

29-Jesus's Victory in a Triple Power Struggle

Series on Mark

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Let's turn now to the gospel of Mark 5. A few weeks ago, we looked at the parable of the mustard seed as we recommenced our series on Mark, and prior to recommencing that, we had already preached on the last part of Mark 4 as well, so today we move into Mark 5. And I thought I could do the first 20 verses in one sermon but there's just too much valuable, valuable instruction here, so this morning, we'll look at the first 13 or 14 verses or so of this portion and then the last verses in a few weeks from now.

Mark 5:1-20. Hear the word of God.

1 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 [that is, Jesus] 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.

May God bless the reading of his remarkable word.

Dear church family, one of the most important things we need to remember in this time of incredible national turmoil and degradation is the power of Jesus Christ, that he is able to triumph over every evil, even able to cast out demons. After calming the storm at the end of Mark 4 showing his power over the realm of nature, the beginning in Mark 5 shows us the power of Jesus over the spiritual realm of evil forces.

So after calming the storm, Jesus and his disciples reached the western side of the sea of Galilee where they come ashore near the city of Kursi in the area of ten towns called Decapolis, deca coming from "ten," and polis coming from "towns or cities." And so they leave Jewish culture and territory and they enter the Gentile world of Greek culture where people know little or nothing about the faithful covenant God of Israel, and in that area among the Gadarenes and the Gerasenes, demonic activity was rampant, in fact, Mark 5 provides us with more details about demonic activity and how Jesus cast out devils than any other passage in the New Testament. But preeminently this passage is about the power of Christ, the victory of Christ in casting out demons and in regenerating even the demon possessed, and that ought to be a tremendous encouragement to us in our time and with the kinds of hearts that we naturally have as we turn to this passage now from Mark 5 and look at, with you, Jesus' victory in what I'm calling a triple power struggle. We'll look at it in three thoughts then: his victory over the man with an unclean spirit, over the devils who possessed him, and over the man clothed now in his right mind.

In verse 2 of Mark 5, we're introduced to a man with an unclean spirit. Luke tells us this man is from the city, and when we combine the accounts in Matthew and Mark and Luke, it appears that this man, at one point, lived a fairly normal life with his family and friends and perhaps had a job, until he came to be possessed by devils. His life was such that the devil saw in this man an opportunity to fill him and possess him, not just with one devil or not just with seven devils like Mary Magdalene, but with a host of devils. It's an incredibly tragic case.

In verse 9, Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he says, "My name is Legion," which means "many." "I am possessed," he's saying, "by a host of devils." The word "Legion" refers to a Roman military unit that consists of 120 cavalry and 6,000 soldiers. Now there are commentators who try to deny that a host of devils can fill one man, but this is what the Bible says here. This man was possessed not necessarily by 6,000 but we

know in verse 13 that there were enough devils to enter into 2,000 pigs, so however that happened, there were a lot of devils inside of this man. He was truly demon possessed.

Now it wasn't that this happened all at once. Luke tells us that the devils possessed this man for a long time and they seized him often, it was progressive, in fact, his consciousness was so increasingly influenced by devil after devil that he even called himself Legion, possessed by many. In fact, he became so demon possessed that, when you read the story, there are places, it's hard to know where this man begins and where the devils end. So when we meet him in Mark 5, Legion's consciousness is so intertwined with demon possession that in one instance he uses a singular pronoun "I," and the next sentence he uses the plural pronoun "we," apparently meaning "the devils and me." The devils have, you see, literally consumed and possessed this man and so he's in utter misery. His life is a tragedy. It's full of uncleanness, isolation, hopelessness, self-destruction and death.

And he goes about in the tombs. The tombs were a place on the hillside where often the dead were buried, but some of the tombs were abandoned and there were, in this particular area, known to be several, not dozens but several demon possessed people that would inhabit the tombs. And if you lived in that day in that area, you wouldn't even walk through that area. It was spooky so you'd walk around it. And this man was in those tombs with a few others, naked, homeless, a servant of wickedness, a pawn in the hands of sin, a derelict that is beyond the pale, living among the dead in the tombs. Morally impure. Blatantly wicked. Wretchedly filthy. He was evil. Verses 2 and 8 use the word twice, he was unclean. Unclean here in the Greek means "evil; wretchedly evil; wicked to the core." And in some sense, of course, what I'm describing right now is what the devils are, the devils are evil to the core; their power and influence are only for evil.

