

# The Power of Jesus to Change Us

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**Text:** Mark 5:1-20

**Date:** April 18, 2010

**Series:** Mark (Introducing Jesus)

**Introduction:** Open your Bible to Mark 5. I believe we are a congregation that needs lasting change. Last week we looked at the *Place* of change and saw that the awful and difficult storms in our lives are allowed by God to put us in the pressure cooker of change. But this week we are looking at the *Power* of Jesus to change us. Next week we are going to see the *Pathway* to change—that is believing and trusting in Jesus Christ.

**Illustration:** Many are like the wife of the man who went to the doctor for his annual check-up. The doctor looked at the man, and said, “Sir, you are in terrible shape, and you've got to do something about it. First, I want you to tell your wife to cook you more nutritious meals. Then, have her quit making you work like a dog; and, inform her that you're going to make a budget, and she has to stick to it. Also, have her keep the kids off your back so you can relax. Unless these changes are made in your life, you'll probably be dead in a month.” The man replied, “Doc, this would sound more official coming from you. So would you call my wife, and give her those instructions?” The doctor did, and the man left to go home. When he arrived at home, his wife met him at the door, and said, “I talked to your doctor today.” She paused, and then said, “You poor thing, you've only got thirty days to live!”

It's not easy to make major changes in our lives. But we all want to change.

Mark 5 has been called the Bible home for those who seem unchangeable. There are three cases given in this chapter which are absolutely, humanly speaking unchangeable.

- There was first, of all the **demonic** man.
- Second of all, the **diseased** woman.
- Number three, there is the **dead** girl.

All three of would be considered impossible cases in the Lord's time and in our day as well. For instance, the man would be assigned to *a mental institution*. The woman would be assigned to a *terminal care unit* and the girl would be carried somewhere and placed for burial in *a cemetery*. But, when you move through this 5th chapter of Mark you discover that Jesus is more than adequate for every situation. **There are no incurables with Jesus Christ**. If we knew more about the power of Christ to change, we'd be maniacs in evangelism. Christ prefers the most hopeless cases to show how easily He can change a life.

To prove this, I want us to zero in on the man who is known as Legion, the man who was possessed with demons. A Roman legion was 6000 men. Here is a man with 6000 devils. You need to keep in mind the context of this particular Scripture. We have just studied in the 4th chapter about Jesus calming a storm on the sea. Now, the Lord is going to calm a storm in a human heart. It's a miracle when Jesus calms a storm on the sea. It is a far greater miracle when Jesus calms the storm in the heart and the life of an individual.

Let's read about it now in Mark 5.

**Mark 5:1-20**, “And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. 2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 Who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: 4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him. 5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. 6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, 7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. 8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit. 9 And he asked him, What *is* thy name? And he answered, saying, My name *is* Legion: for we are many. 10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. 11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. 12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. 13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. 14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. 15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. 16 And they that saw *it* told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and *also* concerning the swine. 17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. 18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. 19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. 20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all *men* did marvel”.

[Prayer for Guidance]

Some of would look at this story and see nothing that pertains to us. This gives hope to people who are out of their mind. All of us seem to be reasonable people. Perhaps this message is for someone else.

Certainly this message is for those who have no hope.

- This message is for those who have a friend or a loved one who seem unreachable.
- This story gives hope to those who have someone in their life that are simply out of their mind in love with this world.
- It gives hope to those who are tormented in their sin.
- It gives hope to the homeless and those even who are demented in mental hospitals and sanitariums.

But this message is for every one of us. I want to compare the power of Satan and the power of God.

This story shows us the end result of ultimate demon possession. But my goal for every one of you here today is to make you fear the control of the devil in your life. The devil is like the big bad wolf dressed like Grandma. He doesn't want to show you his fangs. I want to show you the devil's fangs today.

Look at verse 1, “And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.”

It was probably *the dead of night* by the time that the Lord Jesus and His boatload arrived at the other side, and you can imagine that that would have made the scene much more eerie.

