

CAVES, CHAINS AND CEMETERIES

Mark 5:1-20



WHY THIS MAN'S DOCUMENTATION?

- ◆ He Was Possessed
- ◆ He Was Disappointed
- ◆ He Was Restless
- ◆ He Was Hurting Himself
- ◆ He Was Transformed

“There met Jesus from the tombs...a man who had been often bound with fetters and chains.” (Mark 5:2, 4)

Bill Kirk

“CAVES, CHAINS AND CEMETERIES”

Text: Mark 5:1-20

Subject: How God Changes Us From The Inside Out!

Introduction

(This event in Mark 5 has a great context)

- ◆ On the front side (Mark 4:35-41) Jesus calms a storm crossing the lake with his disciples. (Jesus says)

“Why are you afraid?” (And) “Where is your faith?”

- ◆ On the back side (after the event) Mark 5:21, Jesus heals a woman who had a 12 year chronic illness.

In Other Words

1. Jesus can control what frightens us in the **material world** (wind and waves)
2. Jesus can control what afflicts us in the **physical world** (illness and ailments)

But

3. Jesus now shows us He can control what’s inside of us (**the spiritual world**, the internal, the heart, the mind, the spirit, the attitude, the decision making capacity in all of us.)
 - So, what’s the lesson from the man in chains?
 - What is God saying to you and me in this text? (And)
 - What difference does it make in your life tonight?

(Four Wisdom Discoveries)

I. Wherever I Am – Doesn’t Make God Nervous! (V. 1-5)

Question: How do we know that God isn’t surprised, nervous or intimidated by any of us (your past or your present)? Two reasons, in our text:

1. Jesus knew the condition of the **weather**.
 - It was a stormy night, pitch black, late in the evening.
 - It was a long five miles across in bad weather.
2. Jesus knew the condition of the **man** waiting for Him on shore:

Question: What was the condition of the man Jesus goes out of His way to serve?

Question: What was he dealing with?

Question: Why does God put this in our hands?

Question: What difference does it make in your life and mine?

Question: What’s the purpose of Jesus high-lighting this one man’s journey of spirituality?

#1. He Was Fighting Strong Chains Of Sin

(V. 2) “Possessed with an unclean spirit.”

- He was wild, angry, out of control and had hit rock bottom!

- He was tormented with temptation and fighting a spiritual war!
- He represents the man or woman not controlled by the Holy Spirit.
- Illustration: It's me (pre-conversion) wanting to be like John Lennon of the Beatles.

#2. He Was Pre-occupied With Death

(V. 3) "He dwelled among the tombs." (Are you kidding me?)

- Vault-like tombs were cut out of the limestone hills.
- Jewish cemeteries were always located out of the city or towns.
- This guy loved darkness and solitude where he could hide from people.
- Jesus said (in John 3:19) "Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil."

#3. He Was Habitually Disappointed

(V. 4) "No one could tame him." (Which means)

- People tried to cure him – to no avail.
- All human efforts at rehab ended in disappointment
- Try (and fail) try (and fail) try (and fail) try (and fail)
- Proverbs says "Hopes deferred make the heart sick."

#4. He Was Restless Day and Night

(V. 5) "He was always crying night and day."

- You talk about depression? Hopeless? Sorrow? Sadness?
- He was restless because he was made for a higher purpose.
- He was disconnected from his purpose and his mission.

#5. He Was Hurting Himself

(V. 5b) "He was cutting himself with stones."

- He used stones - we use food, drugs, sex, and alcohol, whatever!
- Self-inflicted pain and cutting – all a cover up and a cry for help.
- All a deception of the evil one to steal, kill and destroy!

Question: What are you doing that's hurting you (and those who love you)?

Question: What is it that God is dealing with you about?

II. Wherever I Am – God Is Personally Speaking! (V. 6-10)

Question: How do we know that Jesus is speaking to us by the Holy Spirit right now?

Answer: Because in v. 9, Jesus said: "What is your name?"

Question: Didn't Jesus know the man's name? Of course He did!

Question: Then why did Jesus ask his name? Only one reason:

- ◆ In the Bible, "**name**" stands for "**nature**"!
- ◆ So the man was asked to confess the nature of his sin that was enslaving him.

So In Other Words

- ◆ God wants us (and teaches us) to confess (and bring to the surface) whatever it is that needs changing!

In Other Words

- ◆ I cannot change what I do not confront and what I do not confront will continue to control and what continues to control will be a chain that derails our potential!

(V. 9) “What Is Your Name?” (In Other Words)

- ◆ He **knows** where we all live!
- ◆ He **knows** what we battle!
- ◆ He **knows** what’s going on inside of us all!
- ◆ He **knows** what He’s after to change!

(V. 9) “**My Name Is Legion**” (Means)

#1. Jesus Knows (and)

#2 **Jesus Waits!**

- ◆ He **waits** for us to acknowledge “my name is”.
- ◆ He **waits** for us to give Him permission to go deeper.
- ◆ He **waits** for us to give up pretending!
- ◆ He **waits** for us to humble ourselves in deep repentance.

