

Mark 5:1-20

“The Purpose Of Satan, The Power Of Christ”

The Bible says, “...*be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*” Eph 6:10-12 and again, “*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God,*” 2 Cor 10:3-5 Don't be deceived spiritual warfare is real. Peter tells us, “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*” 1 Peter 5:8 One way or another Satan wants to destroy your life.

We often talk about the fact that God has a plan for you, God has a purpose for you, and that's true. But if you're not submitted to it, if you're not surrendered to it don't think for a minute that Satan doesn't have his own agenda that pertains to your life. and It's not kind, it's not fun, it's not entertaining and full of freedom, it's not empowering, it's enslaving, it's debasing, degrading, demeaning, it's deceitful, depressing, and destructive.

There is nothing good that comes from dabbling in things that are ungodly, things that are demonic, things that the enemy can use to get a foothold on your life. and I preface our time together today with these things because Mark Ch 5 brings us the single most graphic portrayal and detailed description of demonic possession in all the word of God. It's what we might consider to be the “classic profile” of what might come to our minds when we think about what takes place with in the context of demonic possession.

Now when it comes to the demonic, when it comes to the study of Satanic tendencies we always want to be careful. and Really there are 2 extremes that one can fall to both of which Satan readily accepts and enjoys. One is a denial of the demonic, or thinking that Satan is just some sort of fairy tale that man has invented to help rationalize why evil takes place. Some people believe Satan/demons are a figment of man's imagination; a “personification” a rationalization for evil. On the other extreme is the fact that some people have an unhealthy, inordinate/excessive fascination in the devil, in dark things, in the demonic. and They start probing, and prying, studying and seeking to discover more and more until they're engrossed and engaged in occult activity. The bible says, “...*I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil.*” Rom 16:19

Satan, and his demonic cohorts are very real. and They have a very destructive agenda that we don't want to be ignorant of, outside of that it's not our desire to get to know the devil, we want to get to know Jesus Christ and the power of the resurrection in our lives. It's not our desire to draw attention to the devil but to give glory to Jesus and the power that He has to set men free. and So as we study this portion of Mark Ch 5 we're just simply wanting to affirm the reality of Satan and his demonic forces. But we want to refrain from promoting an unhealthy

fascination and interest in things that are evil. Our goal is to reveal Satan's purpose and Jesus' power over evil and His ability to heal any harm that Satan or the demonic may've caused.

The setting for this scene is certainly one that I would consider to be "spooky." You recall that after an incredibly busy day and absolutely exhausting afternoon that Jesus and His disciples set out in the evening to cross the lake. and As the night fell upon them a sudden and violent storm arose. The weather was storming, Jesus was sleeping, and the disciples were shouting, they were afraid they were going to die. and So they woke Jesus up, in essence rebuked Him because they felt like He didn't care about them and He spoke peace into the otherwise tempestuous time in their life.

and Of course they freaked out because it became eerily calm in a split second. No wind blowing around, no waves sloshing up and down. But in a moment's time it was as though a great hand had brushed aside the wind and pressed down the sea, and then there was silence. The disciples weren't scared anymore, they were shocked, they were stunned. They had this feeling come over them that alerted them to the fact that they'd just encountered something supernatural. It was a life lesson in learning to trust in the word of God, the care and concern of Jesus and His ability to do what He's said He would do, and believe me they'd never forget it.

Here's my point when we get to Mark Ch 5 it's the dead of night, they hit the shoreline in the pitch black, and as they do the demonic awaits them. and I'm not sure what it is about the night time that intensifies fear, but it does. Perhaps it's the fact that you can't see around the corner, you don't know what awaits you in the distance, and there's always a certain fear of the unknown. Be that as it may we read beginning in Vs 1 of Mark Ch 5