I have tried to imagine how that was when Jesus and his disciples got off the boat. Remember the disciples have had a pretty shaky trip anyhow. They were already a little bit uneasy. They had just escaped drowning. They get off the boat and here comes Legion running down that hill to meet them. Can you imagine? Look around for those disciples and they seem to be gone. They must be scared to death. Here they see, not a human being, but a MONSTER. Here is a man filled with all the power of hell—a legion of demons numbering 6000! Here is a man that is unchangeable, and Jesus changes him.

***Don't tell me this morning that you are beyond hope and beyond change.*** I want to give you the secret to change. I'm convinced that if you want to be impacted spiritually, you have to focus on Jesus. If we corporately as a church want to grow, we have to focus on Jesus. The devils cower in His sight. We cannot only experience His Word, but we must have His power. His power through His Word must cut our hearts.

I. **Change begins when we realize that we cannot change in our own power.** We read in verses 1-2, “And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. 2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit”. Here is a man that no one could help. His family couldn't help him. He could not help himself. But when he saw Christ, he found someone greater than all.

A. **We find that this man was under the power of the wicked one.** Verse 2 tells us this man came to Jesus “with an unclean spirit”. Now that shocks us. That might even scare us a little. It seems like it's out of a horror movie. Satan wants us to think that only people whose eyes roll back in their head are under his power. There was someone “with” this man.

1. ***Here is a man who was filled with demons.*** When Jesus asked this man what his name was, you will notice down in **verse 9** that he replied, “My name is legion for we are many.” The word, legion, is the reference to a contingent of Roman soldiers. It is said that there were approximately 6,000 in a Roman legion if they were up to their top number.

2. ***This man is a picture of the wages of sin.*** If you play with sin, Satan will promise you the world in order to get control over your life. Now this state is not usually what occurs. Satan likes to keep these kinds of cases hidden because they reveal his true agenda. This man was living a hell on earth. This is what hell will be like for many. Tormented by demons. ***May God keep us from playing with sin.***

3. ***This man didn't begin this way.*** He likely grew up like you and like me, but one day he

began to play with sin and believe the devil's lies. No murderer starts out wondering how he can kill people. A person starts out slowly by believing the devil's lies. The devil **lies**. **John 8:44**, "he is a liar, and the father of it [lies]". You cannot trust a liar. He tells you one thing and he does another. Paul tells us that we ought not to marvel. "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (**2 Corinthians 11:14**).

- The devil is like the child kidnapper who offers candy to the unsuspecting child. He offers you "pleasure in sin for a season", but his desire is to enslave you. He hates you more than you've ever hated any body or anything. He hates you and he hates God.
- The devil is the most **cruel** malicious creature in all of creation. What he did to this demon possessed man, he would love to do to you. Satan hates your soul. You ought to hate him and flee from him.

Perhaps you are dealing with wickedness and temptation in your life. Flee from it!

**Application:** We are not stronger than the wicked one. We need to be filled with the power of Christ. Only if you are a Christian can you say, "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (**1 John 4:4**). We cannot even say no to ourselves without His help! We need a power greater than ourselves. This man had opened the door to the devil's influence as we all have.

4. I would like you to know that every lost person in the world today is under the power and dominion of the devil. **2 Corinthians 4:4**, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."
5. You are at all times either under the power of God or of the wicked one. You cannot serve two masters. You cannot serve both God and mammon. You cannot sin and be filled with the Spirit at the same time. "Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (**Gal. 5:16**). Listen to the promptings of the Spirit. Let Him fill you and dominate you, and you will be protected by the evil one.
6. As a Christian, you can open the door to the devil's influence in your life by sinning. You don't have to do scandalous things. He loves it when you compromise just a little. The Lord tells us, "Be angry and sin not, neither give place to the devil". By being sinfully angry, you open yourself up to the devil's influence. Stay away from sin in any form. Remove even doubtful things from your life, and you will be safe from the devil's reach.
7. Satan's influences are subtle. He roars like a lion, but he doesn't look like a lion. He looks like "an angel of light". Jesus gave Satan permission to sift Peter like wheat. Who was the pawn Satan used? A little servant girl. Satan will grip you through the things you expect the least.

