

“The Gerasene Demoniac”
Mark 5:1-13
(Preached at Trinity, August 11, 2010)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Like many of the stories we read in Mark this account is also found in the other two synoptic Gospels - **Matthew 8:28-32** and **Luke 8:26-33**.
2. Jesus and His disciples had crossed to the eastern shore of the lake to what is referred to as the *Gentile Decapolis*. They were influenced greatly by the pagan Greek culture. From the Jewish perspective the story is full of uncleanness:
 - A Gentile territory, a man possessed with an unclean spirit and living in the midst of unclean tombs, and the raising of unclean swine probably for providing meat to the unclean Roman army.
3. After making it safely across the Sea of Galilee they were immediately met by a man possessed by demons who was from the Roman settlement of Gadara.
 - a. In Mark and Luke we find the focus upon only one man
 - Mark 5:2** – “When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him,”
 - Luke 8:27** – “And when He came out onto the land, He was met by a man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs.”
 - b. In Matthew’s Gospel we find Jesus was met by two demoniacs
 - Matthew 8:28** – “When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. *They were* so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way.”
 - c. We must not be guilty of calling this a contradiction.
 - Neither Mark or Luke say that there was one only.
 - Perhaps, while two came out of the tombs, only one actually came running forth to speak. to Jesus
 - d. For the sake of the exposition of Mark we will refer to the one demon possessed man.
4. Comparing the three Gospels we get a detailed description of this poor man:
 - a. Mark says of him that he lived among the tombs and was so wild that no one could bind him not even with chains. He screamed day and night and gashed his flesh with sharp stones. The demons had made him like a wild animal than a man.
 - b. Matthew’s Gospel describes him as “Extremely violent”
 - c. In Luke 8:27 we read was naked – he “had not put on any clothing for a long time”
5. This poor man was in the absolute control of a legion of demons. They controlled his thinking, speaking, and behavior.
 - Mark 5:9** – “And He was asking him, “What is your name?” And he said to Him, “My name is Legion; for we are many.”

- a. We should see this as indication that this man was possessed by a large number of demons. We shouldn't take it literally but a Roman legion consisted of 5,600 soldiers.
- b. This militant term also describes the ferocity and power of the demons
6. In all three Gospels the demoniac approached Christ. There were others with Jesus but it was Jesus who was the focus of attention.

Mark 5:6 – “Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him”

 - A. They immediately recognized Jesus. They knew Him.
 - B. In **Verse 7** the demons asked

Mark 5:7 "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?"

KJV – “What have I to do with thee”

NAS – “What do I have to do with You”

ESV – “What have you to do with me”

NAU – “What business do we have with each other”

 1. The original reads - Τί ἔμοι καὶ σοί - “What to us and to you” -
 2. There are two possibilities of interpretation
 - a. “What do we have in common with you?”
 - b. “Why do you bother us?”
 - C. This is the same construction used when Jesus addressed Mary when she requested that He do something about the shortage of wine.

^{NAU} **John 2:4** – “And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come."
 - D. Both cases dealt with the issue of maintaining an appointed time.
 - E. Matthew's Gospel sheds light on this

Matthew 8:29 – “And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"
6. The demoniac recognized Jesus, the Son of God worthy of worship

Mark 5:6 – “Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him;”

The demons knew who Jesus was:

Mark 5:7 – “Son of the Most High God?”

 1. The demons saw themselves as condemned and subject to the judgment of Christ.

Mark 5:7 – “I implore You by God, do not torment me!”
 2. But they also knew the time had not come. Their judgment is reserved to the last day.

Jude 1:6 – “And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,”
7. Jesus commands them to come out and they implore Jesus to allow them to go into the swine. This resulted in the pigs going into a frenzy and they ran down the bank and into the sea where they were drowned.
8. There are two things we need to glean from this passage.
 1. First, I want us to look at the matter of demon possession – does it have any validity for today.

