

## 30-What is Your Mind Toward Christ?

*Series on Mark*

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**Bible Text:** Mark 5:14-20  
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This evening we want to turn to the gospel of Mark again, chapter 5, and I'll read verses 1 through 20 again, perhaps you recall a few weeks ago we covered verses 1 through 13, and so tonight we want to look at verses 14 through 20 of this moving story about Legion brought into his right mind.

Mark 5:1-20,

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 [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.

Thus far the reading of sacred scripture.

Dear church family, never in the history of America has society so flagrantly and blatantly been transgressing the law of God on every hand, and in the last decades, especially the last 10 years, we've never seen a time like this. It's as if America, at least a good part of America, has lost its mind. In going against the very foundational structures of society, not only with the homosexual issue but now with flirting with socialism, cultural Marxism, critical theory, all kinds of social justice issues that go beyond plausibility, and that combined with riots and with protests that go far beyond any constructive end in sight, yes, there are issues that need to be dealt with, yes, racial issues need to be talked about, confronted, things need to change, but the way America is responding to these issues is so out of kilter with God's word. It's as if we've lost our mind.

Two weeks ago, we heard of a man who was out of mind, he was controlled by demons, you recall. Tonight, we look at him and the fruits of his being brought back into his right mind, clothed, the Bible says, and in his right mind. We spoke a few weeks ago on the theme of Jesus' victory in a triple power struggle. We saw his victory over the man with an unclean spirit, then his victory over the devils who possessed him, and we got just a bit into our third point over the man who is now changed and clothed and in his right mind. And I want to read that verse again, verse 15, and preach to you from the remainder of this passage through verse 20, "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." My theme tonight is what is your mind toward Christ? After all, Christ is the central figure here in this story, not the man clothed and in his right mind. The real question tonight, the real question in Mark 5 is: what is your mind toward Jesus Christ? I want to look at four thoughts with you. Do you have a right, clothed mind, that's thought 1. Or thought 2, a fearful rejecting mind. Or 3, a longing grateful mind. And 4, an obedient evangelistic mind. So what is your mind toward Christ: a right clothed mind, a fearful rejecting mind, a longing grateful mind, an obedient evangelistic mind.

Now we left in the middle of this story last time. The demons being allowed by Jesus to enter into a herd of swine, of pigs, boys and girls, and these 2,000 pigs ran down a steep embankment and drowned themselves in the sea, and at the end of the sermon, you remember, I asked the question: why would Jesus do this? What sense does it make to have all these pigs killed when he could have just sent the demons away? And remember there were four thoughts, I'll just give them to you now in a sentence each but we

developed these thoughts. Jesus here is, number 1, teaching us to recognize his sovereignty and supremacy over all things, also the beasts of the field. Second, Jesus is teaching us the incomparable value of one soul, of one soul clothed and in its right mind; it's of more value than 2,000 pigs. Third, we saw that Jesus often uses the loss of property or the loss of businesses for people's salvation; that's got to our prayer right now for all those hundreds of farmers that have lost their entire crops in central Iowa. And fourth, Christ also does this to offer the gospel, because it draws so much attention, it brings out people from the city and the country to come out and see and observe what has happened, and also the herdsmen themselves are invited to come to Jesus. Jesus is saying through this rather surprising event, "See who I am. See what power I have. Notice what I can do. Consider my authority and my power and my compassion and come and believe in me."

Now then, verse 14 tells us that when the witnesses, and this is where we're picking up tonight, when the witnesses saw what happened to the man with an unclean spirit and to the 2,000 pigs, and that Jesus has the victory over both of them, this was amazing news in the city, in the country, and both city folk and country folk come out to see the results of this fantastic story. Is it really true that infamous Legion is clothed and in his right mind?

