



Lord Over the Demonic Legions

Key idea:

Satan's demonic forces want to confuse, enslave, and destroy, but Jesus has the authority to restore people who can then go forth to tell others of all He has done.

Key text:

Mark 5:1-20

They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. ² When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. ⁴ For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵ Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones. ⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. ⁷ He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" ⁸ For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!" ⁹ Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." ¹⁰ And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. ¹¹ A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. ¹² The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." ¹³ He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. ¹⁴ Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. ¹⁵ When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ¹⁶ Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man — and told about the pigs as well. ¹⁷ Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region. ¹⁸ As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹ Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." ²⁰ So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

Key points:

1. Mark 5:1-20 has many things in common with the story of Jesus calming the storm in Mark 4:35-41:
 - a. Both stories are full of vivid details, probably coming from Peter's personal memory of witnessing the events.
 - b. In Mark 4 the chaotic storm threatens Jesus and the disciples, and in Mark 5 a man under the power of demons creates chaos that threatens the people around him.
 - c. In Mark 4 Jesus rebukes and silences the storm (language for controlling demons) so that it becomes calm and quiet and in Mark 5 He expels the demons from the man so that he becomes calm and quiet.
 - d. The people around Jesus no longer fear the chaos but rather fear Him!
2. The description of the demoniac is vivid and pitiful: he lives among the tombs, has been treated like an animal, rages with demonically inspired power, is an outcast from society, moans day and night, and is cutting his own body.
3. The depth of the demons' control over the man is seen in their control over his body and language, his seemingly split personality, and their indication that many demons live inside the man.
4. Jesus expels the demons into a massive herd of pigs, which immediately rush into the water and drown themselves, showing the reality of the deliverance for the man and also the destructive intent and desires of the demons.
5. The townspeople react to the deliverance of the demoniac with fear of Jesus, concern for the loss of the pigs, and a desire for Jesus to leave.
6. The man delivered by Jesus responds with worship, discipleship, and evangelism.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. How do I think I would have responded to the approach of the man described in verses 1-5? Have I ever encountered someone that I thought was under the influence of demons? How did I respond?
3. What evidence of the man's struggle to speak, act, and express his own identity do I see in the story? What clues does Mark give me to show the internal disorientation and confusion experienced by the man?

4. Why do I think we are told that the demon says his name is Legion for there are many of them? How does this help me understand what is happening to the man? What does it reveal about Jesus' authority over the demons?
5. Why do I think Jesus allows the demons to go into the herd of pigs? Why does He grant their request?
6. What do I learn about demons and their desires from this story? How should this impact me when I sense them tempting me?
7. How surprised am I by the response of the townspeople? How did I expect them to respond?
8. Why do the townspeople want Jesus to leave? Have I ever experienced a similar feeling when confronted with Jesus' work in my own life or in the life of those around me?
9. How is the man delivered from the demons an example of salvation? What is unique in his story? What is similar to everyone who becomes a Christian?
10. How is the response of the man an example for those who have been saved by the work of Christ? As one who has been delivered from the power of Satan by Jesus, what should I try to do?
11. How can Jesus expect the man, who was just delivered from the demons, to effectively tell others about Him? What does this tell me about what is required for me to be an effective witness for Jesus?
12. Who will I call or see to invite to gather with the church this week?