

JESUS HEALS A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN

Mark 5:1-20

Key Verse: 5:9

"Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' 'My name is Legion,' he replied, 'for we are many.'"

Today's passage is a story about how a young man was possessed by demons and suffered until he cut his flesh with stones, screaming. In this part, we learn that demons invade individual persons. And the story continues. Jesus had mercy on him and healed him from his demon possession. The demon-possessed man was too horrible even to look at. So his parents and townspeople cast him out. But Jesus saw him with God's eyes and rescued him from 6,000 demons through intensive fighting and paying a hostage price.

I. A man with an evil spirit (1-8)

First, Jesus' second effort for a vacation (1-2). Look at verse 1. "They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes." Verse 1 tells us that Jesus and his disciples made a second effort for a retreat even after facing an awful storm in the Lake of Galilee. They kept on sailing across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. It was only six miles across the Lake of Galilee. Gerasa was one of the cities of the Decapolis. At one time Greek immigrants colonized and lived in this area. And the 14th Roman Legion once occupied and colonized this land. Jesus and his disciples had left the other side of the lake in the early evening and spent a certain amount of time in the storm. It was already late night. So they arrived in a town of the Gerasenes in the late night or very early in the morning. The disciples were eagerly waiting for the boat to touch the shore. Finally, they landed on the shore. They were happy that they were still alive. They were happy now that they could eat something, and get some sleep since they had struggled in the stormy sea all night. As soon as they put their feet on Gerasene soil, they heard a strange cry. It was like the cry of a wounded animal. The disciples became nervous. Soon, they saw a man coming out of the tombs to meet Jesus, tottering and crying. The host of the vacation was not a good one, but a monstrous one.

Second, he had lived according to his sinful nature (3-8). Look at verse 3. "This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain." What had caused this young man to become like this? In verse 9 he says, "My name is Legion." "Legion" refers to a regiment of Roman soldiers. Probably he had seen his father resist the harassment of a Roman soldier and be pierced by a spear and die. This scene may have caused him to become a mental patient. But in truth, he became a man of tragedy when he lived according to his sinful nature.

Verse 3 tells us more about him. As verse 3 says, "This man lived in the tombs..." When others seemed to hinder his sinful human freedom, he cut his relationships with them one by one. Finally he had no one to live with. Verse 3 tells us that he was in the state of total depravity when he was not controlled by the Spirit of God.

After the Fall, all men are considered fallen men. Fallen men are sinful men. In the course of living according to his sinful desires, this man became a troublemaker and a source of anguish to his mother and other members of his family. And he became a disaster in the society in which he had lived. Many people began to hate him. Then he said, "Everybody hates me. They are wrong, and the world is mad!" After he had committed many crimes, he was locked up behind iron bars many times. But he pulled them apart with the strength of demons and ran away again and again. When he lived according to his sinful nature, he was not happy. He was a burden to everybody.

How did his situation develop? Look at verse 5. "Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones." The man thought that he would be free if he lived among the tombs. But he was not free. First, many mosquitos did not leave him alone. Moreover, when he lived according to his sinful nature the devil did not leave him alone. Immediately the devil sent his soldiers, demons. Demons crept into him one by one until he was full of demons. Look at verses 6,7. "When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!'" According to these verses, he liked Jesus, and at the same time, he

hated Jesus. He was split by two forces. He became a man of split personality. He was split between God and Satan. When he lived according to his sinful nature, he constantly felt that he was an ordinary man and at the same time he was a bogeyman or dead man.

As we know, sleeping is one of our human joys. But this man could not sleep because of the torment of demons. He roamed around the tombs and ran up and down the hills. He cried and cried because he was too distressed by the torment of demons. So he began to cut himself with stones to stop the torment of demons. This man never imagined the cost of enjoying his sinful nature was so costly. There are too many demon-possessed people. One young man attended a prayer meeting one night. The next morning it was announced that he committed suicide by jumping out of his window on the eighth floor of an apartment building by the lake shore. He didn't want to commit suicide. He just wanted to escape from the torment of demons.

Here we learn that there are two worlds: One is the visible world and the other is the invisible world. There is the physical world and there is also the spiritual world. In the spiritual world there are two kinds of spirits: One is the Holy Spirit, and the other, an evil spirit. An evil spirit is also called an unclean spirit, and demons. Demons are the soldiers of the evil spirit. The devils are the staff members of Satan. Jesus testifies concerning Satan, "He was a murderer and a liar from the beginning" (Jn 8:44). Satan opposes the truth of God with sweet lies. Satan obscures the light with darkness. Satan entangles men's minds in error. Satan stirs up hatred. Satan kindles fights. Satan misleads men into eternal condemnation. His purpose is to overthrow God's kingdom and snatch away man's happiness. We must know about the existence of Satan and his soldiers, demons.

Jesus saw that this man's problem was not mental, but a spiritual problem. Jesus saw his problem as demon possession. As soon as Jesus saw him, he ordered the demons to come out. Demons have never been afraid of anyone, not even King Saul or the Roman Emperor Nero or Joseph Stalin. But they were scared to death when Jesus came near them. Nevertheless, they did not want to release their prisoner free of charge. Jesus was ready to set him free from their grip.

