

## The Mad Man (subtitle: All Troubles for One Soul)

### Mark 5:1-20 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

*They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes. <sup>2</sup>When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him, <sup>3</sup>and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; <sup>4</sup>because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. <sup>5</sup>Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones. <sup>6</sup>Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; <sup>7</sup>and shouting with a loud voice, he *said*, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!” <sup>8</sup>For He had been saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!” <sup>9</sup>And He was asking him, “What is your name?” And he *said* to Him, “My name is Legion; for we are many.” <sup>10</sup>And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country. <sup>11</sup>Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain. <sup>12</sup>The demons implored Him, saying, “Send us into the swine so that we may enter them.” <sup>13</sup>Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea.*

*<sup>14</sup>Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and in the country. And the people came to see what it was that had happened. <sup>15</sup>They *came* to Jesus and *observed* the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the “legion”; and they became frightened. <sup>16</sup>Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and all about the swine. <sup>17</sup>And they began to implore Him to leave their region. <sup>18</sup>As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him. <sup>19</sup>And He did not let him, but He *said* to him, “Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you.” <sup>20</sup>And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.*

### **Introduction**

Each Sunday this year, we walk with Jesus. We follow Him wherever He goes. Today, He is taking us on a field trip along with His disciples. We are in the Gentile region called Gerasenes.

Here, Jesus encounters a man who had an unclean spirit (v. 2). Some translations call him a demoniac. Others call him demon possessed (v. 15, 18). I would call him a mad man. The mad man had a rough life before he met with Jesus. Many a time, his townsfolk tried to confine him to his own house to no avail. They even put him in chains for hands and shackles for feet. He broke loose. With supernatural strength. Every single time. All efforts

to subdue him failed. All people feared. They eventually left him alone and hoped that he would go away to someplace else or die. The man ended up living alone among the tombs because that was the only place where nobody was around. That's the context of today's story.

### **Content**

Let me walk you through today's text verse by verse from here.

v. 6-8: *<sup>6</sup> Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; <sup>7</sup> and shouting with a loud voice, he \*said, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!" <sup>8</sup> For He had been saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"*

Please note here what's really happening. Seeing Jesus from a distance, the man runs up to Jesus whom he has never met before, bows down before Him, and declares with a loud voice who Jesus is: Son of the Most High God (Messiah). The man from a distance knew who Jesus was, recognized Him in public, and worshiped Him. This is the spiritual reality. Every spirit knows who Jesus is. And, they bow down and worship Jesus the Messiah. Likewise, even today, the unclean spirits recognize Christ in us right away. In the presence of Jesus, they have no other option but to worship and obey Him. E.g. A friend of mine was recognized by a shaman as the one who has the Greater Spirit in him.

Listen one more time to the man's cry (v. 7): *"What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!"* He is crying out in agony, *Jesus, why did you come here? Stop tormenting me. Please leave me alone.* By the way, have you noticed that the words from the mouth of the mad man were not exactly his own words? They were the words of the unclean spirits who screamed out their frustration from their unhappy encounter with Jesus. In the presence of Jesus the Holy One of God, the evil spirits shudder and are tormented.

V. 9: *<sup>9</sup> And He was asking him, "What is your name?" And he \*said to Him, "My name is Legion; for we are many."*

Interesting. When Jesus asked what his name was, the man didn't give his personal name such as Jacob or John. Rather, the spirit inside of him taking over the tongue of the man and answered, "My name is Legion, for we are many."

A little knowledge on the Roman army system would help here. A legion consists of 10 cohorts. One cohort is made of six centuries. One century had 100 infantry men (e.g. centurion is an officer in charge of the century). So, a legion has 6,000 infantry men. So, thousands of demons dwelt in that man. They are many. Don't be surprised with the fact that one person can have more than one unclean spirit in him/her. For instance, Mary of Magdalene had seven demons in her before Jesus cast them out (Mark 16:9, Luke 8:2).

Let's move on. Verses 10 through 13.

v. 10-13: <sup>10</sup> And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send **them** out of the country. <sup>11</sup> Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain. <sup>12</sup> The **demons** implored Him, saying, "Send us into the swine so that we may enter them." <sup>13</sup> Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the **unclean spirits** entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea.

Please note the references on the number of demons in verses 10, 12 and 13: *them, the demons, the unclean spirits*. They are all plural. Jesus was dealing with multiple demons in one man. Commanded by Jesus to come out of the man, they had no other choice but to obey. But they don't just disappear into the air. In other words, they needed the hosts of body where they could enter and dwell, so, they implored for Jesus' permission to go into the swine. When Jesus gave them permission, out of the man and into the swine they went, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and were drowned in the sea. Quite a happening!