Vs1

Now I've already mentioned this vaguely but I believe it's worth underscoring again more specifically. We read in Vs 35 of Ch 4 where Jesus said, "Let us cross over to the other side." Here in Vs 1 of Ch we see that they did just that, they made it. Now between the time of the command and their arrival on dry land were some incredibly rough waters. But that doesn't in anyway circumvent or take away from the fact that they're there nonetheless. and In the end they'd come to have less *self* confidence and more *Christ* confidence as the result of it. But here's my point; God *always* keeps His word. He does not promise us smooth sailing, but the bible is very clear. *"God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" Num 23:19* The point being that if He says it He will do it, if He's spoken it, He'll make it good. He's not like us, saying one thing and doing another, or not being able to always make good on His word. and God has given you and me all sorts of precious promises in His word. That having begun a work in you He'll be faithful to complete it, God's not about unfinished business, if He starts it, He'll finish it. That whoever believes in Christ will never perish but have eternal life, Jesus said that whoever believes upon Him that out of his heart will flow rivers of living waters. He's promised us peace, joy, rest for our souls and the forgiveness of our sin in Him. Believe it, count *on* it, trust *in* it, God keeps His word.

We read here that He came to the country of the Gadarenes which was predominantly Gentile country, there were Jews who lived there but it was mostly Gentile.

Vs2-5

So as soon as their boat hit the shore this man comes blasting out of the darkness, out of the graveyard to confront them. and We find out from Luke's gospel that he had been in this condition for a long time, that he was naked and lived sub-human and animal-like. Again we note that he lived among the decaying and the dead, he had supernatural strength breaking chains and shackles, he had uncontrollable behavior, was tormented and self-destructive.

Now I want to point out here before we get too far into this that a Christian *cannot* be demon possessed. and When we speak of demon possession we're talking about a demon that resides inside a human body and will at times surface, showing it's personality through the body of its host. But as a believer *Christ* is in you by the power of the Holy Spirit and He's not into subletting, He doesn't share or lease space out to demonic entities. Now that's not to say that a demonic spirit can't deceive you or intimidate you, but they cannot possess you if you're a child of God.

Having said that I want to consider these characteristics for just a moment, some of these behaviors or mannerisms that we see in this man. Because I believe it can shed some light on demonic overtones or perhaps *oppression* that often times takes place in or around our lives. What might the life of one look like who's under a demonic sway of influence. *Again* I want to make very clear that I'm not saying that whoever displays these characteristics is possessed, however the potential for being *oppressed* I believe could certainly be there. But I don't want to take away from our own ability to simply debase ourselves through feeding fleshly lusts. Often times the devil gets too much credit, we blame the devil for decisions we've made ourselves, but we're looking for a scapegoat so that we have some sort of justification.

But notice some things about this guy, the very 1st thing we learn about him is that he lived in the tombs, among the decaying and the dead, Luke tells us that he was naked. He was debased, he had descended to filthy living both physically and morally. He lived away from society, that is in isolation, vented hostility and intimidation upon any who came around him. I want you to notice that he had no restraint, exercised no self-control. People tried to bind him, that is, bring some form of restraint upon him but he would always break them, have nothing to do with them and refused to be held by them. He couldn't be tamed, that is this guy wasn't subject to reason, there was no rationale. He would shriek and shrill, lashing out in irrational mannerisms, and finally we read that he would cut himself with stones.

and These are things typical of those under the influence of the demonic. Again I don't want to take away from the human ability to debase and demoralize ourselves. and I don't want to over-spiritualize every troubled teen or person with problems. But it's very typical for demonic forces to debase mankind, around occultism and occult activity you find all sorts of lewd and vulgar goings-on, pornography, drug abuse, and obscenity. Is it possible that spiritual warfare is at the root of some of your family struggles whereby perhaps there's one or more than one who's isolating themselves, hostile toward you, showing no restraint, exercising no self-control, irrational in their thought process or mannerism. They're debasing themselves, perhaps cutting themselves... It's not really a new thing but it's been getting more attention in recent history how people are cutting themselves to try and deal with problems, stresses and strains upon their lives. Where does that mentality come from? Is it godly? Not at all, it's destructive, it's self-mutilation.