This man was inhabited in such a way that he would often break out in rage and anger, he would assault people that might be in the neighborhood, that's why people also wanted to avoid him and that area. And he would take sharp stones and he would cut himself and draw blood and pain, and the people, of course, in the area realized the danger of this kind of person and so on more than one occasion, Mark tells us, they tried to chain him, they tried to, well, treat him like a beast. He acted like a wild animal. They'd shackle him with iron chains but it did no good. The legion of devils inside him were so astonishingly strong that they could snap those shackles and irons. And so the people gave up and this man just made his home in the tombs.

So how do you describe such a man? He lived a total life of alienation. Alienation, triple alienation, estrangement. He was alienated from himself, from other people, and from God. He was living exactly the opposite of how God designed us to be in our creation for we were to know ourselves, and we were to know others and fellowship with them, and we were to know God as his prophet and priest and king. So we need to meditate just a few moments together what this means, that by nature, even though we're not demon possessed with this kind of horrific degree of possession, Jesus said we are of our father the devil by nature. What does it mean that the natural man apart from Jesus participates, at least to some degree, in this alienation, doesn't know himself, doesn't really know

others, doesn't really fellowship in a deep spiritual way with others, and doesn't really know God.

You see, that's what this man had, he was self-estranged. He really didn't know who he was. "My name is Legion," he said, "for we are many." He's got a personality conflict within himself, the confusion between the my and the many. It's obvious he's torn apart by a thousand conflicting anxieties and, in a sense, he's spiritually schizophrenic in his relationship to himself. He said, "We're Legion. I'm Legion." And modern man is often like that too, isn't he? We see it in our society today; in all the violence and confusion and tumult, modern man is conflicted within himself. On the one hand, he goes out and kills millions and millions of babies, on the other hand, he tries to get a building project in some area rejected, or an oil pipeline rejected because it might disturb a sparrow or some specie that's maybe not too common anymore. He's conflicted. He has no fixed goal, no certain ideal, no authoritative standard of morality. Too often modern man is so self-estranged that he just formulates his opinions by public majority. When that shifts, his frustrated, angry, confused, empty soul shifts with it, filled with self-contradictions. You see, no divided personality can ever be happy. The self-estranged, the confused person who doesn't know himself, who's always looking to know or find himself apart from God, is always prone to be confused and sad and angry and empty. He's his own worst enemy.

Then not only is the natural man self-estranged, he's also estranged from his fellow man. This man, well, there were others in the tombs but there is no real friendship there. You can't be demon possessed and be close to another demon possessed man. In hell there's no friendship at all. You're estranged. He's bound with fetters and chains but he burst them, but he's got no freedom; even though he seems to be free outwardly he's lonely, dwelling among the tombs. How many studies have been done today of modern man, especially in the big cities, not knowing his neighbor, not being close to anyone, not having a real accountability partner, no real intimate friendship, estranged from himself, estranged from his neighbor? You see, a soul that's alienated from himself will often be alienated from others, and where that happens, others just become objects and lawlessness often fills the emptiness.

A soul with a fight inside of itself will soon have a fight outside of itself with others. Once a man doesn't know who he is, he often ceases to be of service to his neighbor as well, becomes anti-social and then life just revolves around me and I don't even know what I really want. When Cain murdered Abel, he asked the anti-social question, didn't he, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Babel's sin of pride ended in confusion of tongues which made it impossible to maintain fellowship. Estrangement, you see, from self leads to estrangement to one's fellow man but the root of the problem is estrangement from God. That's this man's ultimate problem. It's the ultimate problem of every unsaved person. This man really wanted nothing to do with God, nothing to do with Jesus. We'll see that in a few minutes. The center of his life and what life is really all about, communion with God, he despised it. He was trying to live without God and that is always producing ultimate alienation and emptiness.