And so verse 15, the beginning of our text tonight says, "And they come to Jesus," they all came to Jesus, city folk, country folk, farmers, to "see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind," a miracle has happened, there is a right, clothed mind. Legion is no longer legion. Legion, you recall last time we tried to develop that he was a stranger of himself, he was a stranger to other people, he was a stranger to God. He had no real friendship, no real connections. He was a loner. He was separated from all real friendship and fellowship but now he's restored, he's restored by the victorious power of Jesus Christ to himself, to his fellow man, and to God himself.

He's clothed. He's in his right mind. Well, what does that actually mean? Well, it reminds us right away, doesn't it, of the prodigal son who ends up in the pigsty and has pig's food to eat, and then comes to himself, comes to himself, begins to think even common sense thoughts, "But even the servants have bread enough and to spare in my father's house. What am I doing sitting in this pigsty when I could have something so different, so much better?" You see, when God enters into a person's life, he begins to see, "I'm living a worthless life. I could have such a better life. I could have my sins forgiven. I could have the best fellowship with the saints of God in the world. I could have Jesus as my Savior and my Lord. I could have a home laid away for me in heaven. I could have all things work together for me for good in this life. I could learn contentment in the greatest of trials. I could have all these things. I could really have it all in Jesus Christ." Then we come to ourselves, you see.

This is what's happening to this man. He sees he's been his own worst enemy. He sees his own greatest need. He needs Jesus. He comes to himself. When he comes to himself, he puts on clothing and it's like his mind returns. His mind returns. He embraces even outwardly common sense things and that, of course, is just what our nation needs at this time more than ever before perhaps. Things that are being embraced. I mean, foolish

things like we're going to control crime by reducing policemen and cutting out the budgets? And zoom, the crime goes up in all of these cities within weeks. And we're still doing it? Where is your right mind, mayors in America? You see, but that's just typical of man by nature, we do such foolish things because, really, our mind is not grounded in the basic reality of who man is, of who we ourselves are, and what our needs are. The Bible is very plain. We need government. We need policemen. We need people to control so that society doesn't break out into the kinds of protests and riots that we have. This is common sense. But this man couldn't see it, many people in America today can't see it, in fact, many many politicians, particularly on one side of the aisle, nearly all of them, have not said a word against it. Not a word against it.

Where is our mind? Without the Spirit of God, we lose our mind but with the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, we regain our right mind even in outward things but especially in spiritual things, and we come to ourselves and we begin to see everything in a new light, in a biblical light. Sin becomes sin and Christ becomes Christ and grace becomes grace. We regain our mind toward ourselves but also instead of being isolated from community life, we find him restored to his fellow men by Christ who told him, "Go home to thy friends. You're going to have friends now. Go home to thy friends," he says, "because you're in your right mind. You can be restored to people as well."

And finally instead of hating God, we find that he begins to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus has done for him and all men marveled. You see, now he loves Jesus Christ. Now he wants to be in Jesus' presence. Now he wants to have communion with him and be his disciple. Christ's victorious power changes this man's threefold estrangement and alienation from himself, from his neighbor and from God, into a threefold reconciliation and restoration to himself, to his neighbor and to God.

When you come into your right mind, the power of Christ's amazing grace makes you view God differently, your neighbor differently, and yourself differently, and this wonderful change is what the living power of Jesus can do. Jesus doesn't only gain the victory over Legion and the devils that possess him, but he also changes the man with an unclean spirit from deep within him and the city and country folk, however many hundreds there were, they all see it with their own eyes, "This man is changed." They see a vital display of living Christianity. They see their Christianity before their eyes. It's not a new decision or a new philosophy or just a new way of life, or just a reception of some new worldview, but Christianity is a supernatural, radical, divinely omnipotent change of heart and life.

Now I love what Luke adds here in his account of the story, he said the changed man is sitting in his right mind at the feet of Jesus. Isn't that beautiful, at the feet of Jesus. Martin Luther once said, "You want to know what being saved is? Being saved is going lost at the feet of Jesus, losing your own righteousness, surrendering to Jesus Christ." That's what this man experienced. He was full of rage. The devil was his lord. But now he's calm, he's at peace. He sits at the feet of Jesus, confessing him, knowing him, believing in him, loving him, learning of him, and expressing that he wants to be with him. And those are all marks of grace, aren't they? Isn't that exactly what happens when God saves us?

