

**Mark 5:1** Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. **2** And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, **3** who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, **4** because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. **5** And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. **6** When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. **7** 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." **8** For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!" **9** Then He asked him, "What *is* your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name *is* Legion; for we are many." **10** Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. **11** Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. **12** So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them." **13** And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea. **14** So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. **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. **16** And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine. **17** Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. **18** And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. **19** However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." **20** And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled. (NKJV)

I am still using John MacArthurs consolidation of the gospels as my text. We got as far as verse 10 of Mark's account last week. We will take up from there this morning.

**And they begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country nor command them to go out into the abyss.**

Now it says that "**they**" begged him. No longer is one demon speaking. Maybe they all took turns using the man's speaking capabilities. But the words are strong. They are begging Christ with everything they have because they know that Christ

has complete power over them. Isn't that interesting? Even the demons don't believe there is a battle between God and the Devil. They knew that there was no question. If Christ commanded something, it was going to happen. **Their** master, the devil, was powerless to do anything about it. Christ is the strong man here. Notice also that the demons believe in prayer. They are praying to Christ to spare them. Their position isn't our position. We know that God loves us. We know He will give us good things. We know that His heart is bent in our direction. The demons didn't know that. They knew that Christ was going to one day destroy them and they did not want that day to be this day. So they beg the only one that has the power to save them. Isn't it interesting that they had the sense to follow Christ's advice when he said that we shouldn't fear the one who can take away our lives. We should fear the one who can cast us into hell. The demons were doing just that.

And they were asking for something that is hard for us to fathom.

**Don't send us out of the country. Don't command us to go into the Abyss.**

Maybe it would have been more difficult to find people to embody outside of this area. I have read that the country in this area would have been referring to desert. They don't want to be in a desolate space. They do not want to be without a body. So we can see this would be a bad situation for them that they hope to avoid. We don't know why demons do not want to be disembodied.

But far worse is another alternative. Don't command us to go to the Abyss. The word for Abyss means bottomless.

The word is used here:

**Revelation 9:1 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. (NKJV)**

**Revelation 9:11 And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon. (NKJV)**

**Revelation 11:7 When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. (NKJV)**

**Revelation 17:8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. (NKJV)**

**Revelation 20:1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up,**

**and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. (NKJV)**

As you can see, nothing good comes out of or goes into the bottomless pit. It is a place of torment. It is a place of locked access. It is a place of evil. And it is a place that the demons do not want to go. They would rather go anywhere than there. Maybe it is because they can be locked into that place of torment. Maybe they would have to be close to their master. We don't know why. But we know they fear and dread that place.

Now let me ask you, if the demons who know what that place is like, are afraid to go there, do we really want to see anyone we know go there? Today is the day of opportunity. Today is the day of salvation. We would be wise to use every opportunity we can to present the truth that God may use to rescue them from that horrible fate.

**Now a large herd of swine was feeding there, off a good way off from them, near the mountains. So all the demons begged Him, saying, "If you cast us out permit us to go away into the herd of swine, that we may enter them."**

I have read varying reports about who inhabited these lands. Some say they were all non Jews but some say there were some Jews scattered in the population. If the residents there were Jews, it would be a problem if a Jew had anything to do with pig farming. It would be easier to understand why Christ allows the destruction of their livestock if they were owned by Jews. If they were gentiles, then it becomes a little more mysterious. But anyway, this is what happens.

The demons are looking at three options. 1- get sent into the wilderness. 2- get sent to the Abyss. Or 3- enter some pigs. So to a demon, evidently living in a pig is better than having no body at all.

So the demons go back to praying. It is hellish praying, but they beg Christ to allow them to enter the pigs, knowing that Christ holds absolute power in this situation. They cannot do anything without Christ's permission.

**And at once Jesus gave them permission and said to them, "Go." Then the unclean spirits went out of the man and entered into the herd of swine (there were about two thousand); and suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.**

Again we see the absolute power that Christ has over these demons. They wanted to go, but they could not go until they were permitted. If you ever think the devil can make you do something, you are wrong. He can powerfully tempt us, but Christ always has the power. Greater is He who is in you than He who is in the world.

So all at once all of the demons pour out of the man and enter the pigs. Now if you were watching, you would not see the demons. You would only see the natural,

not the supernatural. You would see **a man acting erratically**, and then suddenly you would see **a bunch of pigs acting erratically** and the man suddenly calm down.