B. **Friends and family could not help him.** Verses 3-4, “Who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: 4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him.”

The man was not living at home. Consider where this man was.

- He was living in Gentile country.
- He was living in a cemetery right next to a pig farm.
- He was an unclean man in an unclean place!

This man’s family and friends can’t change him, so they’ve given up on him.

- His family and friends tried to chain him, but the strongest chains wouldn’t hold him. Friends and family could not tame and could not help him.
- We don’t even know this man’s actual name. Let’s call him “Lee” for the sake of this story. *At any rate, one day Lee’s name got changed.* He became so under the influence of demonic powers that he changed his name to “**Legion**”. He is a man possessed of about 6000 demons. He has been thrown out of his town to dwell in the cemetery. He is forgotten. He is tormented. His condition is dire.

**Application:** There are some people we wish to forget about. In every family—in every place, there are those who are considered helpless, hopeless cases. You’ve prayed and prayed for them. There are some that we wonder, “Are they beyond the grace of God?” Is there anyone in your life that you’ve forgotten about?

C. **This man could not even help himself.** Verse 5, “And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.” He would hurt himself constantly. This man is an extreme case, but in all our lives, when we sin we ultimately hurt ourselves. Without Christ we are our own worst enemy!

1. He was living in a cemetery. You have got to eliminate from your mind what you think about when you think about a burial place. We are not talking about some beautiful memory garden where the grass is manicured and everything is in place. Nor are we talking about a funeral parlor which is carpeted where soft music is playing and the flowers have been carefully arranged. But when the Scriptures say he was dwelling among the tombs, it was little more than a room in a rock. It was a place where they took dead bodies and left them. Can you imagine the foul odor of decomposing human bodies. I want to tell you there is nothing that has a more pungent odor than a decaying human body. Can you imagine a man living in those circumstances?
2. This phrase in verse 4, “had *his* dwelling” means that he had settled down and made his home in the tombs. It is unnatural for a man to live where the dead folks are. I dare say most of you wouldn’t even want to build a home next door to a cemetery. Of course, we say we aren’t afraid of cemeteries but there is something eerie about it, isn’t there?

3. **Illustration:** I heard about a guy one time who, late at night, was walking through a cemetery. There had just been that day a freshly dug grave. He stumbled and fell into that freshly dug grave. He tried to climb up the side and he couldn't. He tried to jump out and he couldn't. He saw there was no way to get out so he decided he would just sit down over in the corner and **wait until the next morning** for somebody to get him out. Would believe a little while later **another guy** came through and fell in that same grave? He was jumping and trying to get out. Finally the guy in the corner reached over and touched him on the arm and said, "it's no use, you can't get out." At that moment the guy had no problem getting out! Living people don't like to be around dead folks. The living don't like to be among the dead.

This man's place of living reflected the condition of his heart. He was not dead physically, but he was dead in a more serious way. He could not help himself.

**Application:** *Our problem is intrinsically inward.* We are our own worst enemy. A better job, a better marriage, a better whatever is not going to help you. It's not the person next to you that's the problem. It's your heart. We are defiled from our own hearts. Our unhappiness comes from within. We need a renewal of the life of Christ in us! It is our own unwillingness to submit to the Lord's control that causes all unhappiness. The submitted and surrendered life is the happy life.

We can change the outward. But only by the power of Christ can we change the inner man. Now, don't think there is nothing you must do. There is. There is one thing YOU must do, and you must do it always. You must seek Jesus. He has the power. Apart from Him we can do nothing! (**John 15:5**).

**Transition:** In Mark 5:6, we come to one instance in the Bible where Jesus comes in contact with a person, and it's like a meteor hitting the earth. There is an impact, and they are never the same again. This man cannot change himself. But there is **HOPE!** There is always hope when Jesus comes on the scene!