We want to be with Jesus. We know him. We confess him. We believe in him. We love him. We learn of him.

This man is no longer naked. The shame has been taken away. He's clothed. That's a picture of justification. It's a picture of what happened to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 when they were ashamed and they lost their mind and sinned against God who never did them any ill. And God renovates them from within and then clothes them with the skins of animals, bloody justification pictured in the garden. This is a picture of justification, a metaphor, as it were, in vivid language for us.

The man is sitting and clothed and in his right mind and that's what happens, that's what happens when the Holy Spirit draws you and you come to Christ. You see, when we're not in Christ, well, rather than worshiping the Creator, deep down we're really worshiping the creature in one way or another and we lose sight of what reality is. Reality is all about God and our relationship with him. If we don't have God, Jeremiah says we're like dead bones that don't live. But the good news is Jesus can change that. He can breathe life into the dead bones and the dead bones arise and they gain flesh and they live. He can do that for you too. No matter how long you've been unsaved, he has the power to do that even with one word. And you know it when he does it because you'll start thinking differently, you'll start thinking rightly and your life will change for the better in the sense that you will begin to experience "if any man be in Christ Jesus he's a new creation. Behold, the former old things are gone away and all things have become new." You see, then you will begin to understand, "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" You begin to think differently about materialistic things. You begin to think differently about the souls of your loved ones, about God himself, about your relationship with him, about what life is all about. You begin to experience that joy and purpose and meaning and fulfillment in life are all about a relationship with Jesus, and through him you can love one another and you develop this right mind of scripture, your mind begins to line up with what scripture teaches. That's a right mind. A right mind is a biblical mind. "There's nothing," you begin to say, "so precious as the pearl of great price. I will sell all to have Jesus for he is my love, he is my Savior, my friend, my Lord, my God, my all in all." That's what happens when you get in your right mind. You become a sin-hater and a Christ-lover and a holiness-pursuer.

So I say this in love to all of you and to myself, are you and I in our right mind? You know, we could plumb this a little deeper and we would actually have to conclude that whenever we sin we're losing our mind. Even when a believer sins, he's losing his mind. How can you sin against God who has treated you so well? Sin is wrong thinking in the mind. It's losing your right mind. Sin is dastardly. Sin is heinous. Sin is anti-God. But Jesus can conquer sin. Jesus knows how to put us in our right mind.

Well, thanks be to God, this man was put into his right mind and now you will think, won't you, that all these people, all these people, hundreds of people that came out to see this, they're all going to be persuaded now, they're all going to bend the knee before the Lord and say, "The Lord, he is a God. The Lord, he is the God." Like the people of Israel when they saw what the Lord was doing through Elijah. But no, those who are watching,

and that's our second point of this sermon, have a fearful rejecting mind. How utterly astonishingly foolish. They've not only seen the dead pigs but they've witnessed the compassion of Jesus to Legion. They've witnessed the power and the miracle of his deliverance. And how do they respond?

Well, look at the end of verse 15, "and they were afraid." Isn't that amazing? They were afraid. Afraid because of the awe of the divine? Yes. Afraid because of the slavish fear of the eternal God? Yes. Afraid because of the power of Christ? Yes. But they were also afraid because of their own guilt, their own sinful, shameful lives. They were afraid perhaps because of how they even had treated Legion so differently than Jesus had treated him. They had chained him. They had wished him dead.

Legion's conscience was now at peace but theirs was terrified and they began to pray, verse 17 says. "pray him," Jesus, "to depart out of their coasts." This was amazing. They beg Jesus to leave, the one hope, the one healer, the one Savior. People were afraid of him too. "Who is he before whom devils fear and fly?" They didn't want to witness extraordinary happenings like scores of devils entering into pigs and casting them into the sea. They felt uncomfortable with seeing this unclean spirit cast out of this man miraculously healed. Everything was unsettling. What would Jesus do next? They feared the future too. They were comfortable in their old way of life so they said, "Go away, Jesus. Go away."