(I Love What This Man In Chains Does)

1. He leaves the cemetery to go see Jesus – that’s **willingness!**
2. He runs to meet Jesus – that means he’s **desperate!**
3. He bows down before Jesus – that’s **humility!**

(In Other Words)

- A willingness to leave cemetery life behind!
- Desperate enough to be intentional and immediate!
- Humble enough to place himself in front of Jesus!

III. **Wherever I Am – God’s Power Breaks Every Chain!** (v. 11-13)

In v. 11 - A herd of swine were feeding.

In v. 12 - The devils pleaded, “Send us away.”

In v. 13 – Jesus speaks, “Come out and leave.”

Question: What’s the big deal about Jesus having power and authority over every chain?

Answer: Because:

(v. 9) “My name is Legion.” (And)

(v. 15) “Where is legion?”

Question: What’s the big deal about a legion?

Answer: Legion refers to the Roman military legion!

- ◆ A legion was a group of 6,000 soldiers.
- ◆ The evil in the man said to Jesus, “My name is Legion (or many, vast, huge, large, plenty)

Question: What is the purpose of this?

Answer: The purpose is clear and unmistakable:

- ◆ That no matter how many battles of evil you’re facing,
- ◆ No matter how difficult the temptations and desires,
- ◆ No matter how large or destructive has been past behavior...

- ◆ The Grace of God is able to snap and break every chain that is holding you back!
- ◆ Isaiah 52:2 “Shake off your dust, rise up Jerusalem; free yourself from the chains on your neck Daughter Zion, now a captive.”
- ◆ Isaiah 58:6 “Is not this the fast I have chosen; to loose the chains and untie the cords and set the oppressed free.”
- ◆ Jeremiah 40:4 “Today I am freeing you from the chains and I will look after you.”
- ◆ Acts 16:26 “The prison doors flew open and everyone’s chains came loose.”

“But my name is Legion (or “I have lots of issues”)

- ◆ That’s the good news of the gospel in this great text!
- ◆ We focus on our legion of weaknesses and sin!
- ◆ Yet Jesus speaks and sets the man free by the power of His Word!

Question: What’s the lesson and take-a-way?

Answer: That it’s not about **how strong you are**, it’s about **how strong God is** in addressing every stronghold you battle!!!

IV. **Wherever I Am, God Has The Plan For My Future! (V. 14-17)**

Question: Why do I know you have a good future (regardless of your issues – past or present?)

Answer: Because of v. 18, 19, 20:

(v. 18) The man (formally possessed) wants to hang out with you.

(v. 19) Jesus said, “No, go home to your friends and tell them how great God has been to you.”

(v. 20) So the man departed and went to Decapolis to tell everyone the great things Jesus had done for him.

(Psalm 138:8)

“The Lord will work out his plans for my life.”

Question: What’s so awesome about this plan for a chronically chained depressed issue-laden convert?

Answer: He was sent to Decapolis

- ◆ Decapolis means “The Ten Cities”
- ◆ These ten cities near Jordan were Greek cities:

- | | | | | |
|----------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| 1. Scythopolis | 2. Pella | 3. Dion | 4. Gerasa | 5. Philadelphia |
| 6. Gadara | 7. Raphana | 8. Kanatha | 9. Hippos | 10. Damascus |

- ◆ They were stubbornly Greek, had their Greek gods and temples and were liable to Roman taxation and Roman military service.

Question: So what’s the big deal about Jesus sending the least likely to Decapolis?

1. This man was to tell his story of what God had done.
2. This man was to be the first seed of what in time was to become a mighty harvest.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ The first contact with Greek civilization was made in Decapolis.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Everything has to start somewhere with someone!

(In Other Words)

- ◆ The glory of all the Christianity which one day flowered in the Greek mind – began with a man who had been possessed by demons!

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Jesus must always begin with someone – someone like you.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Its not about your background or history – it's all about your future God is planning for!!

Conclusion (v. 18-20)

Question: What's so intriguing about his story?

Answer: (v. 17)

- When all the people in the city came out to the country – they saw the wild, naked, crazy madman clothed in his right mind (transformed).
- You'd think they would want Jesus to stick around and transform more people.
- But Jesus disturbed their routine - **so they asked him to get out of town! (Leave us alone")**

(Why?)

Because the carnal mind says...

- "Please don't disturb me."
- "Don't disturb my comfort and ease."
- "Don't disturb my plans and agenda."
- "Don't disturb my stuff and space."
- "Don't disturb my image and reputation."
- "Don't disturb me with conviction, godly sorrow and deep repentance."

In Other Words

- We either invite Jesus to possess us fully, or we resist the Holy Spirit and say "Go away and leave me alone."
 - It's "pass me not" or "pass me by"
 - It's "your way" or "my way"
 - It's "live for self or "deny myself"
 - It's "run from or "run to"
 - It's "Jesus go deeper" or "Jesus take a hike"

It's Either-Or

- "Holy Spirit, get out of here and leave me alone." (Or)
- "Holy Spirit, come over here and do your work in me"

Amen!
Bill Kirk