

## **Mark 5:1–20 — Jesus and the Demon-Possessed Maniac**

**February 17, 2019**

One of my favorite parts of church is hearing testimonies of how God is at work in people's lives. I love to hear how God takes people in a disaster, rescues them through Jesus, then uses them in ways they never expected for Christ's kingdom.

Does anyone else love to hear those kinds of testimonies?

Today, as we continue our study in the Gospel of Mark, we have one of those testimonies. This is without a doubt one of the most radical stories of a life rescued by Jesus in the entire Bible.

Last week, after Jesus and his disciples finished a long day of teaching on the lakeshore outside of Capernaum, Jesus and his apostles sailed across the Sea of Galilee during the night. No doubt the disciples thought they were about to enjoy some much needed rest and relaxation. They had no idea what was about to happen on the lake.

While crossing the Sea of Galilee, there was a sudden and violent storm that descended upon them and threatened to sink their boat. The Greek word used to describe the wind in this storm is the same word used for hurricane and cyclone. There were 70-plus mph winds. Waves on the Sea of Galilee during this type of storm are as high as 10 feet. Last week, we saw that these waves crashed into the boat, flooding it. They were about to sink when the disciples woke Jesus. They were not prepared for what he did. He stood up and spoke to the wind and the waves, "Peace! Be still!" The wind went from raging to instantly calm as fast as you can snap your fingers. The waves, that were towering over

the boat, instantly went flat, leaving the lake as smooth as a piece of glass. The forces of nature obeyed Jesus' voice like a well-trained dog trying to please its master. The disciples were in complete awe at the power Jesus had to control the forces of nature with only his words.

For the rest of the night, I suspect the disciples were bailing the flooded boat, making it sea worthy. They also needed to get back on course because they were driven off course by the storm.

When Mark 5 begins, it is the early morning hours of the next day when Jesus and his apostles finally arrive on the other side of the lake.

Usually I would take the time to read the passage, but since this is such a long text, we are going to dive in and we will read the Scripture as we study it together.

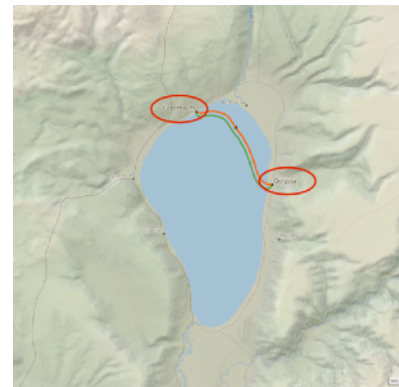
### **Demons destroy life.**

**They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. Mark 5:1 (ESV)**

This is known as the account of the Gadarene demoniac. It is also told in Matthew and Luke. As we work our way through these verses in Mark, I will add some of the details found in Matthew and Luke to help us have a better understanding of the way things unfolded.

Mark said they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes. Luke also said they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, that was opposite

Galilee. When we read this story in the book of Matthew, he changed the name



and said they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes. Matthew gave us a different name. Which one is right? Did one or more of the biblical writers make a mistake?

Actually both are right. Gerasenes is right because on the shore of the Sea of Galilee is a little town called Gergesa. The disciples and Jesus landed next to the small town of Gergesa. The problem is this town was so small, most people didn't recognize that name. A little further south and inland was a much larger and more influential town, which everyone recognized, called Gadarea. Mark and Luke were right because Jesus and the apostles landed at the small village of Gergesa. The problem is this town was so small, most people didn't know where it is located. Matthew was also right because he simply chose the name of the much larger town that was south of Gergesa called Gadarea so people would recognize the location.

Gergesa is a little like Fostoria. Unless you live here, nobody know where to find Fostoria because it is so small. If you tell people you live two hours east of Sioux Falls, everybody know where you are located because they recognize the name of the big city.

The important thing for us to know is Jesus was now in Gentile territory. This is the beginning of Jesus' mission beyond the Jews to the Gentile world.

And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. Mark 5:2 (ESV)

This was not a man from the local chamber of commerce. He was not a member of the community welcome wagon. He did not plan to greet Jesus with a pan of brownies. This guy was your worst nightmare. Here we have a guy who

lives in a graveyard on a hillside. Anybody who lives in a graveyard, and is not there to mow the lawn, is very troubled. This guy was a natural fit for a role in an exorcist movie.