2. Second, we need to maintain a focus on Jesus as the King of the universe. We need to look at the demons with regard to Christ. They were in absolute submission to Christ.
- I. First, the matter of demon possession.
 - A. Demon possession was a very real problem before the coming of Christ
 1. The discovery of ancient Greek papyri shows that early civilizations suffered demon possession. They employed exorcists to spar with the demonic opponents using long and convoluted formulas
 2. We can see during the ministry of Christ that He had frequent warfare with demons
 3. Demons are agent of Satan. Jesus came into the world to crush the power of Satan. His power is very much curtailed today, yet will not be fully bound until Christ returns.
 - B. Evidence of present day demon possession is inconclusive, but there is nothing biblically to prevent it.
The post-resurrection examples point to the possibility. **See Acts 19:11-18**
 1. It is wrong to assume that common illnesses today are the result of demon possession
 2. There is no biblical support for professional exorcists
 3. With Christ's defeat of Satan upon the cross Satan's power has been greatly diminished. Demon possession, if it occurs today, is very limited
 - C. More important for us is the need to have a balanced Biblical understanding of our spiritual warfare.
 1. Many well-meaning Christians have developed an unhealthy fascination with Satan and his demons. An example of this can be found with Frank Peretti's book, This Present Darkness published in the mid-1980's which describes a spiritual war against territorial spirits that were dominating a small town.
 2. There are some groups who promote the casting out of demons and testify to many sensational experiences.
 - a. Years ago there was a popular radio talk-show host – Bob Larson
From his website:
DO YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAVE A DEMON?
ARE YOU EXPERIENCING SOME KIND OF DEMONIC ATTACK?
ARE YOU SUFFERING FROM THINGS THAT NO ONE CAN EXPLAIN?
ARE STRANGE, UNEXPLAINED EVENTS TAKING PLACE IN YOUR HOME
 - b. These groups are operating in stark contrast with the teaching of Scripture. Our experience must always be judged by Scripture.
 3. Jonathan Edwards – “A large part of the false religion in the world is made up of experiences and the false notions they excite. Non-Christian religions are full of them. So is the history of the Christian church. These experiences captivate people so Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, deceives multitudes, and corrupts true religion. Church leaders must be constantly on guard against these delusions.”
 - D. While Christians don't have to battle demon possession today we must understand that there is a great organized demonic force working against us.
 1. It is a relentless attack

1 Peter 5:8 – “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

2. We must continually stand against the attack
Ephesians 6:11 – “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”
3. Calvin – “Truth (Satan) assails with lies, light he obscures with darkness. The minds of men he involves with error; he stirs up hatred, inflames strife and war, and all in order that he may overthrow the kingdom of God, and drown men in eternal perdition with himself.”

II. Second, we need to see Jesus as the King of the universe. The demons were in absolute submission to Christ.

- A. We must not be distracted by the demons of Christ’s exorcisms and miss the truth being taught – Jesus has defeated Satan. The strongman’s fortress has been laid waste by One that is stronger.
 1. Although tempted throughout His entire ministry, He never sinned
 2. The demons were completely subject to Christ
Mark 5:7 - "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!"
 3. Satan has fallen from his place of power
Luke 10:17-18 – “The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." ¹⁸ And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.”
 4. Prior to Christ every nation except Israel was deceived by Satan. Jesus casting out demons is evidence of this triumph over Satan
Luke 11:21-22 - "When a strong *man*, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed. ²² "But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder.”
- B. This passage demonstrates Christ’s omnipotent power and authority
 1. The man needed help and could get it from no other source than Jesus.
Mark 5:3-4 – “And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; ⁴ because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him.”
 2. Jesus commanded this legion of demons that were powerful enough to seize the life of this man and powerful enough to destroy the herd of swine.
 3. They were completely under the authority of Christ
 - a. The demons had to request permission to enter into the swine – The reason is unclear
 - b. Perhaps they needed an animate object in which to reside. They feared being cast into the abyss.
 - c. Perhaps simply from their nature – the desire to destroy
 - d. Perhaps if they could not hurt these people in their flesh they might hurt them in their possessions

- e. Perhaps the hope that when the owners of the swine saw the destruction of their herd it would turn their hearts against Jesus and thus hurt them in their souls
- 4. Christ gave them permission
 - a. As God gave Satan permission to afflict Job
 - b. We can see the dominion of Christ
- 5. Ultimately, Jesus expelled the demons solely on the power of His Word

Mark 5:8 - "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"

Matthew 8:32 – “And He said to them, "Go!" And they came out and went into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters.”
- 6. The question has been asked, was it right for Jesus to destroy so many pigs (2000) and thus depriving their owners of such a large portion of their material possessions.
 - a. We can only answer this by appealing to our Lord’s sovereignty

^{KJV} **Genesis 18:25** – “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

^{KJV} **Romans 9:20** – “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?”
 - b. Certainly, Jesus knew their possessions were more precious to them than He was.

Conclusion:

1. We need to see Jesus as the Ruler of this universe. He is the King of kings. He sits upon His eternal throne where He rules over all principalities and powers.
2. He ever serves as a mighty King to defend us from our enemies. We can rest in Him.