Listen, Satan came to steal, to kill and to destroy... The bible teaches us that we have been created in the very image of God and as Satan wages war against God one of his attacks is to mutilate, distort, and disfigure that image. It's God's desire that we manifest His image more and more to those around us, Satan wants to destroy that image. and So we find this man a naked, filthy and wretched mass of bleeding lacerations, scabs and scar tissue living (as one commentator said Hughes) in a delirium of pain and masochistic pleasure.

Vs6-10

Few things here. 1st of all back in Vs 6 where we read that having seen Jesus from afar he ran and *worshiped* Him. The word "worship" probably isn't the best translation, in reality the man ran up and bowed before Him. That is he paid homage to Him acknowledging Him as One who was superior in authority. It seems to lend itself almost to a forced type of recognition, not that Jesus made him run up and bow, but that the demon had no choice but to show a posture of submission (even by constraint) before Christ. As James said, "*You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble!*" James 2:19 So don't think of reverential worship, but a constrained acknowledgment of the authority of Jesus.

The bible says in regards to Jesus that, "*...God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*" Phil 2:9-11 and This is just a little precursor/foretaste to that, every knee is going to bow before Jesus Christ every tongue is going to confess to His Lordship. and It can happen now (and in that context grant you everlasting life and the forgiveness of sins) or it can happen later when it will be too late, but simply because God said you would, you will; the choice is yours. I've chosen to bow in reverence before Him now and confess Him as my Lord apart from whom I can do nothing.

So he comes running up to Him, bows before Him and lets out this shrill, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me." Now there was an ancient superstition that believed if you knew the full name of someone or a particular spirit that you could take authority over them. and Because of that there are some who believe that this spirit was trying to usurp authority over Jesus by asserting this full title, "Jesus, Son of the Most High God." Whether or not that's exactly what's going on I don't know. Either way that doesn't phase Jesus. But when he says, "I implore you by God that You do not torment me." Basically the scene is these guys roll up on shore, this man comes violently out of the darkness, filthy and bleeding, hair matted, teeth brown and yellow, naked and wild eyed, and he falls on his knees and in anything but a normal voice he screams out an inarticulate cry and when that ceased the disciples heard something to the effect of, "What do You want with me Jesus, Son of the Most High God, swear to me by God that You won't torment me."

Because Jesus had been telling the demon to come out of him, that's what Vs 8 indicates. It wasn't a one time, "Come out of him." and It was over, Jesus was engaging this demon and the demon was trying to resist Him, and he screams out before Him and says, "Swear to me by God that You won't torment me." Luke tells us that he was begging Jesus not to send him to the abyss. 2 Things here, #1 We need to note that the demon readily acknowledges Jesus' authority over him and is begging Him not to torment him or send him out of the county (that is to the

abyss). #2 It always strikes me that the demon's sole intention (seemingly) in inhabiting this man was to torment him, disfigure him, and destroy him, (and had been doing just that for only God knows how long) yet when he's confronted by the authority of Christ he *begs* Jesus not to do to him what he's been all about to this man... Eager to dish it out, begging not to have to take it.

and There in Vs 9 Jesus asked the demon, "What is your name?" and This is the only record we have of Jesus ever engaging the demonic like this, as a general rule He would not speak to them, ask information from them or anything else, He would simply get rid of them. Why did He ask his name here? I'm not certain, probably more for our sake than for His, so that we could see that there was no force of evil (no matter how large) that could stand against Him. and Perhaps to debunk for His disciples the superstition regarding having to have their name and all of that. Because the demon didn't give Him a name, he tried to dodge the bullet. He said, "My name is Legion, for we are many." He's trying to intimidate Jesus, because a Roman legion was about 6,000 soldiers, they were known for their overwhelming strength, the fact that they were unified and battle ready. So this demon is saying, "There's more than one of us in here Jesus, and we're unified, incredibly strong and battle ready." Were there 6,000 demons in him? Probably not (though I suppose it's possible) the devil is a liar, don't think you'll get the truth from his cohorts. But the bible doesn't give us any information regarding the physiology or psychology of demon possession.