So these people failed to see the reality of the devil and his destructive power in their own lives. They failed to see who Jesus was and the cost he would have to pay to set free sinners like the demoniac and them. They failed to see their own need, their dire need for this Savior. All they saw in Jesus was a powerful exorcist who cast out demons and little more, so they said, "Please leave."

Thomas Brooks, the Puritan, says in his "Crowning Glory of Christianity," his book on holiness, "They preferred their swine before a Savior." They'd rather lose Christ than lose their pigs. They preferred things over the person. Brooks writes, "They present a wretched petition for their own damnation. They plead with him to leave the region. Though there is no misery, no plague, no curse, no wrath, no hell, compared to Christ's departure from a people, yet men bewitched with the world will desire that he departs."

What a tragedy. What a tragedy. And yet when we're unsaved, we don't really want Jesus too close to us, do we? He might change our life. Well, he will change your life, he'll change your life big-time but it will all be good. It will be good for you. You see, consider a man and a woman who live a sinful life doing what they want whenever they want to do it and how they want to do it. In God's common grace, we grow accustomed even in a kind of religious orthodoxy to living our own lifestyle, to living our own desires. We have no realization by nature what it means to be unsaved, to be spiritually dead, to be unprepared to meet a holy God in and through the blood of Jesus. But when Jesus comes and changes you from within, your eyes go open, "To be unsaved, I'm unprepared to meet God. I have no advocate to plead my case in heaven. I have no intercessor to plead and pray for me. I'm lost! I'm on my way to perdition, to everlasting

hell!" It just changes everything and you begin to hate sin and begin to love Jesus. You begin to see he's the one thing needful.

What a sad indictment these words are upon these city folk and these country folk that they wanted Jesus to leave. How do you feel about Jesus? What is your mind toward Christ? Do you need him? Do you need him desperately? Or do you prefer the old, empty, customary, sinful way of living than the new divine way of Christ's kingdom? That way that compels you to respond to his imperative, "Take up the cross, deny yourself, and follow me." You see, that's just the rub, isn't it? You don't want to take up the cross. You don't want to deny yourself. You don't want to follow Jesus.

That's the problem and what you don't see because you're not thinking rightly, your mind isn't right and it's not lined up with the word of God, is that when you take up the cross, deny yourself and follow him, you really receive all in him. Everything belongs to the righteous. The meek shall inherit the earth. You see, when your mind is thinking rightly, you don't say, "Jesus, depart from me. Jesus, leave me alone. Jesus, let me just live my old customary way of life of remaining unconverted. Jesus, let me just continue hugging my doubts and idolizing my fears while all the while continuing in unbelief." No. No. No. When you think rightly, you say, "Christ is here today. Christ is here tonight in this house of prayer. He's offering himself through the preached word. O my soul, do not be like one of these Gentile folks from the city or the country who leave Jesus alone, who want him to be gone, but repent and confess your sin and put all your faith in Christ, O my soul, and be willing to sit at his feet because if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." You shall be free indeed, free from the dominion of Satan and sin. Don't you want that? Free from frustrations and fears in Christ. Free from suspicion of and hostility toward your fellow man. Free to serve God. Free to be yourself, your true self in Christ. Free to love your neighbor. That's the kind of freedom Jesus offers to poor, needy, empty sinners who need him. You can have real life in Christ.

That's what the crowd sees in the man sitting at the feet of the Lord of glory but they don't have eyes to see it and hearts to understand it. So they say, "Jesus, be gone." And Jesus goes. Look at verse 18. Verse 17, "they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. And when he was come into the ship," verse 18 says. He's leaving. They're sending him away, their only hope. Imagine that. "And when he was come into the ship." You know, when we read this story we just read over those words but these are tragic words. "When he was come into the ship." He's leaving. They pray him to leave and he's responding. What a tragedy.

