

**Mark 5: 1-13; "The Demoniac of Gadara", Sermon # 27 in the series - "Astonished at His Teaching", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on January 18th, 2009, in the Morning Worship Service.**

We have here in this account, a perfect description of what demon possession looks like; how it manifests itself through fallen human nature, and how damaging it is to the human personality once the demons gain the ascendancy over a person. We need to understand, at the outset, that every person who has ever lived in any generation, with the exception of Adam and Eve and our Lord Jesus Christ, have all been born into this world as citizens of the kingdom of darkness. This is because of Adam's fall into sin in the beginning, and this citizenship is only changed when we are born again and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. When we believe in Jesus, we are transferred from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God's dear Son. It must always be remembered by every Christian, and told to people who we are witnessing to, that the power of the Lord Jesus Christ is much, much stronger than the Devil, or any demon or combination of demons. The Lord is described for us here as casting out a legion of demons from this man, and so he continues to cast out demons, and destroy the dominion and ruling power of the Devil over every soul of man who comes to him.

It should also be noted at the outset that demon possession was much commoner in Jesus' day than it is today. This was probably an attempt by the Devil to demonstrate how great his power was at that time when Jesus appeared in His incarnation. The one who thought that He was stronger than Christ wanted to hold on to his kingdom and his prey. I am not saying that there is no such thing as demon possession today. I believe that there is. It is just that it is just rarer today than it was then. Demonic activity and influence upon people's lives are still very great in our day. I believe that the majority of the Devil's activity today is in trying to deceive the vast multitudes of people in the world that Jesus Christ is not the Savior of the world, or the only true way that people can come to know God. He is more concerned about nullifying the testimony of true Christians and pulling the wool over people's eyes concerning truth of the gospel than he is in taking full possession of men's bodies. It is the deception of the soul which he aims at; to keep a person from seeing their need to believe in Jesus. This is more important to him. He wants to convince unbelieving people that Christianity is a cult rather than a true religion. He wants them to be more serious about playing around with the occult and reading about witchcraft than they are in reading and understanding the Bible which is God's word. Even though there is not as much demon possession taking place in our day, we should nevertheless attempt to draw lessons from the way that these demons acted when they took possession of this man's soul. And we should think about them in relation to how we might pray for, and promote the conversion of people around us to our Lord Jesus Christ. There are people around us, sometimes people who we come in contact with, who are demon oppressed, even if they are not demon possessed. And so I first of all want to describe the symptoms of demon possession

and apply them to people today who are oppressed. Secondly I want to describe the worship of people who are demon possessed and apply the principles of truth to those who today are deceived and demon oppressed. And thirdly I want to conclude by showing you the great danger of demon possession and oppression.

**1st - I would like to describe for you the symptoms of demon possession and apply them to people today who are demon oppressed.** (Verses 1-5)

There are three of them given to us in the first five verses. The first symptom is what is described for us here as "an unclean spirit". The word "unclean" is used in a number of senses in the Bible. People who had leprosy in Old Testament times were considered "unclean" because of their disease. It is a skin disease which caused the person to be seen as ceremonially and socially unclean. Oozing sores and spots breaking out on the skin were a good picture of the defilement of sin. The person's skin had been defiled and polluted and so the person having leprosy was instructed under the law whenever someone was coming near to them, to put their hand over their mustache and cry out, "unclean!", "unclean", so that the person coming close would know that they should not come near. John Brown in his theological dictionary of the Bible gives us to understand that the word "defile" means "to render unclean", and that in the Bible the sinful filthiness of using the heathenish customs of seeking to witches and wizards, of worshiping idols, participating in unnatural lusts or prostitution, or using perverted and evil speech; all these lead the soul and body to be defiled. I believe that it is exactly these kinds of sins which led to this man's eventually being demon possessed. Through these kinds of sins, he opened himself up to the influence of demons. Through these things he believed that he could have greater personal power and pleasure and influence with, and over, other people, not realizing that if he delved into these things that he would fall under greater and greater oppression of spirit and bondage. The thing that he did not understand about these sins is that the Devil would take advantage of him through them, and bring him into a state where he thought that he couldn't live without these sins and yet he knew that he could not live with them either.

Let me speak to such a person who may be here this morning or may read this sermon later. The customs and practices of the occult; witchcraft and sorcery are desirable to you because you think that there is somehow another way of obtaining the things of power that you want in this life, but you either forget or you do not know that what Satan gives in power he will take back later on, and mock you when look for his help. He is not like God, full of goodness and mercy, having compassion on sinners and forgiving them for Jesus sake, when they come to Him. Satan, as Jesus said in John chapter 8, was a murderer from the beginning. He is a liar and the father of lies, and the truth is not in him. His supposed truth and wisdom will defile your spirit. But what he offers to those who toy with the occult is power along with this supposed wisdom. That is the second symptom of demon possession; an insatiable desire for supernatural power which is actually granted to that person by the Devil and permitted by God to show the fatal effects of it upon body and soul.