At this time, it was probably dawn. The sun was coming up. Jesus and the apostles pulled their boat on shore and tied it to a tree. The demon-possessed man who lived in the hillside graveyard watched them come across the lake. He saw them land on shore and started running down the hillside to greet them. He didn't have plans to give them a Starbucks gift card. He planned to terrify them, beat them to a pulp so they bled and possibly kill them.

I know some of you think I might be overstating the evil in this man's nature. When we look at Matthew 8:28, which is the parallel account, we can see how scary this man had become.

And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. Matthew 8:28 (ESV)

Let's begin at the end of the verse. He was so fierce that no one could pass that way. Nobody ever came near the graveyard because they feared him. The word fierce could also be translated as violent. This man beat and tortured people when they came near him in the graveyard, so everyone avoided him.

Matthew told us there were actually two demon-possessed men. Why did Mark and Luke only mention one? There is a simple explanation. While there were two demon-possessed men, Mark and Luke told us the testimony of one of the demon-possessed men. To include the other man is not part of this man's testimony.

He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain... Mark 5:3 (ESV)

First, we see the reason he was at this hillside graveyard was not because he was putting flowers on a grave. He lived there. This was his home. He slept in the tombs with dead men's bones. He slept in a tomb with the smell of rotting human flesh. This was one deranged man. He was a madman and a maniac. He was extremely evil. He was a sociopath. He was a monster. Look what Luke said about him.

When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. Luke 8:27 (ESV)

This man started in society but because of the extreme demonic possession that took over his life, he was kicked out of society. He no longer had a home.

To make matters worse, he was always naked. This guy never wore clothes. It doesn't say this directly but it implies that the reason this man was naked is because he was perverted. Remember that he was as wicked as you can get. Sociopaths like this guy are infamous for their deviant sexual behavior. They are danger to themselves and a danger to everyone around them as the desires of their heart are rape and sadism. Romans 1 tells us that as people go further from God, they will experience increasing levels of sexual depravity. This guy was as far from God as you can get. He was a naked pervert that could not live in society because he terrorized people in every way. He made Charles Manson and Ted Bundy look like Eagle Scouts compared to his behavior. It wouldn't surprise me if he was a murderer. I am sure there was a long list of

people he tortured and terrorized. Demonically possessed people don't keep to themselves. They terrorize society. That is why we lock them up.

Notice people tried to restrain this guy because he terrorized so many people. They even chained him up, but all their attempts at restraining him were useless. The demons made him so strong he even broke chains that held him. This guy makes the Hulk from Marvel Comics look weak. This is a level of demonic possession that is off the charts because it results in supernatural levels of strength.

...for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. Mark 5:4 (ESV)

Now we learn just how strong these demonic powers made him. He had often been bound with shackles and chains. The Greek word for shackles is related to the Greek word for foot. These were leg irons. Chains is a more general term, but it probably refers to handcuffs. This guy was so strong that he pulled chains clasping his hands together apart. Maybe they used a small chain the first time, but he broke it. I am sure they used a much larger chain to bind him the next time, but he broke that too. They did not make anything strong enough to restrain him. The leg irons, he didn't pull those apart. In Greek, it says he shattered them. I can only assume he hit his leg irons so many times that they shattered into pieces.

All you can do with someone like this is try to stay away from them. You can't stop him. You can't restrain him. You can only stay away from him.

This guy was not someone you want to go against head-to-head in a dark alley. You would die. Even if there were 10 of you versus just this one guy, he would beat all of your friends to a pulp.

Who know how many people he murdered? Who knows how many people he raped and tortured? He was the epitome of wickedness. He was an out-of-control, demon-possessed sociopath that was the neighbor from hell.

Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. Mark 5:5 (ESV)

All night and day long people could hear his screams resonating off the mountains. The Greek word for cry out means to scream because you are in pain and agony. These were the a blood-curdling screams of someone being tortured. It would make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up. Imagine lying in bed at night and instead of hearing a coyote howling at the moon, you hear the cries of someone screaming in agony because he is cutting away his flesh with rocks. Can you imagine what this did to children? Can you imagine what your wife would be like if she was constantly exposed to the screams of someone being tortured?

While the demons gave this man supernatural strength, they were using his supernatural strength to injure himself. This man was the original cutter. He was not cutting himself with razor blades. He was hacking off his flesh with dirty rocks, because the demons drove him to cut himself.

