

Last time Brandon asked you *how do you hear* the Word of God?

Last time you heard the voice of Jesus warn you: “watch how you hear.”

What do you hear in these stories?

Because Jesus says,

“With the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” (4:24)

What you hear in these stories is what will happen to you!

Mark 5 needs to be understood in the light of Mark 4 –

especially because we are told in 4:35 that all this took place in the night and day

following his parables in chapter 4.

So Mark is inviting us to see Jesus’ actions in our text tonight

as expressions of his point in the parables.

First, we should ask,

Why does Jesus want to go across to the other side of the lake?

The text presents us with one, and only one, reason:

to heal the Gerasene demoniac.

That is the *only* thing that Jesus does on the other side of the lake.

Second, we need to see the connection between the storm of 4:35-41

and the demoniac in 5:1-20.

The prophets and the Psalms frequently spoke of the nations as a raging sea.

And that the voice of the LORD would quiet the waters.

Psalms 66 speaks of how God turned the sea into dry land–

the Exodus as a picture of God’s deliverance from our enemies.

Psalm 66:12 says that God has brought us through fire and water–

as a picture of how God has delivered us from our foes.

Psalms 65:5-8 says that God is the hope of the ends of the earth–

and of the farthest seas–meaning the farthest nations.

And how God has stilled the roaring of the seas,

the roaring of their waves,

which is, verse 7 says, the tumult of the peoples.

The voice of the LORD stilling the raging waters is a picture throughout the OT

as the voice of the LORD stilling the raging of the peoples against him.

So, as Jesus is going across the Sea of Galilee,

towards the Gentile region of the Gerasenes,

a storm comes up!

Galilee of the Gentiles lives up to its name!

And as Brandon showed us last time,

the voice of the LORD stills the waters.

When his disciples finally woke him up,
he rebuked the wind and said to the sea, *Peace, be still!*

But if you want to understand the full importance of Jesus calming the storm,
keep reading.

Because Jesus now comes to that which the seas represent –
not just the Gentiles – but also the demoniac powers
which enflame the Gentiles against the people of God.

1. A Demoniac Raised from the Tombs (5:1-20)

They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes.

*2 And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat,
immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.*

3 He lived among the tombs.

And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain,

4 for he had often been bound with shackles and chains,

but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces.

No one had the strength to subdue him.

5 Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains

he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.

It doesn't get any worse than the Gerasene Demoniac.

First he is a Gerasene (at least that is what the text suggests).

That makes him a Gentile.

Further, this man has an unclean spirit.

In other words, this man is clearly a part of the kingdom of Satan.

Not only is he a Gentile, not only does he have demons,

but he lives among the tombs.

For a Jew, even to step over a tomb was to become unclean.

So to live among the tombs means

that he lives in a state of perpetual uncleanness.

And when Jesus steps out of the boat,

this wild demoniac meets him.

6 And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him.

7 And crying out with a loud voice, he said,

“What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?

I adjure you by God, do not torment me.”

8 For he was saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”

Plainly, the demon recognizes who Jesus is.

He is the Son of the Most High God.

9 And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many."

10 And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

11 Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside,

12 and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them."

13 So he gave them permission.

And the unclean spirits came out, and entered the pigs,

and the herd, numbering about two thousand,

rushed down the steep bank into the sea and were drowned in the sea.

What is going on here?

To the modern ear, this sounds utterly bizarre.

To understand this, start with the question,
what is Jesus doing here?

These are people, places, and influences that belong to the enemies of Yahweh.

Jesus has come to the region of the Gerasenes to demonstrate the power of the kingdom
over the legions of God's enemies.

The name "Legion" is *supposed* to remind you of the Roman army—

the Roman army that the Jews believe will be overthrown by the Messiah.

Indeed, the driving of the pigs into the sea is pretty much

what the Jews desired to do with the unclean Romans.

Jesus "is fighting a battle against the enemies of the people of Yahweh.

But what Jesus is demonstrating is that Rome is not the enemy;

It is Satan and his legions who are deceiving Israel into thinking

that Rome is the real enemy,

so that Israel will be blinded to their true enemy." (Wright 195-6)

That's what Satan's legions are still doing.

In the same way that the Pharisees fell prey

to thinking that the Romans were the real enemy,

so also Satan is working to convince us that Muslims are the real enemy,

or that illegal immigrants are the enemy.