This power which is searched for is real power, but it is power from the wrong source. The source is anti-God and Anti-Christ. True wisdom from God and the Bible brings real power to do what is right. Demonic wisdom, from below, brings a real power as well, but it is the power to do what is evil and wrong in God's sight. A person who engages in this pursuit does not really understand what it will do to his spirit. What it will do is to defile the person's spirit. It will pollute it with wrong ways of thinking and living.

This is how I believe the mindset work in a person who becomes demon possessed. You want wisdom, but you think that it is found in some other way that in being converted to Christ. You begin searching and giving yourself more and more over to the power of self-deception because you are ignoring or rejecting the truth of the Bible that you are a sinner. You don't want to consider yourself a sinner so you will try to find wisdom on your own. You don't realize or want to understand, that there is a God in heaven that is the giver of every good and perfect gift. You think that if He is real, but that He is holding out on you. There are secret things which you would like to know, and you believe that He is not telling you about. So you think it is wise to pursue these secret things in your own way. But the Bible says in Deuteronomy 29: 29, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever."

You want to know more than what the Bible tells you, and so you have come to believe the lie that Satan will tell you, that he will really give you these things of power and wisdom. The terrible truth is that Satan will give you a sort of perverted power for a time, and then he will take it away later on, and by degrees he will make you his weak slave. That is what was happening to this poor demon possessed man. Let me speak to you who may be being influenced by demons and apply what I think was happening to him, to you. Your case may not be so extreme but there may be similarities. This man was trying to take on more and more power, and because of his compromises with the occult his mind and soul were being influenced by more and more demons. It's like boiling the frog gradually in warmer and warmer water. It warm water feels good at first, and it keeps feeling good the hotter it gets, because the temperature is raised so slowly. The power is growing and growing. You are boiling in your own deception but you do not know it. Other people who see and sense that something is wrong your life try to talk to you about this strange predicament that they see taking place in you. You want control over your own life and you want to make your own decisions and be your own person, but you are so preoccupied with the pursuit of false wisdom and knowledge that you can't turn back. You want to be independent; you love to be free of people telling you what is right and what is wrong, but you are becoming more and more dependent upon the kindness of people around you. You get into trouble because you cannot fulfill your responsibilities in your family or in society and even though you think you know more than other people, they have to help take care of you financially. You are wiser than you employer, but you cannot hold down your job because you can't make it to

work on time and you don't like being told of what doing a good job requires. Eventually your power to deceive yourself grows so strong that everyone around you is rejected except close friends who agree with your philosophy, and so you end up getting into trouble with the law. You resist the authorities and they bind you, but you have so much power that you break their chains. You can't maintain a job or a home and so you begin to live outdoors and find protection and solace in the graveyard among the tombs. Over time you get used to the feeling that you have power and you cultivate it so that you can take more and more of it, but eventually it is too late to change and your life. Your supposed wisdom of cultivating secret knowledge is utterly destroyed your life and your relationships with other people. Why? Because you wanted to impress other people with your power; you wanted to gain friends and influence other people with your supposed power, but it will only be for a short time, and then where will you be? Under the judgment of God, because you did not believe that He is the only wise God. You are on your way to hell, because you would not believe His word, or the kind and good people who know Him who tried to tell you the truth. You thought that they did not understand the ways of power like you do. You thought that the church that they attend was a cult because they kindly tried to teach you that you must be converted and be saved from the sins which Satan's power leads you to. Time and time again they tried to tell you. But you are too proud to believe that you, the wise one, the knowing one, needs to be converted. You have secret knowledge which they do not have; but it is a lie! The true knowledge is found in the Bible! The real power is the power to live a godly life, and it is found only in Christ!

And so, now is there is the pain and the consequences of your sin. This is the third symptom of demon possession. The preoccupation with death and blood and hurting oneself or others. Verse 5 says, "And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones." This man was beginning to wake up to what this thirst for false wisdom and power have done to him, and he did not like the pain of what he saw. You too, if you pursue the occult long enough, will begin to realize the emptiness of the wisdom which Satan gives. You are empty inside. You have not found the meaning of life. You contemplate the idea that it would be better not to go on living. You begin to do things to yourself in your pain; cutting your wrists; taking drugs. You are crying out for someone to help you, but you realize that you rejected the way of God's love in Jesus Christ and the truth of the Bible. You believed that you did not need God's word or His people and so you seek out other people who will sympathize with you and you defile them too. In our text in Mark here, we do not read of two men; we read only of one. But in Matthew's gospel, Chapter 8, verse 28, it says that there were two men. Two demon possessed men. I believe that misery loves company. Misery loves company, and it likes sympathy and companionship. It will not always seek the right kind of company. And so, this man did seek out and find a companion. In the minds people who agree together in rejecting the gospel of Jesus Christ and truth of God's word,