Teenagers, listen to me. Cutting is demonic in origin. Demons want you to cut yourself. Demons want you to mutilate yourself, just like this guy. The difference is you have a razor blade. This guy just has rocks. I believe most

teenage cutting come from demonic influence as the demons inspire you to destroy yourself, just like they were doing to this guy. No wonder he was constantly screaming in agony!

What is the way out for the cutter? It is to walk with Christ. The Bible says that when we walk by the Spirit, we will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. When we walk after our sinful nature, we open ourselves to be influenced by the desires of demons, which include cutting and self mutilation.

If you could take a vote about one person you would want removed from the neighborhood, it would be this guy. He was the naked neighbor from hell who was violent. He murdered, tortured, and raped people. He was so strong he was unstoppable. He was the nightmare of an entire city.

Just to be clear, while demons sometimes works this way in people like the Ted Bundy, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, not every demon inspires people to this kind of overt evil. Satan's favorite way is to work covertly, not overtly. Satan loves to disguise himself as an angel of light. He loves to look like a good guy. He loves to send those who are demonically influenced to a church. He wants to get them in teaching positions or in places of influence so he can lead many people astray. Satan loves to work more subtly. If Satan only worked overtly, he would be easy to identify. Satan loves clandestine operations because they are most effective. Earlier in Mark, we met a demon-possessed man in the synagogue. He didn't look like a demonic guy. He looked like a normal guy. The demon was undercover in that man's life as the demon sought to lead people astray.



There are still plenty of nutty, demonic people running around. Thankfully many of them are locked up in our prisons, not roaming the streets.

Let's get back to our story. This man sat on the hillside in tombs with dead bodies. He saw the little boat sailing across the lake and landing on shore. This guy and his buddy realized they had some new victims to beat, rape, torture and maybe kill. They ran down the hill with the anticipation of a lion about to tear apart its prey, but when this man got close enough to realize it was Jesus, this changed in a jiffy.

And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. Mark 5:6 (ESV)

When he was close enough to see Jesus and realize Jesus was in the group, he ran right to Jesus, but instead of attacking him, he fell down before Jesus on his face.

Some of you may wonder how this man recognized Jesus.

It wasn't the man who recognized Jesus. It was the demons in the man that recognized Jesus. Demons were around before the creation of the earth. They know Jesus. These demons knew Jesus from eternity past.

In Luke's account, he added that when this man was running to Jesus and when the demons recognized Jesus, they shrieked. The Greek word means to scream in terror. This demon-possessed guy, who scares everybody and makes them run for their lives, saw Jesus and he screamed in complete terror. Not only did he scream in terror when he saw Jesus, but he ran and fell down on his face in front of Jesus. The demons in this guy were terrified by Jesus and were begging not to be tortured by Jesus.

This was a complete reversal. The demon-possessed man, who tortured and scared everyone in the town, was now screaming and scared of Jesus because he came to town. The man with the demons, that no one could restrain, was now trembling in fear in front of Jesus. Everything was reversed.

And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." Mark 5:7 (ESV)

Now we hear what the demons were saying to Jesus through this man's mouth. They were crying out with a loud voice. The word for cry means to scream. They said to Jesus, "What have you to do with me?" That means, "What business do we have with each other? Why are you interfering with my business?" Remember, they were in Gentile territory. These demons expected Jesus to stay on the Jewish side of the lake and mind his own business. They were shocked that he came to the Gentile side of the lake and stuck his nose in their business.

The other thing to notice is these demons had good theology. They recognized Jesus as Son of the Most High God. Until we get to the middle of Mark, the only time Jesus was recognized as the Son of God was by demons. Peter recognized Jesus' true identity in the middle of the book. The centurion watching Jesus die got Jesus' true identity at the end of the book. Demons got Jesus' identity right throughout the book. They have good theology.

These demons were also begging Jesus not torture them. They were OK with torturing the man and everyone else in town, but they were not OK with the idea of Jesus torturing them. There is an interesting bit of detail added by Luke in his account of what transpired.

And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. Luke 8:31 (ESV)

What is this abyss? Why were they begging Jesus not to send them there? It is time for a little demonology theology. In the Bible, the abyss is sometimes called the pit or the bottomless pit. It is a demonic holding chamber where God is currently holding some especially wicked demons so they can no longer influence the earth. They are held there until judgment day when they will be sent to the lake of fire. We first read about these especially wicked demons in Genesis 6. It says in Genesis 6:4 that sons of God were coming in to the daughters of men and they bore them children. I will spare you the details but the sons of God were apparently powerful demon who were mating with human wives to create a demonic-human hybrid. How this is possible, I don't know. The Bible doesn't give us many details other than to say they were trying to corrupt the human race into a demonic-human hybrid.

