

Introduction

1. In our current section of study, Mark 4:35-5:43, we witness four miracles of Jesus that reveal His power as the One bringing the kingdom of God and victory over death.
 - a. Victory over the natural realm and danger – Calming the Storm (Mk 4:35-41)
 - b. Victory over the spiritual realm and demons – Jesus and the Demoniac (Mk 5:1-20)
 - c. Victory over the physical realm and disease – A Woman Touches Jesus (Mk 5:21-34)
 - d. Victory over death – Jesus Raises a Dead Girl (Mk 5:35-43)
2. “Victory is the major theme that binds this long section together” (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Diligent*, 59).
3. **Read Mk 5:1-20.**

A. Jesus Meets the Demoniac (1-5)

1. Jesus and His disciples arrived in “the region of the Gerasenes” (1).
 - a. Jesus had just calmed a great storm as He and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee from the region of Capernaum on the northwest coast to the region of the Gerasenes on the eastern shore.
 - b. William Lane reports, “The point of arrival is indicated in a general way as the district of the Gerasenes, most probably in reference to a town whose name is preserved in the modern Kersa or Koursi. At the site of Kersa the shore is level, and there are no tombs. But about a mile further south there is a fairly steep slope within forty yards from the shore, and about two miles from there cavern tombs are found which appear to have been used for dwellings” (William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 181).
2. As their boat landed near the tombs, Jesus met “a man with an impure spirit (2-5).
 - a. This meeting took place immediately (Gk., *euthus*) as if either Jesus had landed knowing where the man would be or the man had known that Jesus was coming.
 - b. The man was said to have an “impure (Gk., *akatharto* – “unclean”) spirit.”
 - 1) This term “unclean” was a euphemism for being demon possessed.
 - 2) Mk 1:21-28 records a similar encounter with a man in the synagogue at Capernaum who was “possessed by an impure spirit” (Mk 1:23).
 - c. The man who met Jesus was empowered by the spirits who possessed him and could not be bound with human chains put on him by the people to protect themselves from his wild outbursts.
 - d. He lived alone in the tombs, a place that was ritually unclean.
 - e. The man was suicidal as evidenced by the fact that he “cut himself with stones” (5). Even today cutting or other self-mutilation is a sign of deep depression and a warning of possible suicide.
3. Wiersbe insightfully observes, “We see in this scene three different forces at work: Satan, society, and the Savior. These same three forces are still at work in our world, trying to control the lives of people. . . . About all that society can do for problem people is to isolate them, put them under guard and, if necessary, bind them While we thank God that society does offer a limited amount of restraint and protection, we must confess that society cannot permanently solve these problems and deliver Satan’s terrorized victims” (Wiersbe, 61-62).
4. But the Savior has power over Satan that Society does not have and cannot even comprehend.

B. Jesus Heals the Demoniac (6-13)

1. The demoniac knew the power of Jesus and “ran and fell on his knees in front of him” (6).
 - a. Falling on his knees was not an act of worship or a plea for mercy by the man.
 - b. It was a plea for mercy from the unclean spirits who possessed the man.
2. The demons feared Jesus (7).
 - a. The demon cried out in fear wanting to know “What do you want with me?” (7)

- b. The demon knew who Jesus was.
 - 1) He identified him as “Son of the Most High God” (Gk., *uie tou theou tou upsistou*) (7).
 - a) Daniel Akin notes, “The demon’s confession in 5:7 answers the disciples’ question in 4:41 [Who is this?]. The demoniac knows who Jesus is, and he knows his existence is at stake. His time has run out” (Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Mark*, 106).
 - b) Use of this precise and accurate name may have been a demonic attempt to gain control of the situation and power over Jesus just as the demon had gained power over the man.
 - 2) In addition, the demon appealed “in God’s name” for protection from Jesus. He wanted the Father to protect him from the Son. That wasn’t going to happen!
- 3. However, the demon’s attempt to control and avoid Jesus’ power were all for naught.
 - a. Jesus commanded the demon, “Come out (Gk., *Ekselthe*) (8).
 - b. This was the same command that Jesus had given to the demon that possessed the man at the Capernaum synagogue (Mk 1:25).
- 4. Jesus then asked the demon’s name (9).
 - a. Jesus most likely already knew the name but commanding and receiving an answer from the demon showed Jesus’ authority over him.
 - b. The demon responded that his name was “Legion” (Gk., *Legion*), a word associated with a cohort of as many as 6,000 men as this term was applied in the Roman Empire. For us, it is a large number.
 - c. The man was most likely possessed not just by a single unclean spirit but many unclean spirits.
- 5. As the demons were on their way out, they boldly asked Jesus for a favor (10-13).
 - a. They did not want Jesus “to send them out of the area” (10).
 - b. Instead, the demons asked to possess a large herd of pigs, two thousand in number (11-12).
 - c. Jesus gave his permission, and the unclean spirits came out of the man and possessed the pigs, who driven mad by the unclean spirits, plunged to their deaths in the sea (13).
 - 1) The possessed man had cut himself but had avoided killing himself to this point. However, the simple pigs were quickly driven to destruction by the unclean spirits.
 - 2) Lane concludes, “What must be seen above all else is that the fate of the swine demonstrates the ultimate intention of the demons with respect to the man they possessed. It is their purpose to destroy the creation of God, and halted in their destruction of a man, they fulfilled their purpose with the swine” (Lane, 186).