there is a camaraderie. They will run together in their fallen, perverted cause. They can swear and curse and take God's name in vain together. They can share conversation and companionship together, trying to find more of the demon's power and wisdom. They can make fun of those who believe in God and His word together. They can feed their unclean spirit together. They can cast their spells together and delve into the deep things of Satan together. They can search for more of what they call "truth" together. And since they will never be fully satisfied with what they find, they will keep on seeking and searching for more and more power. They may try to find it through drugs or perverted sex or by reading of occult books and following witches and warlocks practices and methods. It is the thought that they will have greater power and more of this supposed wisdom that leads them on. And they have a shared cause, a shared belief, that there will always be more wisdom and power to find. These are the symptoms of demon possession; an unclean spirit, an insatiable thirst for power, and the intense mental, spiritual, and emotional pain which leads to hurting oneself or others.

**Now, Secondly, I want to describe the worship of people who are demon possessed and apply it to those who are oppressed of the Devil.** (Verses 6-8)

"When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him." "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." "For He said to him, 'Come out of the man, unclean spirit!'" The worship of people who are demon possessed is a worship of recognition only. It is a worship which is false because it prides itself on its ability to recognize what is true about God and Christ in their supreme authority without ever wanting to cry to God for the grace to submit to that authority. This man, possessed by demons, ran up and worshiped Jesus, but his was only a religion of craven fear. "What have I to do with You, Jesus Son of the Most High God?" "Do not torment me." The demons know that Jesus is the Son of God; they do know that God is the Most High and that Jesus is the man who will judge the world and angels at the last day. In Matthew 8: 29 the demons ask, "Have You come here to torment us before the time?" They mean the time of the judgment of the great Day, when Christ will judge the world and they will be sent to hell. Theirs is a worship of recognition and of craven fear at that recognition. They have a belief in God; they have a kind of faith, but it is not the kind of faith that can save the soul or worship God in the way that He expects and deserves. It is not the kind of faith that can, or will, come to God for mercy and grace so that He might be worshiped and served as He deserves. It is the kind of faith that recognizes God's authority but will not submit to it unless it is forced. Every person, every angel, and every creature will be forced to submit to God at the judgment of the last Day. Turn with me to Isaiah 45: 22. Listen to what it says here. "Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth!" "For I am God, and there is no other." "I have sworn by Myself; the word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee

shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath." "He shall say, 'Surely in the Lord I have righteousness and strength.'" "To Him men shall come, and all shall be ashamed who are incensed against Him." "In the Lord all the descendants of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory." You see, there it is--True Worship. In true worship a sinful soul looks to God to be saved from his or her sins. They recognize that there is a judgment day coming and they will do as God would have them to do; they will bow their knees now and take an oath. They will take that oath because they recognize not only God's power and authority over their life, but also that only in Him do they find righteousness and strength." All men are going to have to come to Him, but those who do not find in Him righteousness and strength (that is grace to do what is right); those people will be ashamed of themselves for having been angry against Him during their life. Those who believe in the Lord shall be justified; that is they will be declared righteous in His sight and they shall glory. They shall make their boast in the Lord. They shall worship Him with all their heart because they have come to love Him for what He has done for them.

Now turn over to Philippians chapter 2 and you will see who the Lord is and what kind of an oath these verses in Isaiah is referring to. Philippians 2, verse 5 says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men, and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 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, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The oath that is being taken is a confession that Jesus Christ is Lord and that we will serve God through Him. And we are to be saved from our sins by believing in His work as a servant who rendered a perfect obedience to God, fulfilling every requirement of God's holy law on our behalf, and even going so far in His obedience that He went to the cross and died for sinners like you and me. This is reason that our knees should bow now. This is why we must take the oath and confess Him to be our Savior and Lord now. We will be forced to later, but why not be saved from your sins and confess Him now and find righteousness and strength and a new ability to worship and serve such a great God and such a loving and merciful Savior. This the demons cannot do. Their faith cannot translate into good works which please God. Their worship cannot please God, either, being based upon their craven fear of God. God seeks men to worship Him who will worship Him in spirit and truth; men and women who will joyfully and gratefully confess His name; people who long to worship Him and serve Him because they love Him.