It was so wicked that God immediately responded by choosing Noah, building an ark, and sending the flood to wipe everyone off the face of the earth except for Noah and his family, because the wickedness on the earth was so great. Apparently some of these extremely evil demons were bound in this pit at the time of the flood. We also see this discussed in 2 Peter.

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment... 2 Peter 2:4 (ESV)

Peter talked about angels. The Greek word for angel refers to spiritual beings. Peter was not talking about good angels. He was talking in this verse about fallen angels known as demons. This is also not talking about all demons

but only some demons. If it was talking about all demons being removed from influencing the earth, Jesus would not have needed to cast demons out of people. Therefore Peter was saying that the sin of some demons resulted in them being cast into hell.

The Greek word for hell in this verse is not the usual word for hell. It is the word Tartarus. Check the footnote in your Bible and you will see that is what it means. In Greek mythology, Tartarus was a pit of torment used for holding the wicked. The Greek term for gloomy darkness in some manuscripts is literally called “the pit.”

Peter said some demons, when they sinned, were confined into a pit, a holding chamber to keep particularly wicked demons from influencing the earth until they are taken out of the pit on the day of judgment.

Jude also talks of this.

And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day... Jude 6 (ESV)

Many scholars think Jude was referencing what happened in Genesis 6. Those demons left their proper place of dwelling as spiritual beings and produced children with human beings. God took them and had them chained in the pit until the day of final judgment when they will be taken out, judged by Christ and sent to the lake of fire forever.

This pit, also known as the abyss, is talked about four times in Revelation. Let me show you one occurrence.

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and

threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. Revelation 20:1–3 (ESV)

There will come a time when Jesus will not just confine especially wicked demons in the pit, but he will confine Satan and all other demons in the pit for a thousand years. During that time Jesus will rule the earth and everything will go well because Jesus is in charge. That is called the millennium. At the end of the millennium, they will be let out for a brief time for one last chance. When they fail their last chance and don't bow their knees to Jesus, Jesus will judge them and send them to the lake of fire forever.

The especially powerful and wicked demons that possessed this man in Mark were begging Jesus to not send them to this pit. They knew this was where they belonged. They knew Jesus had all the power to send them there. They were just begging Jesus not to put them there.

And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" Matthew 8:29 (ESV)

These demons knew they will eventually be sent to the lake of fire. Their biggest worry was that Jesus would start tormenting them before the appointed time. Their biggest worry was that Jesus would start tormenting them now in the pit before Jesus will torment them in the lake of fire forever. They knew their destiny. They just didn't want to begin suffering early.

We have seen the destruction demons can bring. Now let's see the deliverance Jesus provides.

## Jesus Saves Lives.

For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." Mark 5:8-9 (ESV)

Jesus was telling the unclean spirit to come out of the man. Before this demonic spirit came out, Jesus asked him his name. Just as we have names, demons have names. This demon said his name was Legion because the man was possessed by more than one demon. When Jesus talking with this demon, he was talking with the head demon in this man or the representative demon in the man.

There were so many demons in this man they had a collective name. The name Legion is a reference to a Roman legion. One article I looked up on Roman legions said they contained 5,000 soldiers. Another article I looked up said they contained 6,000 soldiers. I was confused so I did a little more research. I learned Roman legions during the reign of Julius Caesar were 3,500 soldiers. By the end of the Roman empire, Roman legions grew to contain 8,000 soldiers. I don't know if this guy was possessed by 5,000, 6,000 or 8,000 demons. All I know is he was possessed by thousands of demons at one time. This guy was crawling with demons. This explains his incredible strength.

Incidentally, possession by multiple demons at one time was not an uncommon occurrence. We see it other places in Scripture. Mary Magdalene was freed from seven demons in Luke 8:2. Nevertheless, thousands of demons at one time is unprecedented.

These demons knew they are at a level of wickedness that would normally get them sent to the bottomless pit. They were begging Jesus not to go there.

There was something else they are begging Jesus.