Do you realize that every time you leave a sermon and you don't respond to the imperatives of that sermon you're saying, "Jesus, leave." And he does. And you spurn his invitation one more time, and one more time, one more time, until there be no more times because God is not mocked forever. There will come a time he won't just leave you for a week and bring you back to the house of prayer again, but he'll leave you forever and you'll hear your last sermon and your last invitation. And J. C. Ryle said, "Woe, woe be to that man or woman or boy or girl that will go to hell under an open Bible and refused to respond to the invitations of a willing Redeemer." Oh dear friend, don't have a fearful

rejecting mind. Don't be like these city, country folk. Bend the knee to King Jesus. Surrender. You can bring all your fears to him. He'll take care of you. He'll redeem you and you'll have life abundant.

That's what happened to this man and so, thirdly, verse 18 says that when he was come into the ship, "he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him," that is, prayed to Jesus, "that he might be with him." The Bible is so simple, isn't it? It's so beautifully simple. This is the basic mark of grace for every true believer: you want to be with Jesus. "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," the thief on the cross said. Jesus said, "Today, verily I say unto thee, today thou shalt be," what? "With me in paradise." That's it. "With me." That's everything. If I'm with him, all is well. That's what this man wants. "Lord, let me be with thee." He wants to be Jesus' disciple. He wants to show Jesus his gratitude. He has a longing mind now, a longing mind for Jesus, and a grateful mind toward Jesus. Why does he want to be with Jesus? Well, for one thing, he knows himself now. He doesn't want to become a slave of the devils again and he knows that Jesus can deliver him so he wants to stay close to Jesus, he wants to be a healed, transformed, demon-free man. So he says, "Jesus, I want to be with you. I want to be with thee. Take me into thy boat and let me go be with thee and serve thee."

That's what happens when you get born again, you just want to be with Jesus. You want to be grateful, you want to be obedient, you long to be with him. This man if you could talk to him at that moment, he would say in the words of the psalmist something like this, "What shall I render to the Lord? What can I do? What can I say? Jesus deserves my life, my soul, my all. He saved me from everything." I think he'd be willing to say, "Make me thy slave, Lord Jesus. Just let me not be separated from thee. Thou art my life, my soul, my all. I can't bear to see thee sailing out of my life. They have said, the city folk, the country folk, 'Leave us,' but I say don't leave us. I need thee, Lord Jesus. I want to be with thee."

That's the spirit of a new disciple. Is that your spirit too? You want to be with Jesus from the bottom of your heart. You want to be attached to him. You want reality in your religion. You want his presence. You want to be with his people. This is the fruit of real saving faith. It's a beautiful thing. Faith always has one object: Jesus. It always wants to be with Jesus 24/7. Sometimes the fervor has its ups and downs but you can prick the veins of a child of God, if you could get the gut level feel right away and say, "What's your greatest desire in life?" I want to be with Jesus. I want to be with Jesus. He's my Savior, my Lord, my treasure, my best friend, my all and in all. "O Lord, help me to say no to sin and yes to Jesus."

But then, and this is surprising, Jesus, verse 19, denies his request or so it seems, "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." What in the world does that mean? Why would Jesus not give this man his desire to be with him? Well, we'll look at that in our last thought.



Verse 20 says, "And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel." This is remarkable. This is an obedient evangelistic mind. Notice Jesus said, "Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord had done for thee. And he departed, and began to publish how great things Jesus had done for him." He did exactly what Jesus told him to do, and to do that he had to deny himself. He had to leave Jesus. He obeyed with all his heart. Obedience is greater than sacrifice.

An obedient evangelistic mind. He obeyed Jesus immediately. This is an illustration of the obedience of faith and I wonder if we know something of this experientially. When God's word guides you in a direction that is counter to your desires, do you obey immediately? You see, if your children love you, boys and girls, if you really love your mom and dad, when they tell you to do something, you want to obey, don't you, immediately, completely and cheerfully. And that's the way God wants his people to obey him.