A generation ago it was the Soviets, or the communists.

But Jesus says to love your enemies—

to have mercy even on the one who symbolizes *everything* that is wrong with the world!

The Gerasene demoniac in the modern world

might be a drug-dealing transvestite Muslim illegal immigrant on steroids!

But at the Word of Jesus even the demonic legions obey.

What is interesting about the casting-out of demons in the gospels,

is that the OT never predicted this,

and there was nothing in 1st century Judaism that expected this!

Giving sight to the blind, healing the sick, raising the dead—

all these are understandable in the light of the OT and Jewish expectation;

but casting out demons is something unique.

Furthermore, while the apostles do cast out some demons,
they never command anyone to do likewise;
and in the early church this practice soon fades away.

So why does Jesus cast out demons?

The casting out of demons demonstrates that the real battle of Jesus' ministry
is not debating with the Pharisees,
but it is a head-on war with Satan.
And this is a battle that Jesus *alone* will fight.

Israel's quarrel is not with Rome—
it is with the power behind Rome.
it is with the power that lies behind all nations!

But this is an enemy that Israel cannot fight.

Israel does not have the weapons to do warfare with the devil.

Only Jesus does!

Because Jesus is the one who speaks the very Word of God.

The principalities and powers of this age are trying to destroy the church.
Jesus says in Matthew 16:18 that the gates of hell will not prevail against his church.
But it is easy to forget!

The demonic is not just revealed in the spooky and weird.

The demonic is revealed in every power that sets itself up against Christ.

Yes, there is something demonic about radical Islam,
but there is also something demonic about Wall Street,
and about our own preoccupation with entertainment!

What twisted sense of priorities leads us to spend hours in front of the TV or computer
instead of spending those hours in showing love to God and neighbor?

After all, every sin begins with a lie—

with that demonic whisper that if you do this, you will be happy!

And before you know it,

you are believing the lie.

What can overcome the lies of the devil?

Only the Word of Jesus!

And as the word of Jesus sends the legion of demons hurtling over the cliff into the lake,
so also the word of Jesus takes your sins and hurtles them into the depths of the sea.

And the word of Jesus speaks powerfully into our chaotic and restless age, saying,

Peace! Be still!

Notice what happens after this.

- 14 The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country.
And people came to see what it was that had happened.
15 And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man,
the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind,
and they were afraid.
16 And those who had seen it described to them
what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs.
17 And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region.*

When the Gentiles hear of how this Jewish prophet had cast out the Legion from this man,
and how the pigs had been drowned in the sea,
they were afraid.

This is what the Word of Jesus does to many people.
That's what Jesus has said in the parable of the soils.

These are people for whom the word simply bounces off their hearts.
They hear the word, but it does not take root.
They are afraid because this threatens everything they hold dear.

They're afraid because they're rather fond of their pet demons!

They see that this Jesus has power.
And that power can root out and destroy all that they hold dear.

That's the irony of our love affair with sin:
it's destroying us, but we don't want to get rid of it!
We would rather chase Jesus away than truly hear his voice.

But the man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him.
When Jesus casts out your demons,
the response of faith is to want to be with Jesus.
But Jesus says "*Go home to your friends
and tell them how much the Lord has done for you,
and how he has had mercy on you.*"
Go back to the Gentiles and proclaim what the God of Israel has done.

*20 And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis
how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.*

What has God done for you?
He has cast out your demons!
He has overthrown the power of the devil,
and opened your eyes so that you might see Jesus.

He has opened your ears so that you might hear his voice,
and love him, and long to be with him always!

Having completed his mission to the Gerasenes –
having made his point that the *real* problem is not Rome, but the demonic,
Jesus returns to the Jewish side of the lake.

2. Two Diseased Daughters (5:21-34)

If you understand what Jesus has done for the Gerasene demoniac,
it doesn't take long to see what he is doing for the two daughters in verses 21-43.

*21 And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side,
a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea.
22 Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name,
and seeing him, he fell at his feet 23 and implored him earnestly, saying,
“My little daughter is at the point of death.
Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live.”
24 And he went with him.*

But suddenly, Mark interrupts this narrative with another one,
thereby linking the two stories very intentionally.