**Point I: Change begins when we realize that we cannot change in our own power**  
Here's point #2:

II. **Change begins when we realize that we cannot change without the power of Christ.** Jesus said, "Without me ye can do NOTHING" (**John 15:5**). We read in **verse 6**, "But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him". I love to see what happens when Jesus comes on the scene. When Jesus arrives, He can draw even the most satanically possessed and influenced people to Himself. "Is God's arm too short that He cannot save?" "Is there anything too hard for the Lord?" Where is our faith?

I think we really forget the power of Jesus Christ to change us. He is the one who

- Created the world
- Raised Lazarus from the dead
- Split the Red Sea
- Saved YOU!
- Can't he save the worst cases?!

Perhaps you have a hopeless situation in your life. You're in a serious dilemma in your job, in your family, in some relationship in your life. Perhaps your spiritual life is dry or even in shambles. Perhaps someone you know seems unreachable, and they are in trouble.

I want you to know there is hope!!

God is the God of hopeless cases. Don't ever forget if you are a Christian that "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world!"

We read in **verse 6**, "But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him"

Immediately we realize that Jesus' power is greater than that of Satan's!

**A. Our mighty Savior has power that is greater than devils.**

Verse 7-15, "And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. 8 For he said unto him, **Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.** 9 And he asked him, What *is* thy name? And he answered, saying, My name *is* Legion: for we are many. 10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. 11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. 12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. 13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. 14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. **And they went out to see what it was that was done. 15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.**"

**Illustration:** I heard about a little boy one time who had heard about the devil in Sunday School. He came home a little worried about the devil. He said, "Daddy, is the devil stronger than I am?" Daddy said, "Well, yes, son, I think he probably is." The little boy said, "Daddy, is the devil stronger than you are?" Daddy said, "Well, yes, son, I think he probably is." The little boy said, "Daddy, is the devil stronger than Jesus?" Daddy said, "Oh, no, son, the devil isn't stronger than Jesus." The little boy said, "Hot dog, I'm not scared of the devil."

**Explanation:** We must get it out of our minds that the devil and God are somehow equal. They are not! The devil is a little dog, a little runt in God's sight. When you see the devil and God together in Scripture, the devil is always asking God for permission to do something. He asks God can he test Job. Jesus says to Peter, "Satan has asked permission of me to sift you like wheat".

1. You cannot fight the devil! He is much more powerful than you. He can send 6000 demons to put you in bondage!

Cutting...

Addictions...

Pornography...

Marriage fights...

You say, "I wish I could stop this." I want you to see by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, each one was changed. Only the Person and Work of Jesus Christ can change you. He and He alone can change you.

2. One thing that strikes me is that Jesus had preserved this man's life even to this point. Those swine were immediately killed by the demons. They apparently did not have permission to kill this man.

**B. Our mighty Savior has power that is greater than all the power of sin in your life.** Whatever sinful habit is controlling you, you can be free by the power of Jesus! Listen to the following quote...

"I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creation of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him." -Napoleon Bonaparte

The power of Jesus Christ is seen in the transformed lives of Christians in all ages. You can always pick out a true Christian because they have experienced the resurrection POWER of Jesus Christ.

1. Look at **verse 8**- For he said unto him, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." He called him a man. He didn't look like a man. Sin had made him everything but a man. Jesus sees us not for what we are but what we can be by his power and his grace. It's amazing what Jesus can do with human beings.
2. It's amazing what Christ can do with a human life. You give Jesus you, as you are, you'll be amazed what He'll give you back. You give Jesus your crab apple, he'll give you back a golden delicious. You give Jesus your thorn, he'll give you back a beautiful rose. You give Jesus an acorn, he'll give you back a mighty oak. Give Jesus your Jacob, the schemer, he'll give you back an Israel, a prince with God. Give Jesus Simon, the cursing fisherman; he'll give you back a Simon Peter, mighty preacher. You give Saul, persecutor of the church, he'll give you back Paul, militant, missionary, apostle. You give yourself to Jesus and you will be amazed what He will do with you.

