

All Those Troubles for One Troubled Soul?!

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

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

*¹⁴Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and in the countryside. And the people came to see what it was that had happened. ¹⁵And then they *came* to Jesus and *saw* the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had previously had the “legion”; and they became frightened. ¹⁶Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and all about the pigs. ¹⁷And they began to beg Him to leave their region. ¹⁸And as He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was begging Him that he might accompany Him. ¹⁹And 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.” ²⁰And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.*

Introduction

Last Sunday, we saw Jesus visiting a Gentile town named Sychar and had a conversation with a woman at the well. He stayed in that village for two days and led the entire town to salvation. The lesson? Salvation is for all people, not just for Jews. Indeed, Jesus came to save the entire humanity from their sins.

Today, we are with Jesus on a field trip to another Gentile region called Gerasenes where Jesus encounters a man with multiple unclean spirits (v. 15, 18). Some translations call him a 'demoniac' (NRSV, Amplified). Others translated 'demon possessed' (NASB, NIV). More translations say, 'possessed with the devil' (KJV) or 'troubled with the devil' (Rheims). I would simply call him a 'mad man.'

This man had a rough life. Because of his condition, he was totally rejected by the townsfolk. Many a time, they tried to confine him to his own house to no avail. They even put him in chains and shackles. It didn't work, either. Every single time they tried, he broke loose. With supernatural strength. All efforts to subdue him failed. All people feared him. 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: ⁶ Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; ⁷ and shouting with a loud voice, he *said, "What business do You have with me, **Jesus, Son of the Most High God?** I implore You by God, do not torment me!" ⁸ For He had already 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 ran up to Jesus whom he has never met before, bowed down before Him, and declared with a loud voice who Jesus was: Son of the Most High God (the Messiah). Let me repeat. From a distance, the man knew who Jesus was, recognized Him in public, and worshiped Him. This is the spiritual reality. In the spirit realm, every spirit knows who Jesus is. And they bow down and worship Jesus the Messiah. *At the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth* (Philippians 2:10). 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 Christian man in Korea was recognized by a shaman as the one who had the Greater Spirit (Holy Spirit) in him than the evil spirit she worshiped.

Listen one more time to the man's cry (v. 7): ⁷ and **shouting with a loud voice**, he *said, "What business do You have with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, **do not torment me!**"

He wasn't saying it softly, was he? Rather, he was crying aloud in agony, *Jesus, why did you come here? Stop tormenting me. Please leave me alone.* That kind of cry only comes from someone who is being tortured! By the way, have you noticed that the words from the mouth of the man were not exactly his own words? They were the words of the unclean

spirits in him 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: *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 spirits inside of him taking over the tongue of the man and answered, “My name is Legion, for we are many.”

A little knowledge on an actual legion, the Roman army unit, 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. That many! Don't be surprised with the fact that one person can have more than one unclean spirit in him/her. For instance, Mary 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: ¹⁰ *And he begged Him earnestly not to send **them** out of the region. ¹¹ Now there was a large herd of pigs feeding nearby on the mountain. ¹² And the **demons** begged Him, saying, “Send us into the pigs so that we may enter them.” ¹³ Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the **unclean spirits** entered the pigs; 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. They are now: *them, the demons, the unclean spirits*. They are all plural. Jesus was dealing with the multiple demons in one man. Commanded by Jesus to come out of the man, they had no other choice but to obey. But they didn't just disappear into the air. In other words, they needed the host(s) of body, either animals or people, where they could enter and dwell, so, they implored for Jesus' permission to go into the swine. When Jesus gave them the permission, out of the man and into the swine they went, and the whole herd, two thousand of them, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and were drowned. Quite a happening!

Verses 14-16.

v. 14-16: ¹⁴ *Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and in the countryside. And the people came to see what it was that had happened. ¹⁵ And then they *came to Jesus and *saw the man who had been **demon-possessed** sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had previously had the “legion”; and they became frightened. ¹⁶ Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the **demon-possessed** man, and all about the pigs.*

v. 17-20: ¹⁷ And they began to implore Him to leave their region. ¹⁸ As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been **demon-possessed** was imploring Him that he might accompany Him. ¹⁹ 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.” ²⁰ 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 Those Troubles for One Troubled 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, Jesus traveled land and sea to save the one soul whom everyone else has given up on. For one single soul. For that man.

To know exactly what troubles Jesus had gone through to save the mad 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. 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 Capernaum. After He cast out the demons from the man, the townsfolk asked Jesus to go back home. They didn't welcome Him, did they?

Here's the summary of all the 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, worth it? Just for one mad man who was not even a Jew?” The answer is a resounding YES.

The story assures us how much our Father in Heaven loves people. All of them. But especially the troubled ones. Especially those whom people have given up on. Jesus too has a very special heart for them. Jesus would not mind going through 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. Every 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 2,000 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, close to a million dollars. Here's how I came up with that number: *"the average cost of a whole hog, cut, wrapped, and frozen to your specifications is approximately \$600.00. Hogs are sold by net weight. That means you are charged \$4.59/lb. on the actual weight you take home. A whole hog will yield about 130 lbs. of meat."* (<https://www.wilsonbeeffarms.com/whole-hog/>). So, let's say, an unprepared hog costs \$400. 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 undesired, uncontrollable, naked, in chains and shackles, with supernatural physical strength, screaming day and night, and self-gashing man to the transformed, 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 said, no. Instead, Jesus commanded him to *"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."* 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 (v. 20). The purpose of miracles is **the glory of God**. If you have experienced God's miracles for you, then share your stories with your family and friends so that they too know what great things God has done for you and glorify your Father in Heaven (Matthew 5:16).

Conclusion

Know this: Jesus loves you dearly. Even though you are the only one to be saved from sin, He still would've gone to the cross. He still would've taken all the troubles to free you from your troubles. He would've spent all the money in the world to set you free from sin and death. In fact, He laid down His own life to do so. Thank Jesus for His grace and mercy for you. Amen.