I believe that is the point of the pigs.

These pigs would have been worth a small fortune. Wealth was often measured in farming societies by livestock. These pigs represented a large share of a lot of people's wealth. There were likely many owners who would pay a few pig herders to tend all the pigs together. What is just about to happen will be a financial disaster.

But had the pigs **not been there**, we would not have had a testimony to the truth of the many demons released from this man. As it was, an onlooker could count the pigs. An onlooker could not have counted the demons. Had the pigs not been there, there would have been no way to verify what had just happened. The leaders may have taken back up their party line that Jesus could do what he did because he was in cahoots with the devil. But the pigs remove that question. The onlookers had visible proof that these demons were real, they really did not want to come out. They were really made to come out. And they really went into the pigs. And it looks like it drove the pigs nuts. We don't know how many demons there were. But we know there were at least 2000 of them.

It is at this point that the jokes can't be avoided.

What we see here in our story are two firsts. The first recorded incident of swine flu and the creation of deviled ham. Brad would have probably thought something was wrong with me if I didn't mention that.

Now, when these demons entered these pigs, things went crazy. Scripture does not tell us why it happened this way. I think that maybe a man, because he is a rational creature and not a creature of instinct, is able to find a way to survive even in the most frightening of circumstances. He holds his survival as a high priority. Even when full of adrenalin, a human can decide what he is going to do. But an animal reacts without thought of the consequences.

Now the shores on this side of the Lake of Galilee are very steep and bordering on being cliffs. When an animal is wounded, it will more often run downhill than uphill. I think the pigs panicked. And the demons, while knowing how to control a man, didn't have the time to read the owners manual on pigs. So when these demons entered these pigs the pigs only knew one thing. Whatever it was that happened to them, they wanted to get away from it. So they ran downhill in an absolute panic and did not stop running until they were swimming and they did not stop swimming until they were dead.

Now the odd thing this morning is that these pigs are an example to follow. These pigs would rather die than be in the company of a demon. And that is exactly the attitude we should have toward evil. While we must use our minds and we should

never be as mindless as these pigs, we would do well to avoid evil with the same tenacity.

Now just imagine being between the pigs and the crowd. You watch all of those pigs stampede into the lake and drown. I think if you'd have turned around to face the crowd what you would have seen are a crowd of people with their jaws dropped down to about their belts. Amazing. Just utterly amazing. I doubt that any were thinking, oh yeah, I saw **that** coming.

You talk about ambivalence- mixed feelings. This would have been a perfect example. Maybe it would be a good definition for ambivalence. The new definition would read- ambivalence is watching a man being freed of demons and watching all your livestock drown.

There is another lesson here that we don't want to miss. What does scripture tell us about the wages of sin? It is death. What do you think the people in this crowd picked up from what they had seen? Do you think that maybe they got that point. Sin leads to death. Demonic influence leads to death. I doubt anyone who saw this display would have quickly forgotten it.

That is the setting.

Now what happens?

**When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and they went away into the city and told everything in the city and in the country including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. And behold, the whole city came to see what it was that had happened.**

Those who fed them. I guess you don't really herd pigs. You just feed them. That was the job that the prodigal son ended up with. So these guys just saw all these pigs, pigs that they were responsible for, all killed. What would you do if you were them? You would go tell the owners as quickly as you could so that the owner can come out and do business with the person responsible for killing them. These guys did not want to take the rap for all these dead animals.

So they ran to wherever the owners were and told the whole story. We can see that they went into the city and the country so that would have us believe the ownership of these pigs was spread wide.

And look what we see. The guys told the whole story. They told the good and the bad. They don't just say that Jesus killed all their pigs. They told them that Jesus cast out demons and the demons killed the pigs. Jesus was doing a good thing.

You can almost hear them say, do you want to hear the good news or the bad news? The good news is, that naked guy that was so scary and mean and awful that used to bother us? I don't think he will bother us any more. The bad news is we aren't going to be feeding pigs any more. They are all dead.

So what happens? Exactly what you would think would happen. The whole city wants to see this. This would have been a very big event.

**Then they came to meet Jesus, and found the man who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.**

We can guess that when it says “they came to meet Jesus” this was not all favorable. It could also be that they came to see who had killed their pigs. It is possible they came to meet the man who cast the demons out of the demoniac. It is just like today. People come to hear about Jesus for all kinds of different reasons. Only some of them are good reasons.

