

# God's Servant Prevails Over Demons

## *Mark 5:1-20*

In quiet, calm waters, the disciples row their little boat across the Sea of Galilee to the Gentile region of Gerasene. They talk in hushed voices about the miracle they just now experienced. Their clothes are still soaked from the storm. The adrenalin of terror is now replaced by the euphoria of their salvation.

As they now glide the ship across glassy water, they recall the panic of the storm just an hour earlier. The waves crashing against the sides of their small boat, tossing it here and there as they held on to the sides for dear life. They remind each other of their ship being swamped by the waves and their feeble efforts to bail water to keep themselves afloat. They nervously laugh as they share the emotions of fear that swept over them. One exclaims, *"I thought for sure that this was our last day on earth!"*

Peter smiles and says, *"Me too."* He adds, *"I will never forget hearing Jesus speak to the storm! 'Peace! Be still!' And the winds and waves obeyed Him! Guys, guys, did that really happen? It feels like a dream to me right now."*

John speaks up, *"Oh it really happened Peter! It really happened!"* I remember looking over to Jesus in my terror and seeing him asleep! Asleep! Who can do that in a storm? I was both afraid and frustrated at the same time. I shook Jesus on his shoulder and said, *"Master, Master, save us!"* I even asked Him, *"Don't you care if we all die here?"*

With that, a tear welled up in John's eye. *"When Jesus said to us, 'Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?' I knew . . . I knew that he was speaking to me."*

James slaps his brother on the shoulder and laughs, *"John, you think everything is about you. ☺ Look! Jesus was speaking to all of us. Not one of us had faith in that moment."*

At that moment, the little boat bumps up against the shore and the 12 begin to jump out onto dry land. No sooner had they pulled the boat onto the shore than two scruffy men dash out of a graveyard straight toward them! They are scary to look at! Uncombed. Unshaven. Sweaty. Smelly. Dirty. Scabbed over with blood oozing from their wounds. These two are shouting and cursing with threats in their cries.

One in particular is full of frenzy and fury. The twelve feel a shiver again run up their spines as they know full well what they are seeing. This man was possessed by demons!

Later they learned that this guy lived in the graveyard and assaulted and threatened everyone who passed by this part of the beach. The towns people tried to restrain him . . . but even when they used chains to bind him . . . he broke them apart like they were spider webs.

Night and day the townspeople heard his howls. He often would take rocks and bash them against his own skull. He was a crazed man filled with crazed anger. Everyone the town was afraid of him and no one dared try to arrest him.

As he runs screaming toward the twelve, he suddenly jerks his head and faced Jesus. Jesus is sitting calmly on the edge of the boat and He does not stir as the man races in His direction. Upon coming to Jesus, the man falls down at Jesus' feet and worships Him.

Jesus then speaks to the demons in the man, *"I command you, come out of him!"*

In despairing submission the man shouts, *"Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God! In the name of God, I beg you, do not torture me!"*

The disciples now look at Jesus with their mouths again agape. First the winds and the waves, and now the demons in this man submit to Jesus' authority.

Jesus speaking to the demon asks, "What is your name?"

The demon answers, "My name is Legion; for we are many." The man's body begins to tremble in fear now.

The demon whimpers, *"Please, do not send us to the Abyss! Send us anywhere but there! Look! Send us into that huge herd of pigs on the hillside and let us enter in to them!"*

Jesus sternly says, "Go!"

And the demons departed from the man and went right into the pigs. The pigs began squealing and running. About 2000 of them raced wildly down the hill and right into the Sea of Galilee where they all drowned. The air once exploding with the grunts, squeals and oinks of 2000 was now deathly silent. The pigs committed "sooie side". ☺

Everyone at the scene were so astonished that for several minutes, the only sound was the gentle breeze against grass and waves lapping lightly on the shore.

After a quiet pause, the guys who were in charge of the pigs knew that the owner of the pigs was not going to believe this. They ran into the city and told everyone what had happened to the pigs that day. The commotion in the streets was such that everyone in the town was soon talking about this incredible report. And the people stopped what they were doing . . . farmers put away their animals,

merchants closed their shops, moms gathered up their children, carpenters put away their hammers . . . and they all raced toward the place where they knew the demoniacs lived. They had all avoided this place for such a long time out of fear of being assaulted, but now they could not get their legs to move fast enough!