The bible *does* make clear that more than one demon (several in fact) can inhabit a single host, beyond that we don't know. But this is a scare tactic, an intimidation factor.

Vs11-13

Again we need to note that Christ is clearly in control here, anytime Jesus is in the equation He's the control factor, everything else is the variable; subject to Him. I mean these demons can't even afflict the pigs with out His permission (by the way He didn't send them there, He just gave them permission to go there; and of course it was off to hog heaven for them, deviled ham and all that). But what I want you to realize is that if they can't even afflict a pig with out His permission of how much more value are you? God's not going to let anything come to you but that He's not aware of it and won't give you the strength to endure through it if you'll but look *to* Him and draw strength *from* Him.

Now pigs were unclean animals, so we have sort of an appropriate picture here of unclean to unclean. and There's a # of reasons that Christ may've allowed this; it readily displayed that this man wasn't just "crazy" there was something demonic happening *in* him, and deliverance was a reality *for* him. Also it shows the true nature of the demonic entity. Demons are destructive in nature, a person means no more to them than a pig, and pigs aren't made in the image of God; there's no real capacity there to resist the natural impulse impressed upon them. and Here it is, as soon as the demonic was upon them destruction and death was the result. Don't think for a second that they didn't have the same end for that man or anyone else whom they can seize control of. Satan was a murderer from the beginning, and it's his desire to destroy human life. We read that there were about 2,000 pigs, were there 2,000 demons or more in the man? Again I don't know, I would suppose it's possible.

Vs14-17

Interesting...cared more about pigs than a person. Not much different today as people rally around the animal kingdom in efforts to save the red wolf or the black rhinoceros but allow babies to be aborted by the 10's and hundreds of thousands. The pigs over people, the swine over the Savior. There in Vs 17 you'd suspect that it would read, "Then they began to plead with Him to come to their villages, deliver more people and preach the good news of the kingdom of God." All these people knew was that Jesus came to town, something crazy went down, they'd lost a fortune and they wanted Him out. and We need to note Vs 15, Jesus changes lives in ways that are unexplainable by the world, and we fear that which we can't understand. Just would rather not have it around, the bible tells us that the natural man doesn't receive the things of the Spirit of God, nor can he know them because they're spiritually discerned.

They came back (probably the next morning) found this man *sitting* (Luke tells us that he was sitting at the feet of Jesus) not roaming about aimlessly in the tombs with out purpose. He wasn't sporadic in his behavior, he was peaceable. and He was *clothed*, (probably in a cloak given to him by one of the disciples) no longer unconcerned about his personal well being, he wasn't debasing and degrading himself. and He was *in his right mind*, he'd been transformed by the renewing of his mind. The bible tells us, "... *God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*" 2 Tim 1:7

But it blows us away to think they'd rather have this demon possessed man bent on self destruction and /or harming others in their midst, but as for the Holy and righteous One, the One who saves souls and changes lives "...could You please leave." It's amazing how often it comes to my attention after someone has been saved how that their family and friends take issue with them and want nothing to do with them after the fact.

"Man I liked you better when you were on drugs, or getting drunk all the time, at least I understood you then, but I don't get you anymore." and People would rather have people on the path of personal self destruction and a threat to others, that see Jesus at work in their lives. But often times when people come to Christ it creates problems for them and people just want you gone. Actually they want you, just not Jesus in you.

They asked Jesus to leave, Jesus won't stick around where He's not wanted, He won't violate your freewill, He won't force Himself upon you.

How often we may not articulate it exactly that way, but the request remains the same. "Uh, you're getting a little bit to close to home with that one Lord, kind of convicting me in an area I don't want to face or deal with right now, could You please just back off a bit, could You just go away and leave me alone for now." and Often times He will, be careful what You ask for you just might get it. Better to say, "Lord this is painful, I don't understand it, don't want to be confronted with it, but I trust in Your mercy, have Your way in me."