He began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him. "But wait a minute," you say, "didn't he have to enroll in an evangelistic program first? Didn't he have to have some extensive training first?" Well, those things can be useful, I suppose, but all he needed to know and all you need to know is what great things the Lord has done for you and you can go out and evangelize as well. If you're saved, dear friend, go back to your home Jesus tells you tonight as well. Go to the people in your own house. The first port of call is go home, Jesus says. Start with those closest to you and tell them gratefully, tell them humbly how the Holy Spirit showed you your sin and misery, cut you off from your own righteousness, revealed Jesus to you through the word in his saving compassion, and made you willing to live a life of gratitude to him. Tell them, your family, your friends, your work associates. Pray for an open door to explain how you experientially became acquainted with misery, deliverance and gratitude, all in and through Jesus, by his Spirit. Tell them what great things the Lord has done for your soul and don't wait, don't wait until your deathbed. Do it now.

You see, that raises the question, doesn't it, why do we struggle so many of us, so often, with evangelism? Well, maybe it's because we're quite unlike this man. We make it so complicated through our ideas of how conversion needs to go, and if we've really had the experience, and on and on it goes. But fundamentally, the gospel is really quite simple. It's profound, it changes your life completely, it's not a shallow thing, but it's a quite simple thing.

I still remember my coming into the living room after I was married and saw my dad just sitting there staring off into space. When I was younger when I came into the living room he was always reading a book and so it kind of struck me, he was just staring off into space. I said, "Dad, what are you doing?" He said, "I'm meditating." I said, "Well, what are you meditating about?" I'll never forget the answer. He said, "Well, the older I get, the more I meditate on the simplicity of the gospel." Simplicity of the gospel. Genuine repentance, genuine faith in Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

It's a call. It's an invitation. You see, just go home and tell them how Jesus brought you to repentance, brought you to faith. It doesn't need to be a complicated long long story. Just say to your family, "I'll tell you what the Lord has done for my soul. I'm a sinner, I never deserved to be saved, I'm a wretch like everyone else but he showed compassion on me. He changed this life. He made me fall in love with the Savior. I see that Jesus is everything to me now."

"But how do you actually do that? You make it sound so easy from the pulpit but I'm not used to talking to my family that way." Well, let me give you some practical guidelines before we close this sermon. I'll give you three of them. 1. Don't focus on yourself when you tell your story. Focus on what the Lord has done for you, Jesus says to the man. Not on what you did but what the Lord has done. If you put your focus on yourself, people will walk away, your family will walk away saying, "Wow, what a conversion, what a godly man my dad is." That's not the goal. You want them to walk away saying, "Wow, what a Savior worked in my dad's life." So that's my second point, when you tell the story, let the focus be on Jesus. Let him be on the foreground. Tell what the Lord has done for you.

You've heard the story, I'm sure, of three men that were sent out from a church in London in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to hear Philip Brooks preach and to hear Charles Spurgeon preach. Both churches were growing and the pastor in this church wanted his elders to go out and hear both men and report back what was it about their preaching that made their churches grow so much. Well, the three men went to hear Philip Brooks on a Sunday morning and they stumbled out of church afterward and they said, "Wow, what a preacher, what gifts this man has! We don't even want to go and hear Spurgeon tonight. We'll just come back here. This is amazing." "Oh no," one of them said, "I agree but we've still got to go hear Mr. Spurgeon because we made that agreement." So they went to hear Spurgeon in the evening and they came out of church and they said, "Wow, what a Savior! What a Savior." That's the point, that's the point of every sermon. That's the point when you tell your testimony, you want people to walk away and say, "What a Savior! I want what my dad has or what my son has, or what my grandma has. I want this Savior for me. If he can do it for my dad, if he can do it for my daughter, he can do it for me."

