

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 29TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

DEMONIC POSSESSION (MARK 5:1-5)

"THEY CAME TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SEA"

The disciples and Jesus made their way to the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee to a city Mark calls the Gerasenes. This region in the Decapolis would have been predominately occupied by Gentiles (non-Jews).

- As soon as they got out of the boat, **"a man with an unclean spirit came out of the tombs"** and met them.

DEMONIC POSSESSION

Not only is Mark's account more vivid and detailed than the parallel accounts in Luke 8:26-39 and Matthew 8:28-34, but it is the most detailed description of a demon possession we have in all the Bible.

- We must be cautious not to read this and see a description of how we are to cast out demons but, instead, see the power and authority that Jesus has over the demonic.
- Luke 10:19-20

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE DEMON-POSSESSED MAN

We are not told how long the man had been possessed or what led to the possession, but he had not always been like this. He **had been possessed for a long time, and he could no longer live in a house** (Luke 8:27).

- According to Matthew, this man **lived with another demon-possessed man in the tombs among the dead and decaying**.
- His behavior was uncontrollable**. Matthew 8 tells us that the demon-possessed man was so violent that **no one could safely pass** by the road where he lived.
- He had **the strength to break shackles and chains**, and there was **no one strong enough to subdue him**. Even with his supernatural strength, he did not possess the strength to expel the demon(s) himself.

HIS TORMENT COULD BE HEARD AND SEEN

Night and day, the shrieks of the demon-possessed man could be heard and the evidence of him cutting himself with stones could be seen.

- We are created in God's image. Since the image of God resides in us, **Satan and the demons (fallen angels) are actively trying to destroy the image of God—us!** The devil comes to **"steal and kill and destroy"** (John 10:10).

LEGION (MARK 5:6-13)

"EVERY KNEE WILL BOW" (PHILIPPIANS 2:10)

When reading the interaction between the demon-possessed man and Jesus, we are not given certainty on the distinction between the man's response and the spirit's response.

- Whether it was the man or the spirits that led him to **kneel before Jesus**, the response was the same: they had to acknowledge **they were in the presence of someone greater**.

"WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO WITH ME...?"

Ancient superstitions believed that spiritual power was gained over another if you knew and said their exact name.

- Fully addressing Jesus as **"Son of the Most High God"** was not the demon's acknowledgement of Jesus' divine nature, but possibly **a feeble attempt to gain control over Him**.

KNOWING HIM AND BEING KNOWN BY HIM

The demons addressed Jesus with truth about his identity. They knew better than the religious leaders because they once occupied the heavenly realm with Him before their fall.

- Much like us, demons can have **a knowledge of Jesus' true identity without ever submitting to Him** (James 2:19) and **having a relationship with Him** (Matthew 7:23).

BIBLICAL AND BALANCED APPROACH

Let's not get weird about it.

- Though demonic activity is a reality, it is one we must approach biblically and with balance. **We must not ignore the reality of spiritual warfare**, but also, **we must not become so hyper-focused on supposed demonic activity** that we "go looking for the devil under a rock."

THE ENEMY'S INTENTIONS REVEALED FURTHER

The demons desired not to be put out of this man's body, showing **their intentions were to inhabit human bodies and use them as weapons against God**.

- Evil cannot stand against God, and since the enemy cannot defeat Him, **they have turned their focus to destroying His creation that bears His image—us!**

"WHAT IS YOUR NAME?"

Did Jesus need the name of the demon(s) to gain power over them? Absolutely not! Most likely, this question was asked so that the disciples, and us, might **know the full extent of the possession and the extent of Jesus' power to expel them**.

- A Roman legion usually consisted of 6,000 men. This is not meant to say he had 6,000 demons, but that **it was not just one but many**.

THE SPIRIT WILL NOT OCCUPY THE SAME SPACE

The demons begged Jesus to allow them to enter the herd of pigs feeding on a hillside, showing that **they hate to be idle and are bent on destruction**.

- Let's not miss that the demons needed permission from God to enter the pigs. They were unable to vacate the man's body and afflict pigs without God's permission. **If we have the Holy Spirit, we do not have to fear**.

THE MAN WAS SPARED AND RESTORED

As soon as permission was given to the demons, they **entered the herd** of about 2,000 and they **rushed down a steep bank into the sea** and drowned the pigs.

- This was possibly allowed so that **the demons' destructive nature could be seen**. Also, this provided evidence that **the man was healed and could enter back into society**.

OPPOSITE REACTIONS (MARK 5:14-20)

"THEY WERE AFRAID"

Everything they witnessed went against their understanding and what they believed, and they were so afraid **they begged Jesus to leave**.

- We do not know with any certainty if their request was rooted in the **financial loss of 2,000 pigs** or **fear of what else someone with the power of Jesus was capable of**. Either way, they asked Him to leave, and He did.

WHY?

The ways of God are not always fully understood by us and that is ok. **His ways and His thoughts are higher than ours** (Isaiah 55:8).

- Those tending to the pigs and the people of the town **asked Jesus to leave the town and He did**. Yet this once demon-possessed man **asked to remain with Jesus and was told no**.

HE HAD TO FULFILL HIS PURPOSE

The man was not permitted to stay with Jesus because there was still a work that needed to be done that only he could do (Ephesians 2:8-10).

- We do not stay where we are when we first encounter Jesus. We are to grow, and we are to go. **We should be maturing and fulfilling the Great Commission**.

WE ARE TO GO!

The man was told to **"go home to [his] own people, and report to them how much the Lord has done for [him] and how he has had mercy on [him]."**

- This is something we all need to reflect on and the gospel we need to preach—**the good news of all the Lord has done for us and the mercy He has shown us!**

ACCEPT HIM OR REJECT HIM?

- Some people are exposed to a reality that is contrary to the one they manufactured, and out of fear, want to put the blinders back on and **wish to forget about what they saw**.
- Some will have a hard time accepting Jesus because **He does not fit in the life they have "created" for themselves**. We may not want "new life" because we are in love with the "old life."
- Some will respond in a similar way to those in the region where the demon-possessed man was set free. **Out of fear and confusion, we will tell Jesus to go** because we **lack a desire for understanding**.
- Some, like the man, will see the **majesty, power, and authority of Jesus** and will **desire to know Him more and learn from Him**.