Vs18

The people asked Jesus to depart from them, the man who'd been possessed begged Jesus to let him stay with Him. Listen, when Jesus changes your life, a mark of true conversion is that you want to be around Jesus, it's not a burden, it's not a bummer or something that's squelching your life, it's the highlight, the most important thing, you want to be with Jesus. It's like the psalmist said, "*What shall I render to the Lord For all His benefits toward me?*" Ps 116:12 It's

like, “Lord, I want to be *with* You, avail myself *to* You, how can I serve You?” You’ve been delivered from the power of darkness and conveyed into the kingdom of the Son of God’s love.
Vs19

It’s not about what we can do for Jesus is it? It’s about what Jesus has already done for us. Interesting that Jesus said “Yes” to the demonic request, “Yes” to the people who wanted Him to depart, but “No” to the man who wanted to stay with Him. Sometimes Jesus answers our requests with a “No.” That doesn’t mean He doesn’t love us, but that He knows what’s best *for us*, and what’s most advantageous for the kingdom.

Jesus had a plan for him, a purpose in reaching him, and that was to minister to his own family, his own friends, in those places, those areas that Jesus Himself may not be welcomed or understood. To go and share his testimony, what great things God had done *for* him to those *around* him. To be a light in that region of the Gentiles.

and I love that because you don’t have to know a bunch of bible Vs to be an effective witness, just be open and unashamed about what God has done in *your* life, it’s real, people see it, Jesus makes a change, transforms us by the renewing of our minds, we think different, act different, our countenance can even appear different after Christ has come into our lives... This is a sermon everyone can preach, tell people what great things Jesus has done for you, and how He’s had compassion on you.

Vs20

Not only is wanting to be *with* Jesus an earmark of true conversion, but also you’ll find (not flawless perfection) but obedience *to* Jesus as another earmark in the lives of the truly converted. Jesus said, “Do you love Me, obey My commandments.” This guy *obeyed* the Lord’s word; went about the 10 cities in that region (Decapolis) proclaiming all that Jesus had done for him, and the people marveled. You see he had an impact, what God had done for him was turning people’s attention to Jesus. What an incredible event, Jesus coming to seek and to save that which was lost.

Over and over again we read of him being designated, “The one who had been demon possessed.” What an awesome thing, a testimony of Christ’s ability to deliver. If Jesus can save that man he can save *any* man.

What’s your name? “The one who used to be full of greed.” “The one who used to be riddled with pride.” “The one who used to be in the throws of perversion or a perverted life style” but Jesus delivered you and set you free. “The one who used to be an alcoholic,” “The one who used to be a drug addict.” It’s awesome to see everyone here, looking so neat, and so nice, but you’ve been delivered from some destructive tendencies, who you are now, Vs who you were before is an amazing testimony of the power of God to deliver you from the kingdom of darkness and convey you into the Son of His love.

Jesus went all this way, for one. Maybe everyone here is in perfect shape except for you, that’s ok Jesus is here just for you. Satan’s purpose is to destroy, Christ has the power to deliver, it doesn’t matter where you’ve been or what you’ve done He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He’ll move heaven and earth, dispel the very forces of hell to set you free. Satan came to kill, to steal and to destroy. Jesus came that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly.

Prayer Points:

Jesus we're so thankful for Your ability to deliver and to set men free, we thank You that the one the Son sets free is free indeed, and You will go to any distance to reach just one. We thank You for Your willingness to reach us. May our lives be a witness, a light to our friends, our family, those who don't know You personally, that people might marvel over the compassion You've shown to us and be drawn to You.

If Jesus is dealing with you, calling out *to* you and today you ready for Him to set You free, to deliver you from the deception and destructive path of the enemy, then get on your knees right there in your heart confess Him as Lord, invite Him in to your heart, into your life and as for His forgiveness.