Tell them what the Lord has done and then, thirdly, tell them sincerely, earnestly, devoutly, humbly, stressing that you never never never even remotely deserved what you've received but it's all to God's glory and it's all out of God's free amazing grace, and if it weren't for God, you never would have bent the knee to King Jesus. And tell them if God can save you, he can save you, he can save anyone. That's the way to evangelize and that's what this man did, don't you think? He went out, verse 20 says, he began to publish. Interesting word, he began to publish. He went everywhere in Decapolis telling what great things Jesus had done for him.

"And all men," all men, "did marvel." I want to give you an example of this that just happened to me actually this week. I got a letter this week from a woman who said, "My husband's name is Joel." I actually asked him if I could tell this story on the pulpit and they said absolutely. Her husband's name is Joel and he's 35 years old. They've got five

children from 9 years to 6 months. Joel was wonderfully converted by God from a lifestyle of sin. He was called to be a pastor in Turkey. He's been there the last four years learning the Turkish language, planting a church, but six months ago he got diagnosed with cancer and he came back to America to get on chemotherapy. They thought it was going fairly well but two weeks ago they got bad news. The doctors determined he's medically terminal, the cancer has spread everywhere. He's got only a few months to live. And since they've been using our family worship Bible guide everyday and reading our books and listening to our sermons, this wife wrote me a letter. She said if there's any chance at all, could I just call her husband and pray with him. He's in Intensive Care for four days now. She said, "I love my husband too much not to ask you to give him a call."

So I called her husband Joel and he told me this incredible story. He said he was living without God, had a girlfriend, his girlfriend cheated on him. He took revenge, he beat up the guy who was responsible and was thrown into jail. And in jail an evangelist came and presented the gospel to him and told him what the Lord had done for his own soul, and Joel was awakened from the dead and wonderfully converted. He got out of jail, the man who evangelized him kept discipling him, trained him for two years to go to Turkey, took him to Turkey to bring the gospel there.

But now cancer. It's not easy, he told me. It's not easy to leave Turkey behind. And it's not easy to think I won't see my children grow up. It's not easy to leave my wife as a widow. And we talked some more but then this man told me three things I hope you'll never forget and I hope I'll never forget. The first thing he said was how do you live with the tension of wanting to die to be with Christ even as you fight to live for the sake of your dear wife and children and Christ's cause on earth? I kind of feebly pointed him to Philippians 1 and Paul having the same struggle but I don't think I did very well. This is a profound question coming from a man face-to-face with death.

The second thing he said to me I hope I'll never forget, is he said, "I have just one burning desire, that my sickness and my death may be used for my children's conversion." Then he told me that he had been reading Thomas Watson's "All Things Work Together for Good," book in the last couple of weeks, and he told his children how much he's getting out of it for his own soul. And he said and he started weeping over the phone, he said, "My 9 year old son came to me and said, 'Dad, can I have that book? I need it too.'" His 9 year old son reading a wonderful Puritan book on how all things can work together for good. And he broke down and he said, "If God could just use it for his conversion, I'm willing to die. I'm willing to die for him."

And then thirdly, he shared with me something that I hope none of us will ever ever forget. He went into surgery two weeks ago and the doctor asked him on the table, the surgery table, "Do you want full anesthesia or do you want something more mild like a sedative of some kind?" "Oh," he said, "doctor, if I take only a partial sedative, will it mean I can see my wife and my children a little bit quicker?" The doctor said, "Yes." "Oh," he said, "give me that." So they did but it didn't make him sleepy at all. The surgery lasted one hour and he said, and the tears dried up and he got excited and he said, "You won't believe what happened. For one full hour while the doctor was doing surgery

on me, I was evangelizing him. I told him all about how I was converted. I told him how Jesus could be his Lord and Savior as well. And he was very interested, he was asking questions while he was working cutting my body." And he said at the end of the surgery the doctor looked at him with tears in his eyes and said this, I wrote it down. I've never heard the gospel shared so personally like this before. He said, "He shook my hand and he thanked me twice for bringing him the gospel." And then he said this, "Can you believe that, Pastor Beeke? God allowed me to evangelize an unconverted doctor and tell him all about what Jesus has done for sinners like me while he was operating on me."