**C. Consider Jesus Past History with Hopeless Cases.** God is the God of hopeless cases.

- Think about **Manasseh**. He worshipped all the host of heaven and served them and built high places, even put idols in the house of the Lord. He was cruel and offered his children to pass through the fire of the Moloch god—he closed his ears to his little one's screams for mercy. He used witchcraft and used wizards. He did much to provoke the Lord to anger. His thirst for evil was limitless as he continued in his path of utterly ruining himself. But you will remember that one day the Lord dealt with Manasseh. He

intervened dramatically in the life of Manasseh. He brought him to affliction to this scorner. Manasseh sought the Lord and humbled himself before God, and God answered him. One who seemed beyond redemption was rescued. Is there someone here you think you are beyond redemption? Someone in your life?

- Let me tell you about **Rahab the Harlot**. She was not only a Gentile, but she was a home wrecker—a prostitute. Let's not soften this one. Yet through faith she was received by our merciful God.
- What about **Saul of Tarsus**? By his own admission he was the "chief of sinners". He was a blasphemer of Christ, and he harmed Christians and sought to kill them. He was of the same blood thirsty crowd that put Jesus to death. He was there at Stephen's stoning. Can one like this be saved? Even when he came to be saved, the Christians did not trust him because his reputation was one of a blood thirsty destroyer of anyone who believed in Christ. But Saul saw the light.

In closing, I want you to consider that -

### III. **We need to tell the world of Jesus' power to change the most hopeless case**

**(ME)!** Jesus Christ would have His Name to be famous! Paul said, "I'm the chief of sinners". Moses said, "I can't talk". David said, "I just want to be a doorkeeper in God's house!" Look what God has done!

A. *Don't be surprised when the world won't want to hear it!* Verse 16-17, "And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. 17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts."

B. *We don't normally desire to get out into the fray of spiritual warfare.* When we are delivered, we'd like to rest with Jesus. Verse 18, "And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him."

In verse 18 this man expresses his desire to go with Jesus. Isn't that what we all would like. We'd like to get saved and then experience the Second Coming. We'd love to immediately go to be in Heaven.

C. But Jesus would have His Name be famous Look at what He tells this changed man. It's what he tells you too. Verse 19 – "Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee".

You see those people in that area didn't want Jesus but he wanted them. So, he sent them a personal witness who could give a personal testimony of what Jesus could do in a life.

1. Has Jesus done anything for you? Has he changed you? Has he saved you? You say, "Yes, He has." Have you made it public? No? Why haven't you? Are you ashamed of Jesus? Are you afraid? Why haven't you publicly declared what Jesus has done for you? Go home and tell your friends.

2. The Scripture says in **verse 20**-“And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all *men* did marvel”. Decapolis **meant the ten cities**. He turned those ten cities into ten bells where he rang out the praises of Jesus.

Can you imagine Dear old Legion’s testimony? "Dear friends, you all know I was a wild man, but a few days ago I met a man named Jesus and he cast the devil out of me and filled me with His Spirit and he has called me to preach His gospel. The rest of my life I'm going to spend my days telling everybody what good things the Lord hath done for me."

- You may wonder, “Why did God wait so long to save me?” Don’t worry about that. He wants you to proclaim the power of Jesus to set you free!

**Conclusion:** Do you know that could happen to you this morning? You could go out of this building able to tell the world what Jesus has done for you.

You say, “I’d like to have my life changed”. “I wish the wife wouldn’t nag me as much”. “If only I had a change of boss”. You think if you could change everything around you and then your life would be different.

You are mistaken. Change must come from within by meeting with Jesus and surrendering all to Him. I could take you out this morning and buy you the car of your dreams and you wouldn’t be satisfied. You know why? Because the need you have in your life has nothing to do with external things. Your need is a spiritual renewal with Jesus Christ. He alone has the POWER!