II. Jesus healed the man possessed by demons (9-17)

First, Jesus asked, "What is your name?" (9). Out of his deep compassion and mercy, Jesus had already ordered the evil spirit to come out of the man, even before the man asked for help (8). Jesus is always ready to set men free from Satan's grip. Jesus has power to subdue the power of demons. Jesus can save men from demon possession.

When the man approached him, Jesus asked, "What is your name?" As soon as Jesus saw him, Jesus asked, "What is your name?" It is the way Jesus cast out all the demons in him. When the demons in him heard the voice of Jesus, "What is your name?" they were all subdued first and were melted like Jell-O. Let's think again about why Jesus asked his name. The moment Jesus asked his name was the moment that Jesus cast out all the demons from him. When Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" the demons in him were helpless, like the 100,000 soldiers of the Austro-Russian army before Napoleon Bonaparte. When Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" he replied, "My name is Legion." Legion was the name for 6,000 soldiers in the Roman army. Before meeting Jesus this man had been tormented by demons with the strength of 6,000 Roman soldiers. In history, no one was stronger than a demon. But Jesus cast out 6,000 demons from him.

He was saved from demon possession. But he was still half-way beside himself. Jesus had great compassion on him when he saw he was like an animal man both mentally and spiritually. Jesus wanted to make him whole. So Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" In the Bible, a person's name represents his character or his whole being. Probably this man's real name had been forgotten long ago by others, and even by himself. Jesus saved him from demon possession in the hope that he would be a blessing to others. God saved his chosen people again and again whenever they became useless. So we also must shepherd demon-possessed men until they are healed and can be a blessing. In this generation, the most important thing seems to be to shepherd demon-possessed men with the hope of God.

Second, Jesus used others' pig industry to save a demon-possessed man (10-17). When Jesus began to help this man, the demons in him felt the danger of losing their prisoner. So they wanted to make a deal with Jesus. They looked around and saw a large herd of pigs grazing nearby. There were 2,000 pigs in the herd. The demons turned their attention to less valuable existences--pigs. They demanded the 2,000 pigs as the ransom price for their prisoner. Jesus accepted their demand without reservation. As soon as they got a deal, they entered the 2,000 pigs. Pigs' greatest joy is eating. But when the demons entered the 2,000 pigs, the pigs felt that they became third-degree mental patients. They lost their joy of life--eating. Also, the pigs could not endure the torment of demons. They decided to commit mass suicide. They rushed over the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

The herdsmen fled when they saw the pigs' mass suicide. When the townspeople came back and saw Jesus and the man who had been possessed by demons, sitting there by Jesus, fully dressed and in his right mind, they were very unhappy. They thought that Jesus ruined their pig industry just to save one useless man in their society.

To Jesus, one seemingly useless man was more valuable than 2,000 pigs. To Jesus, one sick human being was more valuable than any amount of material possessions. In order to save one helpless man, Jesus did not hesitate to use pigs that belonged to other people. And he didn't even bother to ask permission. Jesus came to this world to free men from their bondage of sin. Jesus came to this world as a ransom sacrifice for all men. Mark 10:45 says, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." In order to save this man, Jesus spent a sleepless night in Gerasa. In order to save this man, he was hated, rejected and abandoned by the townspeople. Finally, he was forced to leave the town. By healing a demon-possessed man, Jesus was rejected and despised.

III. Jesus commissioned him with a mission (18-20)

First, Jesus helped him remember God's grace (19). Jesus sent him back to tell of God's grace. When Jesus got in the boat to leave, the man who

had been demon possessed begged to go with him. His request was not granted, but Jesus helped him in two ways. Look at verse 19. "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." Jesus helped this man to remember God's grace as of first importance. In the past, he wanted to enjoy his sinful pleasures, and as a result he became a slave of Satan. Such a handsome man was disfigured so much that he looked like a Frankenstein. Because of his demon possession he was abandoned by his townspeople. Because of his demon possession his parents also could not but abandon him. But as soon as Jesus saw him, he had great mercy on him. As soon as Jesus saw him, Jesus demanded the evil spirit to come out of him. By the wonderful grace of Jesus he was freed from demon possession. And again his handsomeness came alive in his face. He is no more a slave of sin and Satan. He is now a precious child of God by Jesus' grace. He should not forget Jesus' grace.

To remember God's grace through his Son Jesus is the beginning point of human happiness. But to sinful men, not to forget God's grace is the most difficult thing. One young man was bald-headed and too heavy. So he had a severe marriage problem. But by God's grace he married a daughter of God in the UBF church. God gave him a son. He was thankful for a few days. But when he was abundantly blessed he became complacent. Then the devil took God's grace away from his heart. His Bible teacher's wife died just two weeks earlier. But the young man ran away from the church. Paul means "little." But the Apostle Paul is a great man forever. He never forgot God's grace in time of hardship, misunderstanding and prison. He said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am..." (1Co 15:10). Peter also knew God's grace and said in 1 Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

Second, Jesus established him as the director of Decapolis house churches (19-20). Now this man has a precious mission. According to Jesus' instruction, he went back home and began his ministry--first to his family, next to his friends. He proclaimed God's grace throughout the Decapolis. Thus he became the director of Decapolis house churches. The more he

7

told about Jesus' grace, the happier he was.

At this time, let's ask God's mercy that he may help us learn how to use our human freedom in Jesus. Let's remember how Jesus sacrificed to save a demon-possessed man. May God have mercy on us so that we may be used as shepherds.