*And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him.
25 And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years,
26 and who had suffered much under many physicians,
and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse.
27 She had heard the reports about Jesus
and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment.
28 For she said, “If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.”
29 And immediately the flow of blood dried up,
and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.*

In verse 42 we will learn that Jairus' daughter is twelve years old.
Here we learn that this woman has had a discharge of blood for twelve years.
For twelve years she has been unclean.
For twelve years she has been excluded from the worship of the people of God.
No one could heal her.

Until she touches Jesus' garments.

*30 And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him,
immediately turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my garments?”
31 And his disciples said to him,
“You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, ‘Who touched me?’”
32 And he looked around to see who had done it.
33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling*

and fell down before him and told him the whole truth.
34 *And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well;
go in peace, and be healed of your disease."*

Do you believe the voice the Jesus?
He has calmed the storm,
he has commanded the demons,
and now he has healed the woman with a 12-year flow of blood.

Watch how you hear!
What matters more to you?
Following the voice of Jesus?
Or following your own desires?

This woman has reached the end of her rope.
She has been unclean for 12 years.
She has been excluded from the worshipping community for 12 years.
She is desperate.
Her only hope is Jesus.

That is where you need to be!

3. Death Overthrown (5:35-43)

35 *While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said,
"Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"*
36 *But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue,
"Do not fear, only believe."*

Jesus has power over demons.
Jesus has power over disease.

But death?

The voice of Jesus brings Shalom to the seas.
The voice of Jesus brings Shalom to the demoniac nations.
The voice of Jesus brings Shalom to the sick.

If these things are true,
then what will the voice of Jesus do for the dead?

37 *And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James.*
38 *They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion,
people weeping and wailing loudly.*
39 *And when he had entered, he said to them,
"Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping."*

40 *And they laughed at him.*

*But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother
and those who were with him and went in where the child was.*

41 *Taking her by the hand he said to her,*

“Talitha cumi,” which means, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.”

42 *And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age),
and they were immediately overcome with amazement.*

43 *And he strictly charged them that no one should know this,
and told them to give her something to eat.*

Jesus told the healed Gerasene demoniac to tell everyone.

But the Jewish synagogue ruler must be silent.

Why?

Because Jesus is not yet ready to provoke the authorities.

His time has not yet come.

If it gets out that Jesus can raise the dead,

he will never accomplish his true mission.

Conclusion: Watch How You Hear

I said at the beginning that

what you hear in these stories is what will happen to you.

You may be tempted to say—But God hasn't done as much for me
as he did for all those people in all those stories!

Jesus healed them, but I'm still sick!

Jesus cast the demons out of the Gerasene, but I'm still fighting with my demons!

How long had the woman had that flow of blood?

12 years.

How long had the Gerasene had the demons?

For a long time.

And for that matter,

Jesus waited until the 12 year old girl died before he did anything about it!

But Mark is calling you to see the big picture.

You are not the center of the universe.

Jesus is.

Let's tell the story of the little girl without Jesus.

Her father is a ruler of the synagogue—an important man in the community.

She gets sick.

She dies.

End of story.

Let's tell the story of the woman with a discharge of blood without Jesus.
She's had a flow of blood for 12 years.
She spends all her money on doctors—and none of them can heal her.
She can never enter the worship of God.
She is perpetually unclean.
A few years later she dies, penniless and alone.
End of story.

Now let's tell your story without Jesus.
You were born.
You had some good times.
You had some bad times.
You get sick.
You die.
End of story.

In all the stories of all the people of the world,
there is only one story with a happy ending.
The story of Jesus is a story that calls you into the narrative.
He was born.
He suffered.
He died.
But in his death he destroyed
the power of death, the power of sin, the power of the devil,
so that we who were under the power of death might have life.
And so Jesus was raised from the dead—
and in Jesus you have been raised from the dead as well.

What has the Lord done for you?
He has brought you into his story!
He has brought you into the one and only human story with a happy ending!
Just like he brought the Gerasene demoniac,
the woman with a flow of blood,
and the little 12 year old girl.
He doesn't always do it the way you want him to.
Because after all, it is *his* story that you are being brought into.
If God did everything the way *you* wanted,
then *your* story would be the center of the universe!

But how do you participate in Jesus' story?
Like the woman: by faith.
By believing the message that you have heard.
Daughter, your faith has made you well.
After twelve long years of suffering and being excluded—
your faith has made you well.
Go in peace.