My friend, if you're living without God today, you may not become as demon possessed as this man, I should think not, but you are of your father the devil, and you are empty, and you are confused, and you'll never find yourself by looking for yourself, you'll only find who you are in the presence of almighty God. Don't be estranged from God. He's your Creator. He's the one who can help you. You see, once the hub of the wheel of life which is real fellowship with God, that's what life is all about, that's the meaning of life, the joy of life, the purpose of life, the fulfillment of life, once that hub of life, fellowship with God, is lost, which we did lose in paradise, but once it's never regained, once you keep staying away from Jesus, keep staying away from embracing the gospel, keep staying away from repenting and believing that gospel, you see, all the spokes that are meant to go into that hub will be in disarray. All the spokes, picture them as different people, they'll be falling apart. Life will seem empty because it is empty when you're outside of God and your sins make a separation between you and God, Isaiah says.

So this is natural man. We have chosen to ignore God, his law, his gospel, and therefore we must face the consequences of it. In this case, it's an extreme consequence but we must face, all of us without God, frustration and hatred and anxiety and despair and meaninglessness because God made us for himself and when we insist on being slaves of Satan, we are insisting on living out our fall, our deep and tragic fall in Adam without turning to the once solution. So this is the life of the natural man, alienation from God, from fellow man, from ourselves. It's a tragedy.

Now, of course, the world looks at us and looks at what I just said in the last 15 minutes and says, "You know, you Reformed people, you Reformed Christians, you're far too pessimistic about human nature." No, we're not. We're not pessimists, we're realists because we're teaching you what the Bible says. Read Romans 3:9-20, what the natural man is. And until our eyes go open for that, you see, until we understand what Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:2, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air," that is the devil, "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," that is who we are. And so Jesus himself said it this way, John 8:44, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

This is our nature, living selfishly rather than oriented to God. We dwell spiritually, not literally, spiritually in the tombs, in the empty tombs naked before God, shameful. Look at the shame of what's going on in our nation today. Look at the shame of our human nature apart from God, the shame of the language people are using today. Today "hell" is a fill word. People don't even know what they're talking about when they use the word. And they use the name of God in vain as if it's their prerogative. Look at their hatred, the broken homes, the sexual perversity, the abuse of every kind, the rampant addiction to alcohol, to drugs, the number of people in this nation under all kinds of difficulties and trials of their own making, the shame of their greed and oppression, and all sorts of immorality. And people rejoice in it. They make movies out of it. They put it up on a screen and they call it a movie, they call it family entertainment, and even people who call themselves Christians bring it into their home and watch it, one commandment after another broken, broken, all the power of darkness.

This is who you and I are by nature before Christ, if not in our outward lives, at least in our inward being to a substantial degree. Deep in our conscience we know if we're believers, that this was our history also in our thought world prior to being born again. And you know too, don't you, that were it not for Christ being powerful to conquer you, so loving, so tender, so gracious, so powerful to draw you to himself, this is who you would still be were it not for his grace. And so, though, yes, we're not as demon possessed as in nature as Legion was, has it ever become experientially real for you that by nature we are under the power of darkness and that the devil is our father. God is our Creator Father but the devil internally is our father and we serve him, we are sin-aholics by nature.

Well, that's the man that Jesus met when he stepped ashore. As his boat comes to shore, as he disembarks with his disciples, this man sees Jesus and he immediately begins to run to him. The atmosphere is electrified. Here is this demon possessed, scar-marked, naked man running toward Jesus, shouting in his madness, and Jesus does not turn away from him. Isn't that amazing? Jesus doesn't flinch. Jesus realizes as the man comes running to him that he's not just a maniac but a demoniac, and he begins to command the man, verse 8, that the demon would come out of him for he said, and in the Greek it's a past tense, saying he had been saying unto him even as he was coming, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." And after that initial command was given, unlike all the other instances in the gospels when Jesus commanded a devil to come out of a person, yes, the devil would tear at the person and cause a commotion but the devil would come out right away, but here for his own sovereign reasons, not because of any lack of power in Christ, to teach us valuable lessons, the demons do not immediately leave.

