



## Introduction:

In Mark 5:1-20, we have one of the most dramatic conversions in the Bible. In this text, we read the story of the man of Gadara. Among society and according to the culture, this man was an outcast. He was deemed unlovable. Beyond the physical uneasiness of this man's appearance, there was something much deeper causing the visible unrest. Imagine you are one of Christ's disciples, and upon getting out of the boat you see a naked and deranged man covered in blood coming toward you.

As he approached, I am sure some of the disciples, who wanted nothing more than to get out of the boat because of the storm they just encountered (Luke 8:22-28), took one step back into the boat being unsure of this man's intentions. But again, Christ saw through the visible to that which was veiled, his heart. He saw the oppression this man was captive to. Jesus loved this man and had compassion on him. We must have hearts full of compassion, but compassion only comes through ministering to and loving on others. How are you loving the unlovable?

## The Focus:

- **Every believer must reach out and love the unlovable. Why?**
  - **Because Jesus has ascended to heaven.**
  - **Because Satan is operating on the earth.**
  - **Because Christ's love can revolutionize a person's life.**

After sailing to this area of Gadara and going on land, Jesus is met "*immediately*" by a man with an "*unclean spirit*" (Mark 5:2; Luke 8:27). But what did Christ do for him? Jesus had mercy and compassion on him. He brought healing to the man who had been in spiritual bondage (vs. 19). But what about today? How is God liberating people all across the world from the oppression they face today? Christ's last words on earth to the disciples were "...*Ye shall be witnesses unto me...*" (Acts 1:8). After that, He was taken into heaven to sit at His exalted position on God's right hand (Acts 1:9; 2:25, 33-34). Paul informed the church at Corinth that Christ did, in fact, dwell upon the earth, but today, He is no longer walking on the earth (2 Corinthians 5:16). Paul was given a commission that he would be sent to the Gentiles (Acts 26:17). As members of the body of Christ – the Church, we have been given the distinct privilege of being ambassadors for Christ, and our sole pursuit is to reconcile the world back to God (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). Therefore, we are to have compassion on others like Christ had on others. We are citizens of heaven representing Christ on the earth (Philippians 3:20). People need Christ to be liberated from the oppression of Satan and the bondage this world brings (Acts 26:18). We are the ones who are to bring the good news of Christ which can free those oppressed by evil.

From our text, it is very clear that this man was oppressed and possessed by Satan (vs. 2, 15-16, 18). This story prophetically reveals the state of Israel's heart condition (Isaiah 8:19-22). Because of their neglect and disregard for God's Word, they were afflicted and tormented

(Isaiah 9:1-2). God even allows us to see the details of the demonic activity that was prevalent during the time of Christ. The dialogue between Christ and the demon is recorded for us (vs. 7-13). The Bible teaches that the earth is Satan's kingdom, and he is roaming it seeking to kill and destroy (1 Peter 5:8). As well, Paul teaches the church that our war is spiritual in nature (2 Corinthians 10:3; Ephesians 6:12). As we fight for lost souls, we are engaging in a war that will only be won by using both God-given weapons – the Word of God and prayer (2 Corinthians 10:4; Ephesians 6:17-18). Without Christians engaging in battle, Satan will continue to defeat and destroy them. Satan preys on the weak and vulnerable. He attacks the down and out. He brings depression to those who feel unloved. If the light of the gospel is to permeate the world and pierce the darkness, we must live lives that reveal His grace and glory. So, who can stand against Satan and his world system? Only Spirit-filled believers who decide to love the unlovable and show them true love.

When Christ meets and involves Himself in this man's life, it is revolutionized. Before Christ, he was possessed with an unclean spirit, he was living in dead men's graves, he was running around naked, and he was crying and cutting himself (vs. 2-3, 5). After Christ showed up, he is seated, clothed, and in his right mind (Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35). This man's heart that was filled with unrest was now at peace. Having run around naked, he was now clothed. Having been tortured with evil and violent thoughts, he was now sane and rational. What power the love of Christ has on the life of a person who will yield to Him! Christ will replace hostility with peace, sadness with joy, hatred with love, guilt with forgiveness, and bondage with liberty and freedom. Jesus saw beyond what this man was to what he could be. Christian, we must take the gospel of Christ to those who are seen as unlovable, and we must allow Christ's love to flow through us. We must attempt to reach others with the good news of Jesus. Christ can change anybody. Christ's love can revolutionize anybody's life, but His love must first be shared and then received.

