

Seeing Value where others Don't

3.25.18

Message 21

Mark Series

Mark 5:1–20 (NIV)

5 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. ² When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. ⁴ For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵ Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. ⁷ He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" ⁸ For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!"

⁹ Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." ¹⁰ And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

¹¹ A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. ¹² The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." ¹³ He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

¹⁴ Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. ¹⁵ When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ¹⁶ Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. ¹⁷ Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

¹⁸ As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹ Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for

you, and how he has had mercy on you.”²⁰ So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

1. What makes this church different is our love for people.

A. Thank you to everyone who served and gave at yesterday’s single-parent outreach.

1. Loving people is one of our favorite things to do around here, and yesterday was a great example of that.

2. One mom wrote, “Thank you for loving us all this much”.

3. She had expressed that many people make single-parents feel inferior and unwanted but we make single-parents feel loved.

4. We do this because this is how Jesus loves us.

B. **Jesus saw value in you before anyone else did.**

1. And the next two miracles listed here in Mark demonstrate that powerfully.

2. Here is my goal for today’s message:

a. 1st. I want you to know that Jesus loves you.

b. 2nd. I want you to have an encounter with Jesus’ mercy just like the man in today’s passage.

c. 3rd. I want you to freely share Christ’s love and mercy with others.

3. **Let’s take a look at this man from Gerasene that Jesus crossed the lake for.**

2. The man from Gerasene was in a desperate situation.

A. First, we find that he is demon-possessed.

1. In verse 2, Mark says he has an impure spirit (singular).

2. Verse 9 reveals that this man was afflicted by many demons.

3. If the term "Legion" is used literally, it could refer to as many as two-thousand demons oppressing this man.

4. Also, the word "Legion" had a bad view in Jesus' day.

a. The Roman legions were the armies that kept the world in Rome's power.

b. Legion symbolized power, oppression, and control.

5. Clearly, this man was desperate.

B. Secondly, the man was desperate because he lived naked among the tombs and graves outside of the community.

1. We know that the community had tried to treat this man.

a. To place weights and chains on a troubled person was a form of treatment to keep the man from hurting himself and lashing out at others.

b. When this didn't work, the community forced the man outside of the community... "Out of sight, out of mind".

c. The combination of the weight and the loneliness did not help but created a ripe environment for this man to be overcome by his demons.

2. Here we find an immediate application to our world:

a. A tactic of the enemy is to isolate us when we have problems.

b. We tend to withdraw from life, from community, when things are not going well, creating a downward spiral.

c. We were created to be in community, and when we withdraw we make tempting targets for sin and the powers of darkness.

d. We all need to be connected to a community of believers, to a local church, where we can encourage and pray one another.

C. The third sign of desperation was this man was involved in cutting.

1. Cutting is the infliction of pain on oneself in order to mask other pain.

a. When a person is in extreme distress, they express their pain either outwardly or inwardly.

b. Those who do outwardly may injure or kill others or destroy property.

c. Those who process inwardly may self-mutilate by cutting themselves, become anorexic, or attempt suicide.

2. This man was in such agony and torment that he regularly cut himself.

a. Imagine with me a broken, scarred, bleeding man.

b. Perhaps it has been years since he had a bath, his clothes long torn off and destroyed.

c. Malnourished, dirty, waiting for the day that death silences the demonic voices in his head.

d. He has no hope and no home.

This is when Jesus enters the scene.

3. The Presence of Jesus immediately receives a response.

A. Just as soon as Jesus arrives on the shore, the evil inside the man responds.

1. Mark says that the man from the tombs came to see Jesus.

a. Was he being led by the demonic influence?

b. I like to think that there was still a part of his humanity that was crying out for a Savior.

c. Maybe a part of him knew that freedom had just come to his shore, to the place of his torment, and that Jesus had the power to heal him and set him free.

2. As the broken man came to Jesus, he finds himself throwing himself upon his knees.

- a. Once again, it isn't clear who exactly is doing this:
- b. Is it the response of a broken man to his savior?
- c. Or is it the response of the demons who KNOW Jesus' true identity as the Son of God?

B. Then, in that moment, the demonic forces within the man cry out to Jesus.

1. But it is not a cry of salvation but of terror.

- a. They know Jesus has the power to destroy them.
- b. They know that their day of torment is coming.