Now, when they arrived they saw something impossible.

These people knew of the naked demoniac for years. He had been a nuisance and no doubt the talk of the town. And you know how we are. When we have a person pegged as something in our minds, we really don't expect that to change. And most often it doesn't.

But as Christians, we must keep something in mind. Our God is the God of the impossible. Even people who have been a certain way all their lives can suddenly become something very different when God is at work.

We need to keep that in mind in our ministries to one another. Don't ever conclude that since a person has been one way, that they will always be that way. We must leave room for the Spirit of God to work in us and in those around us. I think in marriage is sometimes the hardest place to apply this. If a person has hurt us over and over, we get to the place where we lose hope that God could ever change that person. And we get cynical. And that just makes the problem worse. We need to take a look at this demoniac sitting civilly at Christ's feet and remember that He can change any of us. He truly can.

So here sits the biggest troublemaker this town has ever known. Here is the person you could always count on to be unruly and disgusting. And he is exactly the opposite. He is now back in his right mind. He is now functioning more like a law abiding citizen. And more than that, he is a new person. He has a new heart. He is a follower of Christ. He has known his depravity and has been granted God's grace. So his life will never be the same. He will never be degraded by demons again. That is so much like what Christ has done in all of our lives. Our story might not be quite so dramatic. But the major story line is the same. I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see.

Notice that he was in his right mind. Any mind that is controlled by, or given over to the influence of the enemy is **not right**. Satan will torment a person mentally if he is allowed to. He would have us perplexed and anxious and fearful and lustful and full of rage and full of revenge, if he only can. He does not want us in our right minds. He does not want us at peace at Christ's feet. He does not want us

peacefully paying attention to what our master says. He does not want us in a state of contented rest. Yet that is exactly where Christ will put us if we will submit to His leading. He would have us all peaceful and restful at His feet. He would put us in our right minds. To be in our right minds is to think soberly, self controlled, seeing things as they truly are and reacting accordingly. That is the process of sanctification.

Now naturally the townspeople were thrilled for this man, that he was set free from his demons, weren't they?

Well not exactly. Mark says-

**And they were afraid.**

This means they were terrified. They were struck with fear. Fear overwhelmed them. Jesus just shook up their world. In the past the bad person lived in the tombs. Now this bad person is no longer bad. These people didn't know what to think. They didn't know how to view their world any more. In the past anyone who threatened their livelihood was bad. Now here is Jesus who killed all their pigs, yet He is good.

Then we are told in Mark that now the witnesses retold how Christ had cast the demons out and they went into the pigs.

**And those who saw it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed, and about the swine.**

They probably told how the demons talked to Christ and how Christ talked to the demons. And they know they are standing in the presence of an awesome spiritual power, a power that even the unruly forces that kept this man enslaved for years could not stand up against. Jesus had no chains or shackles, but he bound this man in his love. They simply are not ready for their world to be shaken like this.

**Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes begged Him to depart from their region, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned.**

Evidently people kept filing in from outlying regions. And as they arrived and heard the stories, they all agreed. Jesus had to go. Why? Most of the commentators say it was because of the profit motive. They did not want to lose any more pigs if Jesus did this again. But I don't believe that is the case. These people were afraid. They weren't angry. They were scared to death of Christ. Why? Maybe they knew intuitively that they had a lot to be afraid of. Maybe it is their own sin that made them so afraid of Christ. After all, they would have likely seen Christ as a Jewish teacher. These people were probably **not Jewish**. It is obvious that they had nothing that prohibited them from raising pigs, an animal forbidden by the Hebrew law. They may very well have thought that they stood condemned in front of this man who clearly shows the ability to punish sin.

Maybe they did not want Him to punish **them**. Maybe they **were thinking** what

the demons **were saying**. Have you come here to **torment us**? That seems to me to be the most likely reason for their fear. Jesus was powerful spiritually. And they were afraid He would use that power to harm them. Which in some cases, ultimately, would be true.

Christ is not one to stay where He is not wanted. He does not barge into our lives against our will. So when He was invited to leave, He left.

This is also true in our lives. Christ could force us to obey Him. But He does not. As believers, we are free to disobey Christ. But we will discover, either through Christ's discipline or sin's consequences, that we are foolish to do so. We are always wise to say Yes to Christ, even when it is very difficult to do so. We do much better to invite Him in than to invite Him to leave.