### **Response to the Sermon:**

The points taught by Pastor Dan are great truths to remember, and I don't think anyone would disagree with the truth and validity of these points at a knowledge-based level. But how many of us truly believe these truths, enough to move us to action? It is one thing to say Christ has ascended, but it is totally different to recognize and be His hands and feet to minister to others. It is one thing to say Satan is operating on earth, but it is entirely different to engage in combat in the spiritual realm against the evil spirits, spiritual wickedness, and the rulers of darkness (Ephesians 6:12). It is one thing to say Christ's love can revolutionize a person's life, but it is completely different to tell others the story of God's plan to reconcile and restore all things (Colossians 1:19-22). We must serve and minister in Christ's place. We must pray and fight against the wickedness oppressing the people of this world. We must tell others of God's marvelous grace, and together we must glorify Him through our worship (Mark 5:19-20).

### **Bible Study Thoughts & Questions:**

It seems from scripture that this story came on the heels of a storm that Christ and the disciples had just encountered on the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 8:23-34; Mark 4:36-5:20; Luke 8:22-39). But rather than thinking of Himself and what He had just gone through, where was Christ's focus? What did He do? He liberated this man from spiritual bondage (Mark 5:8). He brought rest to his spirit (Mark 5:15). This man no longer was a shame to look upon because of his nakedness, but was fully clothed (Mark 5:15). This man was given peace by the God of peace which now kept his heart and mind (Mark 5:15; Philippians 4:6-7). In essence, Christ loved on this man by comforting him through his tribulation and fight with spiritual oppression. Paul instructed the church to do the same (2 Corinthians 1:3-7).

What did Paul say comes from God which should be extended through us who are His children (2 Corinthians 1:2)? Why are these qualities important for us to manifest in church (Romans 15:5-7), but also to those who are lost?

What does Paul teach us in his description of God the Father (2 Corinthians 1:3)? (See also Psalm 86:5, 15; Daniel 9:9; Micah 7:18.) How should this impact us as we minister to others?

If God is "*the God of all comfort,*" how should this move us who have been comforted by God (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)? What does comforting others look like?

Paul teaches us a great truth regarding our perception of both suffering and comfort (2 Corinthians 1:5-7). Whether we suffer or are comforted, how are we to view those times in our life, and where should our confidence be (2 Corinthians 1:9-10)?

When people are going through trials and afflictions, how does Paul encourage the church to help (2 Corinthians 1:11)? Why is this so important, and what does it enable or provide to others (Ephesians 6:18-19; Philippians 1:19; Colossians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 3:1)?

### **Application Questions:**

With those who seem to be a lost cause, the world deems them beyond repair or restoration. They are considered unlovable. How does the world try to suppress what they can't explain or change? They try to bind (vs. 4a), they try to tame (4b), and if that doesn't work they try to avoid people altogether (Matthew 8:28). And the mistake that the world often makes, and sadly the approach by Christians too, is they try to change a person's behavior, not addressing the root issue. People often treat what they can see, the external and not the internal. Christ always worked from the inside out. When Christ spoke to the man under the power of the demonic host, what did He say (vs. 8)? The unclean spirit was inside the man and had to be removed. In a similar manner, when Christ saves a person by the faith they place in Him, God replaces the spirit of bondage and fear with the Spirit of adoption wherewith we are given power, love, and a sound mind (Romans 8:15; 2 Timothy 1:7).

Because Christ has ascended, we are commissioned as Christ's ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20). With what you have been given and with the opportunities you have daily, who are some people in your path that you could stop to cultivate a relationship with that may need Christ?

Paul teaches the church that we have been given weapons to fight against Satan and his cronies (2 Corinthians 10:4). How is your prayer life? Do you set aside time to engage in spiritual warfare? Do you believe God for the promises that you have been given in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20)?

Paul reveals that the gospel of Christ **IS** the power of God which can lead to the salvation of one's soul if they will believe (Romans 1:16). If that is the power of God, are you telling others the good news you have been given?

Reading Romans 10:13-15, describe the progression outlined in the text (hint: you will want to work backwards). Who is involved? How does it start?

**Prayer:**

- Pray that you would remember our commission and engage people with the truth of the good news of Christ (Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

- Understanding Christ has ascended and Satan still has dominion over the earth, we must pray for the blindness of lost souls in order for our light to penetrate the darkness of their hearts and minds (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).
- Pray for opportunities to witness, and for boldness to engage in the gospel when opportunities are presented (Ephesians 6:18-19; Colossians 4:3).