And the man keeps coming toward Jesus and, no doubt, those who were watching were expecting this man to attack Jesus, but as he comes close to Jesus, he falls on the ground prostrate at his feet like a subject in the presence of his Sovereign, and the Bible says he ran and worshiped him. Now "worship" here is not in the good sense of reverencing him out of true saving faith and heartfelt adoration but worship in its root meaning can also mean to fall prostrate in awe, and that's what happened to the demoniac. Legion recognizes, as he gets close to Jesus, somehow that Jesus is not a mere man. He's bowing down in prostration. Why? What's going on? Why is he doing this?

Well, two reasons. 1. Legion knows who Jesus is. The devils recognize Jesus, you see. But he wants no fellowship with him. Verse 7 says he cries out with a loud voice, a loud shriek actually at the top of his lungs, screaming, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee," adjure means "I swear an oath to thee by God, torment me not." So Legion, this is the mixture now of the man and the devils, is expressing his deep hostility against Jesus and even engaging in this blasphemous petition for self-preservation. He's actually saying something like this, "I want to have nothing to do with thee. We're completely polar opposites. You, Jesus, and me, Legion, what business dost thou have with me? I'm from evil and death and misery and thou art the Lord of life and light. Why art thou here? Why hast thou come? Leave me alone! I, the tormentor, take an oath and charge thee to leave me alone. Don't torment me! We

have nothing in common. Please be gone most high God. I use thy name to bring a charge against thee, O Son of God."

It's blasphemy but it tells us something, it tells us that the devils even understand who the person of Jesus is. James 2:19 says the devils believe and tremble, and you see that here, don't you? He's the Son of God, the Son of the most high. That's how Mark begins his gospel, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," and here the devils in the presence of Jesus recognize and confess his person, that he is the Son of God. So what are we to make of that today? How are we to apply this to ourselves today? Well, it ought to teach us how evil, how sinful unbelief is. This is the great evil of all evils. People today often say, "Well, I'm not as bad as my neighbor. I'm a pretty decent guy, a pretty decent woman so, true, I'm not perfect but I'm certainly no devil." Well, no, you're not a devil but as Jonathan Edwards said, you could be worse than a devil because the devils know and tremble when they confess Jesus Christ. But today millions upon millions and the numbers are growing, don't believe in God at all and don't tremble.

Isn't it amazing that even this demoniac trembles before Jesus? Do you tremble before him? If you don't know him savingly, you ought to be trembling because one day at the judgment day all of this will be reversed, you see, and you'll come before the living God and then every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. But then it will be too late to repent, too late to believe the gospel. My friend, don't go on another day without Jesus Christ. Don't go on another day in your wretched, wretched state of unbelief.

But there's a second reason why Legion and his internal devils bow down before Christ and that is that they are simply afraid of him. Look at verse 7d, "torment me not." The devils have what you might call an orthodox eschatology, eschatology means the doctrine of the last things, heaven, hell, judgment. Torment me not. You see, they know their end time theology. They know that when the Messiah comes, he's going to cast them into hell and they're asking for reprieve for a while.

"Torment me not." They know that Revelation 20:10 is true, "the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." You know, some people have a very wrong idea about hell. We think that if we go to hell that the devils will torment us. No. The devils are not in charge of hell, Jesus is. The devils will be tormented in hell by Jesus. You see, that's the point. They are in hell to be forever tortured and tormented for their disobedience and their sin against God as are all their followers.

So those of us who are outside of Christ on the judgment day will suffer the same condemnation as the devils. That's what Revelation 20 goes on to say in verses 14 and 15, "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Our end will be the same as the devils if we die outside of Jesus Christ. That is why unbelief, which is the one sin that keeps us from Christ, is the sin that will bring us to hell.

A. W. Pink makes the statement that at first seems unsound, he says it's not sin that will drive us to hell because sin can be repented of and can be forgiven, but it's unbelief, the mother of all sin, that will bring us to hell if we refuse to believe in the Son of God.