2. The demons call Jesus the Son of God.

a. Isn't it strange that the powers of evil could recognize Jesus' divinity while those who claimed to be followers of God rejected Christ?

b. The demons know who Jesus is because only Jesus could speak to them with that kind of authority and on their turf.

1. For a long time, the demons owned this man.

2. They owned his thoughts, his actions, and his soul.

3. But when Jesus called out and told them to leave they knew that He had authority that was not of this world.

C. Then Jesus asks for their name.

1. Let me clear something up about this first:

a. People often use this one verse to teach that when you are involved in a demonic confrontation, that you are supposed to ask for the demon's name.

- b. That misunderstands Jesus' intention.
- 2. When Jesus asked for the name of the demons talking to him, what he was doing was revealing their nature.
 - a. "What is your nature" is what the phrase meant.
 - b. In the Biblical times, a person's name revealed their purpose and destiny.
- 3. Jesus didn't care about their name.
 - a. Demons are created beings, fallen angels.
 - b. Jesus knew their origins and he knew their future.
 - c. He did not need to know who he was dealing with because he already knew.
- 4. What Jesus was doing was revealing the "nature" and purpose of the demonic.

4. The nature of the demonic is destruction.

- A. This destructive nature is portrayed in the pigs.
 - 1. The presence of pigs is interesting.
 - 2. If the owners were Jewish, then they were violating the Law which declared them to be unclean.
 - a. Maybe the owners were Gentile.
 - b. Or maybe it was Jews who sold pork to the local gentiles.
 - 3. Regardless, the demons ask permission to be allowed to enter the pigs.
- B. *Why would the demons want to go into the swine?*
 - 1. The answer is found in the nature of the demonic.
 - a. They had come for one purpose: to torment and kill the man.

b. That is what they do:

1. They stole his identity,
2. They killed him emotionally, physically, and mentally.
3. Then they destroyed everything the man had loved, cherished, and desired.

2. Jesus knew their nature was a nature of destruction.

a. But others couldn't see this to the extent that Jesus did.

b. So the demons, bent on destruction, asked Jesus to enter the swine.

c. Jesus allows them to do so, and the herd of swine run off the cliff to their deaths.

c. "What must be seen above all else is that the fate of the swine demonstrates the ultimate intention of the demons with respect to the man they had possessed. It is their purpose to destroy the creation of God, and halted in their destruction of a man, they fulfilled their purpose with the swine."¹

3. The intention of the demons was the destruction of the man.

a. **The pigs were the object lesson that Jesus used to demonstrate their destructive nature.**

b. Picture this with me:

1. With a shriek, the demons leave the man and enter into the pigs.

2. Some two-thousand pigs begin to squeal and rush into a frantic frenzy.

¹ William L. Lane, [The Gospel of Mark](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 186.

3. Then they enter the water, squealing, drowning, dying.

4. Their bodies could be seen from the ledge, floating around as evidence of the demon's destructive nature.

5. The scene would have been traumatic.

c. This graphic and senseless destruction was the fulfillment of the demons' purpose.

D. Then there came a moment of divine silence.

1. The squeal of the pigs has stopped.

2. The herd's owners have run off into the local towns.

3. And there stands the former demoniac, healed, whole, and in his right mind.

a. The voices are gone,

b. The desire to cut is no more,

c. He stands, naked, but in his right mind for the first time in years.

d. The man who had been known as the demoniac, the crazy one, the monster of the villages, now needs a new name for he had been changed by the love of Jesus and the power of the Kingdom of God.

5. Mark wants us to see the comparison between the formerly possessed man and those from the village.

A. The demon-possessed man is now at peace.

1. When those tending the pigs came back with their neighbors, they found the man in his right mind.

2. He was healed, at peace, fully clothed, and possibly at the feet of Jesus learning for the first time in years.

B. Those who came from the towns were afraid (vs15)

1. *The same power that brought peace to the broken man brought fear to the crowds.*

2. **Why?**

3. **When you have been radically saved and redeemed like this man had, you will not fear the power of God.**

a. Last week we saw how faith and love go together.

b. This man did not fear Jesus' power because he knew the love behind the power.

4. But Jesus' demonstration of power brought tremendous amounts of fear to the villagers.

C. **Their fear stemmed from misplaced priorities.**

Mark 5:16 (NIV) ¹⁶ Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well.