You know, it wouldn't enter my mind to evangelize someone who's working on my body in surgery but this man, you see, is so filled, so filled with this obedient evangelistic mind. He saw the surgery as an opportunity to evangelize someone. And I thought to myself, how many opportunities do we let pass by because fundamentally we're still living far too selfishly, not thinking about other people's souls. Now will this bear fruit in this doctor's life? We don't know. That's not the point. That's leave the fruit to the Lord. Just like here, you don't know. It says all men did marvel at the end of verse 20. All men did marvel but it issue in their conversion? Well, maybe some but we don't know for sure. The point is, you see, that we must obey him and glorify him immediately, faithfully, cheerfully, and leave the fruits to the Lord.

Now how do we do that? Spurgeon has a great message on this. He says, "To be with Christ is good, to be sent by Christ on a holy errand of evangelism is even better. But here is something that is best of all, namely to work for him and to be with him at the same time." Then Spurgeon develops this thought in a way that I think is very intriguing and very helpful. He said, "Yes, Jesus denied his request to be with him and Jesus sailed away on the boat, but the beauty of a relationship with Jesus is Jesus doesn't have to be physically present, and when we obey him and evangelize for him and have him in our hearts, we actually are with him, we are both," said Spurgeon, "sitting at Jesus' feet like Mary and yet serving dinner with Martha at the same time."

Then, of course, that brings you the question, "Well, how can you do both at the same time?" Spurgeon anticipates it. He says, "In your body you can't but you can in your soul." And you see, those of you who are believers and go out and evangelize other people, you know exactly what I'm talking about. You feel closest to God when you're evangelizing someone. You're actually with Jesus as you evangelize someone else. That's one of the most holy activities you can do for your own soul.

Then Spurgeon goes on and he says, "But how do you cultivate this double reality that you're with Jesus even as you're evangelizing about Jesus? Well," he says, "there are three things you need to do to cultivate this double spirit. 1. Cultivate the inner life as well as the outer life. Eat spiritual food and do spiritual work, be much with Christ, do much for Christ, and live wholly upon Christ and you will experience being both Mary and Martha at the same time."

2. "Grieve much when there is the least cloud between you and Christ," Spurgeon says. "If you maintain perpetual fellowship with Jesus, you can both be with him and serving him at the same time." When sin gets in the way, you see, that spoils a lot, doesn't it?

Then number 3, "Before you engage in any aspect of evangelism or service for Christ, always pray for his presence and his help, and always remember that no matter what you say, or no matter what kind of success you feel you've had when you evangelize someone in yourself, you just remain an unprofitable servant in your own eyes."

That's wise advice. You see, when that may be your portion, then Jesus' victorious power will be most evident not only over the man with the unclean spirit and over the devils who possessed him, but also over you, for you will then be possessed by him and you'll feel like you are the man clothed and in his right mind before Jesus, a mind overwhelmed with gratitude for amazing grace, a man and a mind overwhelmed with the desire to serve and glorify him wherever you are and wherever you go. And so then it will be your prayer, and make it your prayer, "Lord, make me a Mary conquered by thy power to sit at thy feet, and make me a Martha conquered by that power to serve thee at the same time." Amen.

*Gracious God, we thank thee so much, so much for an obedient, evangelistic, longing, grateful mind. We pray that that mind may be given to us that we would fleece in, fall in love with thee profoundly as our Savior and our Lord and that we would desire earnestly to serve thee out of love all our lifetime, and to tell others what great things God, Jesus, does for sinners like us and, yes, for us personally as well. And to tell others, "If he can do it for me, he can do it for you, for anyone, because it's all grace." Lord, please work these things. Help us to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ and in our right mind. Deliver us from a fearful rejecting mind and grant us that longing, grateful and obedient, evangelistic mind. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*