When the townspeople arrived, they first saw Jesus and then they saw two men who were sitting quietly at Jesus' feet listening to Him and talking with Him. At first they did not know who these guys were, but as they approached the men they realized that they were the men possessed by demons! They looked so different from before! Gone were the crazed eyes. Gone were the shrieks of anger. Gone were the waving arms and jumping movements. Gone were the naked bodies. They were quiet, calm, clothed, completely sane. Eye witnesses to the healing told everyone all the specific details that happened to these men . . . all that Jesus did to free these guys of the evil control of the devil over them.

Well, the townspeople became very very afraid now. They did not know what to do. They looked down at the sea and saw the 2000 pigs now floating on top of the water or being washed up on the beach. They knew the owner and knew the disaster that fell upon him that day. They huddled together and finally came up with a plan.

The leader of the town approached Jesus. *"We see what you did here. We know that these two guys will not plague us anymore. For that we thank You. But we are all really afraid right now. We do not want any more economic damage to our area. We do not know you and the power you possess. We know the power of the demons that were inside these guys and that made us afraid. So, now that someone greater than them is here, we are even more afraid. We beg you . . . go back to where you came from. We do not want you here. We want to go back to our simple lives . . . the way they were before you came!"*

So Jesus and the 12, packed up their things and began to get back into the boat to row back to Galilee. As they were about to leave, the man who had the Legion of demons ran up to Jesus. He bowed low and grabbed Jesus by the hem of his shirt, "Please! Let me go with you! You saved me and I want to give myself to You! Please let me be one of your disciples now too!"

Jesus gently shook his head and said, *"No. You are needed here. Go home to your family and your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you. Let them know of my power and my mercy in your life. Tell them your story so that they too may have life in Me."*

And that is what this man did! When he approached his parent's house, his little brother was out working in the field. His brother looked upon him while he

was a great distance away. And he recognized him! He knew that his mom cried herself to sleep every night over her son who had been lost to demons. The little brother immediately ran to his mom and dad exclaiming, *“We thought we lost him forever. But look mom! Look dad! Your son who was lost to the demons is coming home! He is clothed and in his right mind!”* Tears of wonder streamed down their faces as they raced out to embrace their boy who had been taken from them but is now given back to them.

**Main Idea: Jesus is the answer to Satan’s assault upon your soul. He alone can free you from the bondage and chaos that Satan creates in your life.**

### **Satan’s Design for Man**

**Do you think that the devil has a design for your life?** From the beginning of Creation, we see the activity of Satan against us . . . the creatures that God created in His own image to know Him and to worship Him. Satan initiates the conversation with Adam and Eve. He twists God’s truth to deceive Adam and Eve with a false Gospel and to tempt them to disobey the Lord. His design is to bring death to them . . . his strategy is to make sin look attractive and make obedience look restrictive. Why does the devil make such efforts?

**Truth: His design is to destroy those whom God loves.**

**As surely as there is a real God who created us, there is a real devil who designs to crush us.**

God loves us and created us with the purpose of giving us life. Satan hates us and he does everything in his power to take life from us.

What is this man’s problem?

1. He is enslaved by Satan and compelled to sin. He is not free to live a righteous life. He is a sin addict.
2. He has no one to help him. Isolated.
3. He is a danger to others. His life does not spiritually bring life to anyone.
4. He resists protective restraints.
5. He has no rest from the darkness. He cannot sleep in peace.
6. He is inwardly tormented all the time.
7. His mind and heart are damaged beyond proper functioning.

8. He chooses to act to his own harm.
9. He is an instrument of darkness. Satan is using him for evil purposes.
10. He has no hope for a better future.

The demoniac in this story illustrates for us the design that Satan has for each one of us. **While this man may have suffered from Satan's assaults to a greater DEGREE than many do. Every person born in this world experiences the same KIND of assault from the evil one.** (Go through this list again.)

*"You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." (John 8:44 [ESV](#))*

*"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10 [ESV](#)).*

The devil is very, very effective in pursuing his deadly will for our lives. What lies do you recognize Satan using in your life to veer your life away from the God who created you?

#### **Here are a few common lies that the devil uses to murder our souls:**

Lie #1: Do not think about me at all. I am not real.

Lie #2: Do not think that I am present in your life. I only get involved in the lives of very wicked people.

Lie #3: Do not think that I am dangerous. I am offering you a path to happiness and meaning.

Lie #4: Do not think that I am lying to you. God is the one who lies to you, not me!

The devil knows us. He knows our weaknesses. He knows our longings. He knows our pleasures. He knows our fears. He knows our discouragements. He knows our anger. And he uses all these to design a strategy against us to keep us from God's life and to destroy our soul.

**Truth: The devil's strategy is to give us what we want so that he can take from us what we need.**

We all begin our lives under the devil's enslavement. We are born as citizens of the kingdom of darkness.