Verses 14-16.

v. 14-16: <sup>14</sup> Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and in the country. And the people came to see what it was that had happened. <sup>15</sup> They \*came to Jesus and \*observed the man who had been **demon-possessed** sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the "legion"; and they became frightened. <sup>16</sup> Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and all about the swine.

v. 17-20: <sup>17</sup> And they began to implore Him to leave their region. <sup>18</sup> As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been **demon-possessed** was imploring Him that he might accompany Him. <sup>19</sup> And He did not let him, but He \*said to him, "Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you." <sup>20</sup> And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

Quite a story, isn't it?

Three Lessons:

1. **Seriously, all these troubles for just for one soul?** Jesus went through all the troubles to save one single soul from the tyranny of the devil. Yes, He did it all to save one man from the years of torment from the unclean spirits. Yes, to save the one whom everyone else has given up on, Jesus traveled land and sea. For one single soul. For that man.

To know exactly what troubles Jesus had gone through to save that man, I need to take you back a little bit in time. Today's incident takes place in Mark 5. Remember the parable of the sower? That was the lesson Jesus gave to the crowd in a town called Capernaum in Mark 4. Capernaum is one of the seaports in the Sea of Galilee (more like a lake). After the teaching, one evening, Jesus said to His disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." That means, to get in the boat and sail a several miles across the Sea of Galilee. That night, in the middle of the Sea, they experienced a terrifying storm that almost drowned them until Jesus calmed it. The disciples discovered that even the wind and the sea obey Jesus (Mark 4:35-41).

Then, they went across the sea and arrived at Gerasenes the opposite side of Galilee. After He cast out the demons from the man, by the townsfolk Jesus was asked to go back home. They didn't welcome Him, did they?

Consider one more time all these troubles Jesus and His disciples went through in a matter of day: a life-threatening storm, and the encounter with the mad man, the unwelcoming people, and return home. I am not sure if they had any time to eat breakfast that day. It makes us wonder, "Was all this trouble, including the death scare, was for one mad man? Who was not even a Jew?" The answer is a resounding YES.

The story assures me how much God loves people. Especially the troubled ones. Especially those whom people have given up on them. Jesus has a very special heart for them. Jesus would not mind going through His own troubles to save such people from their life-long troubles. Furthermore, even if you're the only soul to save from sin, God would've still sent Jesus to earth. Jesus still would've gone to the cross for you. You are that much important. Your soul is that much precious in the sight of God.

2. **Money or person (v. 17)?** To Jesus, one person's worth was far more than that of 2000 pigs. One scientist once calculated how much worth one person's flesh and bones. Altogether less than \$100. But, to God our Father, our soul is infinitely more precious than all the other creatures combined or even the entire world. "*For what does it profit a man to **gain** the whole world, and forfeit his soul?*" (Mark 8:36).

Today's story clearly indicates that. Saving one man cost the pigherds more than 2,000 swine. Quite a monetary loss. In today's worth, let's say, it costs \$400 to buy a whole pig for roasting. Multiplied by 2,000 pigs equals \$800,000.

Remember: animal rights are not equal to the human rights. I am sorry to say this to animal rights activists. Don't get me wrong. I love animals and don't harm them. I rescue bugs, spiders, even flies at home. It is God's will for us to take good care of animals. We are stewards of God's creation. However, person always comes before animals.

We also need to learn to evaluate the success of our ministry, not by monetary value but on the worth of one human soul. To save one soul from sins, it is worth spending a million dollars.

3. **Share with others what the Lord has done for you.** Think of the mad man once again. A complete transformation took place in him: from an uncontrollable, naked, in chains and shackles, with supernatural physical strength, screaming day and night, and self-gashing man to clothed, calm, sitting down, and in the right mind man (v. 15). He became a new creation in Christ. With his right mind, he implored Jesus to allow him to join Jesus. Jesus says, no. Instead, Jesus commands him to *go home to his people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for him, and how God had mercy on him (v. 19)*. So he did. *He went home and began to proclaim in his hometown and vicinities what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.* The purpose of miracles is **the glory of God**. Have you experienced God's miracles for you, then share your stories and testimonies with the people around you so that they too know what great things God has done for you and glorify your Father in Heaven (Matthew 5:16).

## Conclusion

What I learn from Jesus is this: He loves us dearly. Even though we are the only ones to be saved from sins, He still would've gone to the cross. He still would've taken all the troubles to free us from our own troubles. He would've spent all the money in the world to transform us into the state which God wants us to be in. Let us thank Jesus for being such a caring and compassionate Lord for us. Amen.