So my friend, let me just reason with you a moment. You're unsaved, you feel emptiness, don't you? Of course you do. You don't have God. You're not ready to die and you're not truly living and so you try to fill up that emptiness, don't you, with all kinds of things, possessions sometimes that give you pleasure for a week or two, or other ideas, or things you pursue, or maybe your work, or maybe your friendships, but deep down you know there's an emptiness. And you feel that you're missing what believers have all around you, yet something's holding you back, something's holding you back from just surrendering with all your sin to the Lord. What is it? What's holding you back from your own happiness, from your own fulfillment? Are there some kind of thoughts that are tormenting your soul? Are you thinking for some reason, for some absurd satanic reason that God won't receive you when he says he will not cast out anyone who comes to him? Why are you persisting in this state of pitiable, miserable alienation we call unbelief? It just makes no sense, does it, at all to stay on as an unbeliever and refuse to repent, and go on your way in this little short life unprepared to meet God for the eternity to come. Why would you destroy yourself through unbelief?

But look what Christ does. He comes. What does he do with Legion in his pitiable miserable condition? He has compassion on Legion, mercy on Legion. He looks upon this angry, godless, wicked man in a lost, sinful, demonic state, and his heart is filled with love and pity for him and he says, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." If he can have mercy and compassion and love for Legion, why can't he have it for you? You see, he who commanded the natural elements like the storm at the end of chapter 4, is so powerful that he can just as well command the supernatural elements and they obey him. With one word of his mouth, he will get the victory over the host of powerful devils who cannot resist him, but he simultaneously gets the victory by planting his seed or regeneration in the heart of this needy man and overpowering him with his amazing grace and his stupendous salvation.

Well, that's amazing. That is amazing grace. You know, today you often see these advertisements, they're everywhere, you can't miss them. There's a picture of two people, one is in kind of a slouched posture and a big belly, the other is the same person standing up straight and the belly is gone and it advertises, if you do this or if you get on this program, you know, you can lose weight, and it's called before and after, a before shot and then after shot and the dramatic results are obvious in the picture. Well, I want to tell you the before and after shots of this demoniac man are a thousand times more, a thousand times more than these pictures. Rarely do you see such a dramatic change. The before shot is a man out of his mind, naked, cutting himself, screaming, chasing, chasing everyone off, living among the dead, a terrible picture. The after shot is verse 15, he's clothed, he's sitting at the feet of Jesus, he's in his right mind, and he's asking Jesus if he can stay with him and be close to him.

You see, in Jesus you can find freedom, you can find peace, you can find deliverance. John 6:37 says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." This man ran to Christ, against him, and Christ delivered him from something that was beyond him. You see, if we're in Christ, this is what we too have received. We've received divine infinite mercy in the person of our Beloved who has unshackled us because he was shackled and suffered unto death that we might be set free. In his astonishing compassion, we, who are worthy of hell, have him as our substitute to bear the agonies of hell so we could be set free. That's why Paul said, "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Christ on the cross, this is the answer for all the tumult going on in America right now. It's the answer for all the tumult going on in your heart, my unconverted friend. There's only one answer and that is Jesus.

"Come out from among him, you unclean spirit." Repent and turn and believe. You see, that alone can restrain sin. Politics, science, economics, well, all areas of life in many ways try to tame sin but all fail again and again. But Christ on the cross, he's the power. He gets the victory. There's victory in the cross of Jesus, salvation victory, victory over sin, victory that produces fellowship. Everlasting victory.

So today, one of the big talking points in the media is racism, it's oppression. We don't deny there's some racism and it needs to be addressed, don't deny that, but all of the commotion involved that flows out of this produces just more riots and protests and looting and destruction of statues and history and property, more outward changes, more laws, more anger, more death. You see, none of this is going to change the human heart. Only the cross of Christ gets at the heart of the matter and can change the heart, can bring repentance, can grant deliverance, can produce constructive change, can result in racial reconciliation and sweet contentment and peace that passes all understanding and joy unspeakable. So as Christ comes in his compassionate power to this man, so he can come in his compassionate cross power and resurrection power to us, to you, to your family, to our church, to our city, to our nation today to get victory over the bondage of sin and the powers of darkness and set us free, and exactly how he does that we'll look at after we...