*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—” (Ephesians 2:1-2 [ESV](#))*

We all need rescuing! We are not told this guy’s back story.

**Truth: Satan normally looks for little footholds to enter in to our lives. He uses little sins to make big inroads to gain more and more control over us.**

What are some specific inroads that make way for demons to have greater control over us?

1. Anger. He loves to use resentments that we have toward people who hurt us.
2. Lust. He loves to offer us sensual pleasures to entice us.
3. Greed. He loves to show us the value of the treasures of this world.
4. Discouragement. He loves to bring despair and hopelessness.
5. Self-love. He loves to feed our sense of our own importance and independence.
6. Pride. He loves to build our confidence in our own understanding about life.

**Each of these sins weaken us and make us vulnerable to being controlled more and more by demonic forces.**

*“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” (Proverbs 4:23 [ESV](#))*

### **Jesus’ Dominion over Satan**

**The demons in this man IMMEDIATELY submit to Jesus.**

*And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. And crying out with a loud voice, he said, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.”” (Mark 5:6-7 [ESV](#))*

This response of these demons is consistent with the response of demons EVERY SINGLE TIME that demons encounter Christ. No fight. No bluster. No challenge. No threats. No defense. Only submission.

**If we ask why this story is recorded in God's Word (Three gospels record it.), we have to go back to Genesis 3 to understand the answer.**

*"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15 [ESV](#))*

*"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8 [ESV](#))*

Jesus is the Messiah King promised in the OT. He is the One who comes to crush the adversary who opposes God and works to destroy mankind. How do we know that Jesus is this Messiah who was prophesied for thousands of years? Look at what He does when He encounters demons!! Does anyone else do this? No! Only Jesus possesses the power and might to crush Satan under His feet.

As the Messiah King, Jesus exercises absolute dominion over the devil and his demons. Dark forces are not given authority to act independently of God.

As Martin Luther famously remarked, "Even the devil is God's devil." **He acts in rebellion against the Lord to do evil, but his ability to act depends upon God's allowance.** While the devil has an evil purpose for all that he does, God also has a purpose for what the LORD allows for Satan to do. And God's purposes stand.

Why does this man rush to Jesus and kneel before Him? This is not an act of worship. It is an act of terrified submission. He is panicked by Jesus' presence.

Notice also the sound theology that demons have. Demons know the truth about Jesus. *"What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." (Mark 5:6-7 [ESV](#))*

Demons distort the truth so that man becomes deceived about Jesus' true identity, but demons KNOW the truth about who He really is. He is God of very God. He possesses all authority and power. He will bring judgment upon the unrighteous in the future. They know all this.

Question: Why does Jesus not send them to the abyss? Why does He allow the demons to stay in this world and to go into the pigs?

Answer: Because Jesus still has a purpose for the demons who are in the world. There will be a future time when He binds them and then ultimately casts them in to the lake of fire where they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

*And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations . . . their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up . . . and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur . . . , and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” (Revelation 20:7-10 [ESV](#))*

**Doctrine: The time for the final conquest over Satan and his minions has not yet come. A future triumph of Jesus will banish all demons forever in the lake of fire.**

**The point in this story is that Jesus possesses the power to end Satan’s rule in the world right now.** And for this man, He does it!! And He does it with a word. Though the man is filled with a “Legion” of demons. A legion is a Roman battalion that may number as many as 6000 men. **God wants us to know that this man has THOUSANDS of demons controlling him. And yet even in that number, they are POWERLESS, IMPOTENT in the presence of Jesus the Servant King.**

*And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him, saying, “Send us to the pigs; let us enter them.” So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.” (Mark 5:10-13 [ESV](#))*

All of God’s people are assaulted by the demonic realm. Not one of us is immune from his evil design and attacks. Some experience his attacks more consciously than others. But every person inside of Jesus is safe in the face of thousands of demons who desire to destroy us. One little word from Jesus brings demons to their knees quaking in fear. Jesus is the ultimate strong man who frees every person who comes to Him in faith. Do not let Satan deceive you into thinking that He is bold in the face of Jesus. He is NOT! He trembles in Jesus’ presence.

Friends, do not take your knowledge of the devil from your own experiences or from others. Receive your knowledge about him from God’s Word. Know that Jesus is your refuge from his power and presence. Jesus is the Strong man who can protect us. But He is 100% effective against the assaults of demons. No one but Jesus has this power. No one. This is why we must place our lives in His care!!