It is faith in Christ, I am saying, that cleanses the heart. It is faith in Christ that casts out the demons. It is Christ Himself who has overcome the Devil at the cross and who is now plundering his house of his possessions. It is people's souls that are

in his possession if they are in His kingdom, whether they are demon possessed or not. The issue is whether you have a true faith in Christ which saves the soul or whether you only recognize God in a general sense, but say, "What do I have to do with you?" The idea of serving God through Jesus Christ is torment to those who do not know His mercy and grace and whose worship is fellowship with demons. In the book of James chapter 2, we see what the difference is between a true and a false faith. In verse 18 James says, "But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.'" "Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." "You believe that there is one God." "You do well." "Even the demons believe--and tremble!" "But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?" You can see here that the demons believe and they tremble, but they will not submit and serve God by doing the good works which He has commanded in His Word.

Let me now ask you whether you serve God in this way? Do have a worship of the only true and living God that is through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ? Is it your pleasure to worship God with a clean and right spirit and to do what He commands you in His word, or is your worship a matter of fearful recognition of what He will demand of you at the last Day? Your knees will bow then to the Lord Jesus Christ; why not now? He died for sinners so that He could receive them and give them salvation and bring them near to His Father so that our fellowship could be with God. And what joyous and joyful fellowship it is. "Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take Him at His word." "Just to know, thus saith the promise; just to know, 'Thus saith the Lord.'" "Jesus, Jesus how I trust Him; how I've proved Him o'er and o'er." "Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus; Oh, for grace to trust Him more." "Yes, tis sweet to trust in Jesus, just from sin and self to cease; just from Jesus simply taking life and rest, and joy and peace." Is this you, my friend? If it is not, it may become you today. Simply come to Jesus and lay your sins and your stubborn rebellion at His feet. He will cast out your demons, all of them, and all their awful influences He will take away. Call upon His name and it shall be done.

**Then finally - I want to conclude by showing you the great danger of demon possession and oppression and the greatness of Christ's power to save.** (Verses 9-13)

"And Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' "And he answered, 'My name is Legion; for we are many.'" I would say to you that if there were a legion of demons that possessed this man's soul, that there is a very great danger from demonic influences in our day as well as his. A legion consisted of different numbers of men at different periods. There were anywhere from three to five thousand men in a legion. One Dictionary that I consulted said that a legion was 6200 foot soldiers and 730 soldiers who were riders on horseback. That is surely a lot of demons to be inhabiting one man's being, and possessing his soul. We see here also that when given permission by Christ that these demons were also able to inhabit the bodies of animals; some two thousand swine. We see the immediate effect of this was suicide

on the part of the swine because of the presence of this great evil troubled them to the point of insanity. Did I say insanity? Yes, when this demon possessed man had the legion of demons cast out from him, it says in verse 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." We should always remember that demons, having lost by their sin all possibility of being saved, long for someplace to dwell. They long for the opportunity to dwell in a human body and have sway over a human soul and mind in order to find a perverse fulfillment of their existence. If they are to perish, it only makes sense to them to ruin the lives forever of those who might give in to their influences for however long that person will permit them. The more of the soul of a human being is given to them and to their foul defiling influences, the more indwelling takes place until finally possession is the right term for the reality of the experience.

You should understand, as I close this sermon, that you as a human being, created in the image and likeness of God, were meant to give yourself; body, soul, and spirit to someone, but that someone is not Satan or any of his demons. That someone is God. You are designed as human being to give yourself to God through the Lord Jesus Christ. You were created so that you would open up your heart and your life to His blessed influences and come to worship His glorious, pure, and perfect Being. This is what you were created for. But Adam fell, and thus all ability for you to do this apart from grace has been lost forever. But thanks be to God that nothing is too difficult for God and for our Lord Jesus Christ. The legion of demons was not too many, and their power not nearly great enough to resist Christ when He told them to come out of him. They knew that Jesus was their Sovereign Lord even though they would never give Him a loving allegiance. Although that was true, still they did have to obey His commands and leave the man when He ordered it so. And he had to give His permission for them to enter the swine.

If that is so, then see how utterly impossible it will be that demons can continue to oppress and influence your heart and life when Jesus gives the command to leave. Are you a person who feels oppressed by the Devil? Then turn to the Lord Jesus. You may be like the man who was possessed by this legion of devils. He ran to Jesus and fell at his feet and worshiped him even though the devils still at that point had him in their possession. But not for long. If you run to Jesus with all your sin and all your inability to drive the evil influences of the Devil out of your life; when you ask Him, He will cast them out and take away the oppression of your spirit. Your soul will be set free as a bird from the snare of the trapper. This is why Jesus came into the world; to destroy the works of the Devil. Listen to Acts 10: 38. Peter is preaching the gospel to Cornelius and his household and he says, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and He went about doing good and healing all those were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." And a little later in the sermon he says, "To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins." Truly this is what each of



needs in order to be pure of heart and to deal with all the defilements of flesh and spirit that come when we pander to the dark side of our nature and take up interacting with the Devil. Look to God for every good thing; not the Devil. And remember that in the Lord Jesus Christ is every good thing. Remember it is the pure in heart who shall see God someday, and remember that the Lord Jesus is God.