Now up to this point we have seen 2 incidents of begging.

The demons begged Christ to be allowed to enter the pigs. Christ said yes.

The crowd begged Christ to leave. Christ said yes.

Now look at what comes next and if you don't know the story already I think it will surprise you.

**Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him.**

Look at this. The perfect disciple. This man has been saved from incredible things. And all he wants is to be with Christ. Now think about it. If you had been demon possessed for years, would you not want to have the security of being around the person who had cast those demons out? Might you not be afraid that they would come back and you wouldn't know what to do? And wouldn't you want to be with the one who showed you the grace to remove that burden from you? All those years, that is probably the one thing he wanted, day after day, more than anything else. And now he is free. He wants to be with Christ. Can any of us blame him? We would too. It is a wonderful desire. So naturally Christ says yes?

**However, Jesus did not permit him, but sent him saying, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you and how He has had compassion on you."**

Wow. Who would have expected that? Jesus says no.

Now let's look at the "why?"

First Christ sent him. He did not send him away. He sent him TO. Christ saved this man and Christ had a mission for this man. That is always how it is. If Christ saved you, He has a mission for you.

And what was the mission?

**"Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you and how He has had compassion on you."**



Go home to your friends. The actual Greek word really means those who are yours. It could just as well be kinfolk as friends. It would be more like saying, go home to your people.

What Christ is telling this man is that Christ is restoring this man to his family and friends. This man has not been doing any duty toward his family. He has not been loving his friends. He was incapable of it. But Christ is sending him back to first share with them the good news of Christ.

Think just how heartbroken this man's friends and family were. Maybe they had gone to see him to try to speak reason to him. But they could see that he was not in his right mind. Now he is coming back to them restored. He is a person who can now give and love and reach out to his friends and family.

Christ sent him back to show off the grace of God.

He wanted this man to tell two things:

1- What great things the Lord has done for you. Christ wants the man to show what kind of power the Savior has. He has absolute sway over the devil. He can cast out the devil with just a word. There is no struggle, just absolute authority. This man could surely have said, If Christ can set me free, He can set anyone free. If he could forgive me, he could forgive anyone. Isn't that still our message today to our friends and family?

2- How He had compassion on you. The Lord is powerful.... And the Lord is loving. Tell your family and friends just how compassionate Christ is. The people in the crowd probably didn't get this. They didn't understand it. They feared Christ. But Christ's message to this man's family is that Christ is compassionate. He can be called upon, no matter who we are and what we have done.

Isn't that still the same message we carry? Call upon Christ. Call upon Him to save you. He is a compassionate God. If you call upon Him, He will surely save you, just like He did me.

I look forward to meeting this man in heaven and hearing the rest of his story. I'll bet it will be a great one. I wonder how his restoration to his friends and family went?

But we are given a little more of the story.

**And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis, throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.**

This man may have taken the term "your people" in the biggest sense possible. Because we find he went to his people. He travelled in the Decapolis region, the 10 cities region. He did exactly what he was told to do. He went about bragging about Jesus. He told people just what Christ had done for him. Wouldn't it be nice to have a verse like us written about us? Would it say we proclaimed to all that

would listen the great things that Christ has done for us? Or would it say we were not willing to make waves and upset people? This man is an excellent example to follow.

Now, did he have any effect? Well remember these people asked Christ to leave. Well this is what happens on Christ's next trip to Decapolis.

**Mark 7:31 Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. 32 Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." 35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it. 37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak." (NKJV)**

We don't know for sure, but it is quite likely this saved demoniac prepared the way for Christ's future ministry in his land. He truly went to his people and He proclaimed the power and love of Christ.

What a wonderful model we are left with this morning. We have a man obsessed with sin who is found by Christ. Christ restores him and everything about this man changes. He is at peace. All of his restlessness is gone. He is in his right mind. All of his craziness is gone. And he is telling everyone he knows about Christ. Isn't that a wonderful picture of discipleship?

And notice there are two things happening at the same time. The man is sharing the gospel while portraying a changed life. Some people share the gospel, but their lives are so out of control that no one is convinced of the power of God to change anyone.

Some people have changed lives, but will not face the discomfort of presenting a message that may be received badly.

This man is a perfect example of doing it right, and an example we would do well to follow.