*"The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe." (Proverbs 18:10 [ESV](#))*

Song from childhood: "Don't Be Afraid".

### **The Rebel's Decision about Jesus**

*"Mark 5:14 The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. Mark 5:15 And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. Mark 5:16 And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. Mark 5:17 And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region." (Mark 5:14-17 [ESV](#))*

The people of this region just experienced a miracle. This man had been a menace to them for years. They could not walk on this part of the beach without fear of being assaulted. They told their children to stay away from that place. So NOW that the man who was such a terrible problem has been delivered of the demons, we would expect that the people would rejoice. But no! They tell Jesus to get away from them!

Why do you suppose that they did not want anything to do with Jesus?

Answer: They too encountered the true Jesus. They encountered His absolute holiness. He does not deal gently with evil. They encountered His absolute majesty. He calls us to submit our lives to Him. They encountered His power. He has the strength to rule over them.

Here is the issue: the townspeople were not thrilled with the man with the Legion of demons living amongst them, but he let them live the way that they wanted to live. The demoniac did not care if they worshipped false gods, if they lived sexually immoral lives, if they followed their own desires, if they loved this world, if they were greedy and independent. But they knew Jesus would care. And they did not want Him to rule over them.

They tolerated the demoniac for all the darkness he brought into their daily lives. But they could not tolerate Jesus for all the light He offered to them.

*Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their*

*works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.” (John 3:18-20 [ESV](#))*

When Jesus is seen for who He is in all his holiness, righteousness, judgment, power and authority . . . many look at Him and say, *“I could never worship a Jesus like that!”* They turn away from that Jesus and many turn to other gods or no god. **But some in turning away from the Jesus of the NT manufacture another Jesus that is more fitting to their own desires.**

Problem with that solution: There is only ONE JESUS. And He is the Jesus who hates evil . . . who is sovereign and righteous . . . who stands in judgment upon all wickedness . . . who with a word casts thousands of demons into a herd of pigs who then die by drowning.

The Gentiles in the region of Garasene encounter the real Jesus that day. And they say, “No Thanks.”

Such is the heart of a rebel. What a loss for the people. They saw the kindness and grace of Jesus at work. This man was restored to life . . . to sanity . . . to peace and joy. Yet they loved their sin so much that they turned away from the love of God found only in Jesus.

### **The Saint’s Duty to Jesus**

The man who was delivered from the Legion of demons loves Jesus! He is saved. He is rescued. He owes his life to Jesus. He wants more of Jesus. Such is the testimony of all who have been delivered from darkness and transferred into the kingdom of God!

*He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins . . . And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,” (Colossians 1:13-14, 21-22 [ESV](#))*

### **Truth: Those who are redeemed by Jesus long for more of Jesus.**

But Jesus denies this man’s sweet request!

*“Mark 5:19 And he did not permit him but said to him, “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” Mark 5:20 And he*

went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.” (Mark 5:19-20 [ESV](#))

**Truth: Those who are redeemed by Jesus are commissioned to tell others about Jesus.**

**This man becomes the first missionary commissioned by Jesus to serve the Gentiles.** And he went about the Decapolis telling people his encounter with Jesus. He said, “Look at my life. I was lost and without hope. Jesus delivered me from such deep darkness! If Jesus can deliver me, He can deliver anyone! Go to Him now!! Believe on Him.”

**If you ask this guy what his qualifications were to be a missionary,** “Well, I ran around as a crazed naked mad man scaring people for years and years. Then Jesus met me and delivered me from thousands of demons. He took my broken life and made me whole. That is my qualification to be a missionary.”

Friends, if this guy is qualified to be sent by Jesus on a mission to tell others the Good News about Jesus, what hinders you?

Evangelism strategy in our church: Year 1: Pray the miracle. Year 2: Know their story. As you do, God will open doors to tell your story too! Simply ask God for open doors to let others know what Jesus has done in your life!

**Main Idea: Jesus is the answer to Satan’s assault upon your soul. He alone can free you from the bondage and chaos that Satan creates in your life.**

*“The plight of the strong man is a vivid picture of our own bondage to sin before salvation in Christ. Sin’s home is among the tombs—leading only to death. Left to ourselves, we lack the strength to overcome it; no chains of self-discipline or willpower can truly bind it. But this moment in Gerasa is not just about one man’s deliverance two thousand years ago. It is a sign of the inbreaking kingdom of God, a display of Jesus’ authority over the spiritual forces that enslave both unbelievers and, at times, oppress believers. Just as He came to set this man free, Jesus alone has the power to break every chain, bringing life where there was once only death.”*