And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Mark 5:10 (ESV)

Demons are territorial. I don't have time to get into the biblical background on this but some demons work geographical areas. Maybe the best way to think of this is, like an animal that marks and protects its territory, some demons control a particular territory. This is why there are things like haunted houses. This is why in Haiti you have voodoo and demons controlling a particular area. I realize this is subjective, but have you ever traveled to a place and that place had a dark feeling to it, as if evil had a grip on the area? That can happen. Demons have geographical strongholds. An example of this is found in the book of Daniel.

The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia... Daniel 10:13 (ESV)

Here we have a high-ranking demon that was in charge of the kingdom of Persia fighting one of God's angels. You can see he was referenced by a territory. Back to our story.

Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them." Mark 5:11–12 (ESV)

This was Gentile territory. Jews don't raise pigs. This was a large herd. We will see in a moment, it was about 2,000 in number. Why did the demons want to go in the pigs? I don't know. I think they wanted a body. They didn't want to be disembodied spirits.

They didn't want to go to the pit. They didn't want to leave the area because they were territorial. Jesus wouldn't let them inhabit people, so they asked to inhabit the pigs.

By the way, can animals be demon-possessed? Apparently they can be possessed. Here an entire herd of pigs would be demon-possessed.

Before we go any further, let me just answer a background question that comes from this text. Why didn't Jesus send these demons to the pit? It think it would be a good idea to get rid of 6,000 demons. Was Jesus lacking in power to send them to the pit? No. In Revelation, God binds Satan and all demons in the pit for a thousand years. Power over demons was not a problem for Jesus.

Why didn't Jesus send these demons to the pit? If Jesus will eventually send all demons to the pit, why not start early with these guys? The reason Jesus didn't send these demons to the pit was because for now, they were serving God's purposes.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12 that he was given a thorn in his flesh, a messenger from Satan. This messenger of Satan was allowed by God in Paul's life because that way Paul was forced to rely on God's strength, rather than rely on his own strength. In Luke 22, Jesus told Peter that Satan desired to have him so he could sift him like wheat. Jesus gave Satan permission to sift Peter. Why did Jesus allow Satan to sift Peter? Jesus knew Peter would come through that time of sifting and failure, and at the end of it, Peter would be a better apostle because of it. God is still using Satan and his demons for his good purposes.



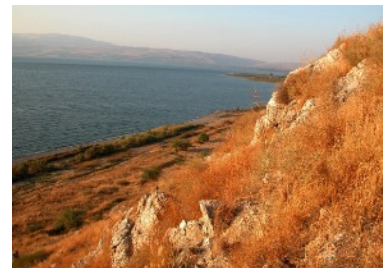
God could stop all Satanic and demonic operation in an instant and send all of them to the pit or to the lake of fire in an instant, but he hasn't for now, because Satan and his demons cannot do anything Jesus does not allow. Satan and his demons are being used by God for his good purposes in his plan.

So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea. Mark 5:13 (ESV)

Just as the demons' presence in the man led the man to cutting and destroying himself, when the demons inhabited the pigs, it immediately led them to destroying themselves. Some people wonder why Jesus let the demons go in the pigs. While I don't know for certain, thousands of pigs running down a cliff as soon as this man was freed of his demons was a visual demonstration of the power of the demons that left him.

Today in this area there is a ledge overlooking the lake that is known as Kursi cliff. It is supposedly the ledge the pigs jumped off to land in the lake where they drowned. In this picture, you can see the ground out of focus in the distance because it is so far of a drop.

I know there are some PETA people out there who are freaking out over the loss of pigs. How could Jesus allow these demons to kill all those pigs? Think about this. These pigs were destined to become bacon, pork chops and fill a can of Spam. They were just butchered early.



The other things our PETA friends miss in this story is the value of one man. The value of this one man, even though he was a sociopath and sexual

pervert, in the eyes of Jesus he was worth far more than 2,000 pigs. Pigs won't spend an eternity in hell. This man was in danger of an eternity in hell.

### **What choice will you make about Jesus?**

The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. Mark 5:14–15 (ESV)

The herdsmen ran to the city and into the country to tell everyone what happened. I am sure they needed to tell their supervisors because losing 2,000 pigs is a huge financial loss. They were in serious trouble. It says people came to see what happened. In Matthew, it says all the people came to see what happened. Everybody from town came to see this.