C. The Aftermath of the Healing (14-17)

- 1. Those tending the pigs ran off to report what had happened and the people in the town quickly came out to see for themselves (14).
- 2. Concerning those who came out to see what had happened, Wiersbe notes, “Not only did Jesus come to them, but He spoke to them and permitted them to speak to Him. The citizens of that area avoided the two demoniacs, but Jesus treated them with love and respect. He came ‘to seek and to save that which was lost’ (Luke 19:10). . . . the drowning of the two thousand swine was a vivid object lesson to this Christ-rejecting crowd that, to Satan, a pig is as good as a man! In fact, Satan will make a man into a pig! The Lord was warning the citizens against the powers of sin and Satan. It was a dramatic sermon before their very eyes: ‘The wages of sin is death!’” (Wiersbe, 63-64).
- 3. The people, who had been afraid of the demon possessed man, now feared Jesus (15-17).
 - a. Now that the man was “sitting there, dressed and in his right mind,” he was no longer one to be feared.
 - b. The people were now “afraid” (Gk., *ephobethesan*) of Jesus just as His disciples had been after Jesus had calmed the storm (cf., Mk 4:40).
 - c. When afraid, we naturally react with either fight or flight. In this case the people asked Jesus to go away from them.
- 4. Wiersbe concludes, “Mark 5 tells of three requests: (1) The demons requested that Jesus send them into the pigs (Mark 5:12); (2) the citizens requested that Jesus leave the area (Mark 5:17); and (3) one of the former demoniacs requested that Jesus allow him to follow Him (Mark 5:18). Our Lord granted the first two requests but not the third one” (Wiersbe, 64).

D. Jesus Commissions the Demoniac (18-20)

1. The demoniac asked to go with Jesus, but Jesus denied his request (18).
2. Instead of adding the man to His band of disciples, Jesus commissioned him as a missionary (19).
3. Wiersbe states, “This man became one of the earliest missionaries to the Gentiles. Jesus had to leave, but the man remained and bore faithful witness to the grace and power of Jesus Christ. We trust that many of those Gentiles believed on the Savior through his witness” (Wiersbe, 65).
4. We remember so far how Jesus has commanded demons and those whom He had healed to keep silent about His identity and actions (cf., Mk 1:25, 1:34, 1:44). We have called this phenomenon, the Messianic Secret.
 - a. So why did Jesus commission this man and command him to “Go . . . and tell . . .” (19)?
 - b. Lane believes, “It is striking that no restriction is place upon the man by Jesus, in contrast to the injunctions to silence found in other instances of healing. . . . This may be due to the fact that the man was a Gentile and his proclamation is confined to a predominantly Gentile area. It is, nevertheless, an exception to the more usual pattern observed by Jesus in Galilee. . . . Thus in the midst of the Gentiles, the God of Israel was glorified through the proclamation of what Jesus had accomplished”(Lane, 42-43).
5. The demoniac witnessed openly concerning Jesus in “the Decapolis” (20).
 - a. The Decapolis was a region extending from the Sea of Galilee east of the Jordan River up onto the eastern plateau (i.e., modern Jordan). There were ten major Greek-style cities in this region, which was inhabited primarily by Gentiles (e.g., They kept pigs which were unclean food for Jews.).
 - b. The former demoniac most likely had an effective ministry based on his miraculous transformation and his passionate testimony of “how much Jesus had done for him” (20).
 - c. We each should have a personal testimony of how much Jesus has done for us.

E. Closing Thoughts

1. Like the demoniac and unlike the people of Gadara, come to Jesus for help.
2. Jesus still has power over the spiritual realm and is still the source of ultimate healing.
3. Who are the “demoniacs” in your sphere whom society avoids but whom Jesus wants to reach, to listen to, to heal, to redeem and commission with the good news?
4. When God’s blessings, especially to others, are costly to us, do we receive them with joy or reject them?
5. Like the former demoniac, what we want to do for/with the Lord may seem good to us but may not always be God’s plan. God’s plan is better than our plan every time!
6. How will you share what Jesus has done for you with your own people today?