1. The construction of this sentence paints a picture.

2. They weren't just afraid because of Jesus' power.

3. *They were afraid because of how Jesus used his power.*

4. Jesus' power resulted in two things:

a. The freedom of the demon-possessed man.

b. AND the destruction of a huge herd of pigs.

c. Neither one of these results were acceptable to the crowd of villagers.

d. Why else would they "plead" with Jesus to leave their area? Vs. 17

5. If this happened in Texas County, here is how we would say it:

a. I don't care what you do with the low-lifes around here, but you don't touch my bacon.

b. There was no love here, no faith, just fear that life as they knew it would have to change if Jesus stayed.

c. And that was not something they were willing to take a chance on.

d. **Wherever Jesus is, change happens.**

e. The same change that brought peace for one brought fear to many.

D. **When our priorities are not in align with God's Kingdom, we will fear God's rule.**

1. The villagers wanted life to stay the same.

a. So what if a crazy man lived outside of town.

b. So what if he was in torment and Jesus had the power to change his life and the life of others.

c. So long as I don't have to suffer or sacrifice my will or desires, we are ok with God's rule.

d. But God's rule requires submission to His plans and His priorities.

e. And this is where most people ask God to stop.

f. **When our priorities conflict with God's, are we willing to change our will for His?**

2. Why are so many in our nation anti-God?

a. Because they know change will be required if we put Jesus first.

b. We will have to change lifestyles, habits, and behaviors.

c. Many have declared that the sacrifice to follow God is too much.

d. We can't stand the sight of seeing our "bacon" running over the side of the cliff at Jesus' command!

3. Even in our own life, we fear God's power because we will have to change.

a. **The purpose of giving your life to Jesus is for your life to be different.**

b. *Look where your sin has gotten you.*

c. *Look where your choices have led.*

d. Why would we want life to stay the same when what Jesus offers is far better and greater than what we can do on our own?

6. This brings us to the end of the story.

A. If you or I would have written this, we would expect Jesus to let the man go with Him.

1. But Jesus doesn't let him on the boat.

2. Instead, Jesus tells him that his new purpose was to go and tell the surrounding villages about what Jesus had done for him.

B. Can you imagine the stories this man would tell?

1. As he walks into a village he hadn't been in for years, people gather around.

a. They see his scars, his self-inflicted tattoos reminding him of his past.

b. Perhaps he struggles to talk for the first few days because he hadn't had a real conversation in years.

c. **And then, with a group of people around him, he opens his mouth and says something like, "I was the man who had been left for dead, but JESUS found me!"**

d. I was the man who had no value to society, but Jesus came to find me!

2. The man whose life had received no mercy in life was now testifying of the mercy of God to others.

a. What is mercy?

b. The biblical word for mercy means "to give undeserved kindness or forgiveness to those who do not deserve it."
(Mounce)

c. It wasn't because the man deserved mercy that Jesus healed him, but because of Jesus' love for him that he received mercy.

C. And that was the man's message to the neighboring villages:

1. He was to tell the villages of Jesus' power over darkness and his mercy for the broken.

2. Why was he to tell this?

3. So they, too, might experience Jesus' power, love, and mercy.

Final Thoughts:

A. If you are a follower of Jesus today, you are already a recipient of Jesus' mercy.

1. You once were a sinner.

2. You too were involved in things that were destructive.

3. But at some point, you were shown Jesus and your life was changed.

4. **Never forget where you were when Jesus found you.**

B. Others of you today are in need of mercy.

1. Your life is a mess.

2. You need forgiveness, deliverance, and a savior.

3. You wonder if you can be loved again.

4. You wonder if there will ever be hope for you again.
5. And the answer from this passage is there is hope and mercy available for you.
6. Jesus is declaring to you today that He sees value in you.
 - a. He died for you.
 - b. He is coming back to Earth for you.
 - c. You are dearly loved and cherished.
 - d. Let Jesus heal your hurts and brokenness and give you a new life with Him.

C. This morning, I want us to pray.

1. Whatever situation you find yourself in, I want us to pray with you.
2. Maybe you need deliverance, hope, or forgiveness.
3. Whatever your need today, I believe Jesus is speaking some people here today to trust in him in order to see a miracle happen in your life.