There was the demon-possessed man clothed and in his right mind. I guess he was given extra clothes from one of the disciples. The Greek word describing him means he was quiet and harmless. This was the guy who terrorized the town with his demons. Then he was now completely calm, completely sane, and gentle.

How did the villagers respond to Jesus? They were terrified of him. The demonic power of the man was the most terrifying thing they had ever seen. Nobody could bind him or control him. Jesus, with just a word, brought complete sanity and cast the demons out of this man. The people of this town were scared of the power this man possessed, but they were terrified of the power Jesus must possess to cast all of these demons out with just a word. They had never seen this kind of power. There were two reactions to the power of Jesus. The crowds rejected him. This man embraced him.

**The people who lost their pigs asked Jesus to leave, because they were afraid of what Jesus would cost them.**

And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. Mark 5:16–17 (ESV)

Notice all the people begged Jesus to leave. Why did they do that? If Jesus could heal the man with a legion of demons, couldn't he help the rest of the sick and demon-possessed in the town? Why did they ask him to leave?

I think they asked Jesus to leave because they were afraid of what it might cost them if Jesus stayed. If healing the demon-possessed man cost 2,000 pigs, what would happen if he healed the rest of the people in the town? You see, in this town, the pigs were more important than the people. Keeping their stuff was more important than saving people's lives.

**The demoniac, who was changed by Jesus, wanted to stay with Jesus.**

As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. 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." Mark 5:18–19 (ESV)

The man who had the demons taken out of him didn't want to live another day apart from Jesus. I am sure there were conversations this man had with Jesus after he delivered him from the demons. This man wasn't just delivered from demons, but I am sure he was also delivered to faith in Christ. This man wanted to become apostle No. 13. Those who are delivered from great sin by Jesus have great love for Jesus.

Jesus didn't permit him to join the disciples. Instead, he told this man to return to his friends and let the gratitude of his heart inspire him to tell others

what Jesus had done for him. Out of gratitude, Jesus asked him to share his testimony of how Jesus delivered him from a life of nakedness, demon possession and cutting.

And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled. Mark 5:20 (ESV)

This verse is the gem many of us miss. This man's heart was filled with gratitude. He didn't just tell people in the small town of Gergesa what Jesus did for him. He went to all the towns in the Decapolis, telling the story of how Jesus changed his life. The deca is Greek for 10. Polis is Greek for city. The Decapolis was a confederation of 10 Gentile cities that were east of the Jordan River. It was a huge piece of real estate. This man singlehandedly



became a missionary to these Gentile cities and told thousands of Gentiles about Jesus with nothing more than his testimony. He knew no theology. He had no training. All he kept telling people was how Jesus freed him and saved his life.

When we get to Mark 7, Jesus would go back into Gentile territory, and he went to the area of the Decapolis. The Gentiles instantly recognize Jesus and brought him a deaf man to be healed. Why would Gentiles be so eager to meet Jesus? In Mark 8, a huge crowd came to Jesus in the wilderness in the region of the Decapolis, and he fed 4,000. Why would a huge crowds of Gentiles be so desperate to meet Jesus?

Jesus sent one man into this territory to prepare the way for his coming. This man had nothing more than the testimony of how Jesus changed his life.

This former demoniac led thousands to Jesus. It is amazing how God can change a life! I have two applications for you as you leave this morning.

### Applications

1. **No matter how far from God we have wandered, we are never beyond Jesus' saving reach.** I don't care how sinful you are. I don't care what you have done. If Jesus can save a naked, demon-possessed maniac from his wickedness, perversion and filth in a moment's notice, Jesus can forgive you and transform you. It doesn't matter what you have done. It doesn't matter what footholds Satan has gained in your life. All of them can be broken through Jesus setting you free. Jesus can turn you around and use you in ways beyond what you could ask for or imagine for his kingdom.
2. **Sharing our testimonies is the unique way God calls us to reach the world.** Sometimes we don't know how to explain Jesus to other people. We wish we had more schooling and more knowledge. Jesus tells us all we need to do is simply tell them our testimonies. We just need to tell other people who we were before Jesus and how God changed us when we came to Jesus. God gave each of us a testimony. It is the story of how God rescued you. Tell your story to others and let God use it to lead them to have faith



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, and time with his family. Feel free to contact him at [www.Christ2RCulture.com](http://www.Christ2RCulture.com) ([www.c2rc.com](http://www.c2rc.com))



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