

HOPE FOR THE HELPLESS

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Mark 5:1-20

1. Last week we saw a clear demonstration of Jesus' power over the natural world.
2. In the midst of a violent storm He was able to rebuke the winds and the sea, and when He did they became instantly calm.

NOTE: It is comforting to know that God rules over all aspects of His creation.

3. Here we see Him confronting another seemingly hopeless situation—a man so possessed by demonic spirits that both he and society were powerless to do anything about it.
4. The Bible makes it clear that demonic forces exist, and that they are able to possess and control both people and nations. Ephesians 6:12

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

5. Demons obey the Devil, and they function under His control.
6. Every person who has not been born again is controlled by the powers of darkness.

- a. They are spiritually blind. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

- b. They are spiritual captives. 2 Timothy 2:24-26

The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, 25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, **having been held captive by him to do his will.**

NOTE: Based on human history and current events I am not sure how anyone can deny the existence of evil forces at work in the world.

7. Most conservative commentators believe that demons are fallen angels that joined Lucifer in his rebellion against God.
8. Fortunately not all of them are free to cause mankind problems because some of them are consigned to a place the Bible refers to as “the abyss.”

I. The reality.

- A. According to Mark this man was a menace.
 1. To himself.
 2. To the community.
- B. Neither the man nor the community could do anything to control his actions and emotions.
- C. His condition did not have a human solution.

NOTE: Our society likes to think that it has the power to correct the problems that plague us, but the evidence does not support that belief.

II. The request.

- A. The man, under the influence of the demons, saw Jesus, ran up to Him, and bowed down before Him.

B. The demonic spirits recognized Jesus and addressed Him as, “The Son of the Most High God.” James 2:18-19

But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." 19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.”

NOTE: It is a sad thing that demonic spirit recognize and bow before Jesus Christ, while men refuse to repent, bow, and believe.

C. When Jesus asked what their name was they replied, “My name is Legion; for we are many.”

D. They knew that they would have to obey the Lord, so they requested that Jesus send them into a nearby heard of swine rather than consigning them to the abyss. Luke 8:31

They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.

NOTE: Putting Mark’s account together with Luke’s we could paraphrase their request as, “Do not send us out of the country and into the abyss,” which demonstrates our Lord’s power over evil both personally and geographically.

E. Jesus gave them permission, and in the process demonstrated Satan’s ultimate desire, and that is to destroy.

III. The results.

A. The herdsmen ran away and reported what happened to everyone who would listen.

B. The man who had been demon possessed was found sitting down, fully clothed, and in his right mind.

1. 1 John 3:7-8

Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; 8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. **The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.**

2. While speaking at the house of Cornelius Peter declared. "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." Acts 10:38

C. The response of the people was not joy and wonder; rather it was fear and rejection. Luke 8:37

And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to leave them, for they were gripped with great fear...”

NOTE: When God’s power is manifested many run from God rather than to God because they are not willing change the direction of their lives.

D. The response of the former Demoniac is recorded in Luke 8:38-39.

But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying, 39 "Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

NOTE: Warren Wiersbe wrote the following regarding the man’s request.

“Jesus knew that the man’s place was in his own home, with his loved ones, where he could bear witness to the Savior. After all, effective Christian living must begin at home, where people know us best. If we honor God there, then we can consider offering ourselves for service elsewhere. This man became one of the earliest missionaries to the Gentiles. Jesus had to leave, but the man bore faithful witness to the grace and power of Jesus Christ.”

APPLICATION

1. Effective Christian living begins at home.
2. If we can't represent Jesus Christ there, we should not play the hypocrite and try to represent Him in the world.
3. Christianity that does not go home from church with us is probably not genuine.
4. This man had credibility in his home and community because it was evident to all that something miraculous had happen in his life.
5. We might ask ourselves, "What is Jesus doing in my life that others can take notice of?"
6. May God help us to live a life that gives credibility to the Gospel's power to save and to sanctify through Jesus Christ our Lord.
7. May we also bear witness with our lips to the grace and power of Jesus Christ.