease, in a palace, in health, in honor, in wealth, in pleasure.”*

In Christ we find the abundant life He promises us and the joy that never ends, along with a peace that floods our soul.