And now something remarkable happens, look at verses 10 through 12. You see, the demons don't want to just leave. They beseech Jesus through the demoniac to allow them to go into a herd of 2,000 pigs. Then look at verses 13 and 14, "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. 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." This seems so strange, doesn't it? Why would Jesus give the devils their wish to go into the pigs and destroy all these pigs and they be choked in the sea? And none of the herdsmen can stop them. Why not just let the devils disappear? Well, we don't know all the reasons, of course, only the Lord knows but I want to leave you this morning with four lessons, four things we can learn from this.

The first is, in this story and in this event, we must learn to recognize Christ's supremacy and sovereignty. Christ's supremacy and sovereignty. Even the devils, you see, realize that to some degree here. That's why they dread every contact with Jesus. They know that Christ's whole nature is against theirs and that his entire mission is diametrically opposed to their mission. They know their powerlessness in the presence of the power of Jesus and that's why the parallel account in Luke 8, Luke 8:31 says the demons "besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep," meaning, of course, the bottomless pit of hell, the lake of fire. They know that their fate is sealed so they're saying, "Put us into the pigs, Jesus, rather than destroy us altogether. Don't destroy us right now forever." They implore him to delay the inevitable and because the second advent wasn't coming yet, Jesus had to suffer and die, be raised again, ascend into heaven, and we have to live through the pentecostal age until he comes again in the clouds, until the last elect is gathered in, then Jesus will destroy them in hell, because that time had not yet come, Jesus agrees to let them go into the pigs in his inscrutable supremacy and sovereignty.

And you see, that teaches us that Jesus' timing is always best, even in things that we don't understand, and we need to remember that in our own lives, in the life of our nation right now, that though we don't understand why Christ doesn't just uproot evil sometimes and cast demons and all evildoers away and bring peace, we have to admit sometimes we just don't have the answers. All we know is that the King is still on his holy hill in Zion, that he has his wise reasons for doing what he does and not doing what he doesn't do, and that we're but creatures whose every hair is nevertheless numbered by our Savior. So it's a blessing that in puzzling situations in life, Christ often humbles us and causes us to recognize his supremacy, his sovereignty, even when we cannot fully grasp it so that we learn to walk more by faith and less by sight, which in the end brings him all the more glory. That's what we need to learn, and what a comfort it is to know that the devils cannot even enter into pigs without Christ's permission, so they certainly can't get us to fall, or much less destroy us, without the permission of our King and Captain who is our personal, supreme and our sovereign Lord.

So actually we ought to glean comfort from the devils going into the pigs. It means our Lord is supreme and sovereign and in control. And secondly, Christ teaches us here the incomparable value of one human soul. Now animals are valuable, of course, and we must not treat animals in mean ways unnecessarily, but an animal doesn't have a soul. An animal is not on the level of a human being made in the image of God. Today there are some people who become obsessed with animals; they treat animals better than they treat God or man; they seem to value an animal more than a human person. And so why would Jesus allow the devils to go into the pigs and these pigs to be destroyed? Well, because Jesus wants to teach us that one human being, the restoration of the man with the unclean spirit, even a sinful, hell-worthy human being is more valuable than 2,000 pigs.

That's why we've got to be so strongly against abortion. We're not killing animals when we kill babies. We are allowed to kill animals for food, we're told in the Bible. But you can't kill a human being in the womb that's made in the image of God because that human being has a soul. Your soul is worth more than all the money of this world, boys and girls. Your soul is worthy more than everything this world can offer you. You've got one

soul to gain or to lose for a never-ending eternity. That soul is worth more value, may I say it this way, than all the animals on the face of the earth. And that one soul needs to be saved. That one soul needs to repent and come to Jesus and be saved.

That's the lesson here too and then, third, Christ teaches us here that often through losses, you get the loss of property, the loss of business, the loss of animals, he works good or he at least calls people to himself. Sometimes a man or a woman full of idolatry or a teenager filled with covetousness seems to have no time for God, no time for the Bible, no time for prayer, no time for eternity, no time for salvation. As they grow older, they get a really beautiful home, beautiful car, take great holidays, have nice everything in terms of this world, and then you notice this sometimes, don't you, Jesus in some excruciating painful providence brings them low and they lose, they lose a lot. They might even lose their house or their job as so many have now in these months, and they're humbled and they see their wretchedness and their sin and their state before God, and they cry out for mercy.

Don't you wonder what happened to all those herdsmen when they saw their pigs, their livelihood go crashing into the sea? Oh, if they would only repent. If only their eyes would be opened. We'll see a few weeks from now that it didn't seem to go that way, for most of them at least. But what about you when bad things happen to you? What do you do with that? Do you rebel against God or does it bring you low and does it bring you to need Jesus and to find forgiveness of sin which is worth more than any property or any home that you have or anything you hold dear? You see, that's the point here. When the people came out from the city in the country, we'll look again at that a few weeks from now too, they saw two things: they saw a man clothed and in his right mind who they knew was demon possessed, they saw the gospel vividly before their eyes, but they also saw the destruction, the pigs choked in the sea. The message could not have been clearer, if you don't turn to God, this is your future, like pigs drowned in the sea, you'll be thrown in the lake of fire. But if you turn to him by the grace of God, you'll be like this man, clothed, in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus.

So that brings me to my last thought: Jesus does this to offer the gospel to the greatest of sinners, to the herdsmen, to the wicked Gentiles of that area in the city, from the country, but also to the man with the unclean spirit. They were all Gentile pagans but Christ shows us his power. He shows us his power by breaking down this man at his feet. He shows us his power by casting the devils into the pigs. And now he shows us his power in these powerful words, the man sat at his feet clothed and in his right mind. And everybody can see it. All the city people, all the country people will come out. They can all see it and it's as if Jesus is placarding through the picture before them, "See who I am. Notice what I can do. Consider my authority and my power and my compassion. Come and believe in me."

And the tragedy, it's an incredible tragedy. Seeing the man clothed in his right mind, seeing the pigs in the bottom of the sea, the people said, "Get out of our area. Be gone, Jesus." And Jesus left. What a tragedy when week after week after week after week after week, year after year after year, decade after decade, we plead with you in the name of

God as ambassadors of Christ to come to Jesus just as you are with all your sins, and we give you the authority of the word of God, he has never cast out one person in the history of mankind, and you go on your way rejecting, rejecting, rejecting the word of God. Don't do this to yourself. Don't destroy yourself. Bend the knee. Give up the battle. Fall before this Captain, this King, this powerful Lord Jesus Christ and he will restore you so that you'll no longer be alienated from yourself and you'll know who you are, saved by grace, by the grace of God I am what I am. You'll no longer be alienated from others. You'll have real friends in the people of God. You'll fellowship about real things. And you'll no longer be alienated from God. You'll have communion with God. Threefold alienation becomes threefold communion in the powerful hand of the powerful Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Don't delay. Behold now. Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation. Amen.

Gracious God, we pray that thou will use this sermon to bring sinners to the point where they can no longer go on without thee and cry out for mercy, and show them thy mercy, we pray, and deliver them from the chains which bind them so that they would be set free not by the malicious power of evil but by the gracious power of King Jesus. Please, Lord, use this sermon also to encourage thy people to look at their own lives and to say, "By the grace of God he has clothed me with his righteousness and given me a right mind to worship him, to sit at his feet. O that I could sit at his feet more and love him and know him better." Lord, help us to sit more at thy feet, to enjoy thy fellowship, to know thy love and thy presence. Please go with us further this day, be with the men in worship this afternoon, Dr. Kuivenhoven as he leads us this evening, that all that transpires today bring down to thy honor and glory. Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth. In Jesus' name. Amen.