

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
9-4-24

Mark 5

Jesus Restores a Demon-Possessed Man – Verses 1-8

¹ They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. ² When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, 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? In God’s name don’t torture me!” ⁸ For Jesus had said to him, “Come out of this man, you impure spirit!”

5:1-2 Although we cannot be sure why demon possession occurs, we know that impure spirits can use the human body to distort and destroy people’s relationship with God and likeness to him. Even today, demons are dangerous, powerful, and destructive. While it is important to recognize their evil activity, we should avoid any curiosity about or involvement with demonic forces or the occult (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). If we resist the devil and his influences, he will flee from us (James 4:7).

5:7 The demon screamed at Jesus, “What do you want with me?” It was a shriek of fear, defense, and rebellion against God. No one today would like to admit to being demon-possessed, but most of our society, like the demon, is screaming at God, the church, and Christian values, “Why are you interfering with me? Get out of my life!” When people reject Jesus Christ and his authority, they put themselves on the side of the demons and are heading in the same direction. Every person must ask: Will I choose autonomy and self-will leading to destruction, or will I choose Christ’s loving leadership over my life, giving me forgiveness, healing from sin, cleansing, and true freedom? The answer has eternal implications.

Jesus Demonstrates His Authority Over Evil Spirits – Verses 9-13

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 impure 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.

5:9-10 The impure spirit said its name was Legion. A legion was the largest unit of the Roman army, consisting of 3,000 to 6,000 soldiers. This man was possessed by many demons. Mark often highlights the supernatural struggle between Jesus and Satan. The demons’ goal was to control the humans they inhabited; Jesus’ goal was to give people freedom from sin and Satan’s control. The demons knew they had no power over Jesus, so they simply begged not to be sent out of the area (into the Abyss” in Luke 8: 31). Jesus granted their request to enter into the herd of pigs (5:13), but ended their destructive work in people. Perhaps Jesus let the demons destroy the pigs to demonstrate his own superiority over a very powerful yet destructive force. He could have sent them

to hell, but he did not, because the time for judgment had not yet come. In the end, the devil and all his demons will be sent into eternal fire (Matthew 25: 41).

5:11 According to Old Testament law (Leviticus 11:7), pigs were unclean animals. This meant that they could not be eaten or even touched by a Jew. This incident took place southeast of the Sea of Galilee in the region of the Gerasenes, a Gentile region, which explains how a herd of pigs could be involved.

5:13 The destructive nature of demonic spirits was shown by their effect on the swine. They are like their leader, Satan whose desire is to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. This shows another reason why Jesus allowed the demons to enter the pigs — because He wanted everyone to know what the real intention of these demons was. They wanted to destroy the man just as they destroyed the pigs. Because men are made in the image of God, they could not have their way as easily with the man, but their intention was just the same: to completely destroy him.

Reaction Of The Bystanders To The Deliverance Of The Demon-Possessed Man – Verses 14-17

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.

5:17 After such a wonderful miracle of saving a man's life, why did the people want Jesus to leave? They were undoubtedly afraid of his supernatural power. They may have also feared that Jesus would continue destroying their pigs— their livelihood. They would rather give up Jesus than than lose their source of income and security.

The Reaction Of The Man Who Had Been Delivered From Demons – Verses 18-20

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 own people 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.

5:19 Jesus told this man to tell his friends about the miraculous healing. Most of the time, Jesus urged those he healed to keep quiet. Why the difference? (1) The demon-possessed man had been alone and unable to speak. Telling others what Jesus did for him would prove that he was healed. (2) This was mainly a Gentile and pagan area, so Jesus was not expecting great crowds to follow him or religious leaders to hinder him. (3) By sending the man away with this good news, Jesus was expanding his ministry to people who were not Jews.

5:19-20 This man had been demon-possessed but became a living example of Jesus' power. He wanted to go with Jesus, but Jesus told him to go home and share his story with his friends. If you have experienced Jesus' power in your life, are you, like this man, enthusiastically sharing the good news with those around you? Just as we would tell others about a doctor who cured a physical disease, we should tell about Christ who cures our sin.

5:20 The Decapolis, or the Ten Cities, was located southeast of the Sea of Galilee. Ten cities, each with its own independent government, formed an alliance for protection and for increased trade opportunities. These cities had been settled several centuries earlier by Greek traders and immigrants. Although Jews also lived in the area, they were not in the majority. Many people from the Decapolis followed Jesus (Matthew 4: 25).

Jesus Raises a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman – Verses 21-24

21 When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. **22** Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. **23** He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” **24** So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him.

5:22 Jesus went back across the Sea of Galilee, probably landing at Capernaum. Jairus was the elected leader of the local synagogue, responsible for supervising worship, running the weekly school, and caring for the building. Many synagogue leaders had close ties to the Pharisees. It is likely, therefore, that some synagogue rulers had been pressured not to support Jesus. For Jairus to bow before Jesus was a significant and perhaps daring act of respect and worship.

A Woman Is Healed Of A Hemorrhage – Verses 25-34

25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. **26** She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. **27** When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, **28** because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” **29** Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. **30** At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” **31** “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’” **32** But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. **33** Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. **34** He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

5:25 This woman had a seemingly incurable condition causing her to bleed constantly. This may have been a menstrual or uterine disorder that would have made her ritually unclean (Leviticus 15: 25-27) and excluded her from most social contact. She desperately wanted Jesus to heal her, but she knew that her bleeding would cause Jesus to be unclean under Jewish law if she touched him. Sometimes we feel that our problems will keep us from God. But he is always ready to help, no matter how impossible the problem seems to us. We should never allow our fear to keep us from approaching him.

5:31 It was virtually impossible to get close to Jesus, but one woman fought her way desperately through the crowd in order to touch him. As soon as she did, she was healed. What a difference between the crowds who are curious about Jesus and the few who reach out and touch him! Today, many people are vaguely familiar with Jesus, but nothing in their lives is changed or bettered by this passing acquaintance. It is only faith that releases God’s healing power. Move beyond curiosity. Reach out to Christ in faith. That touch will change your life forever.

Jesus Calls Jairus To An Extreme Faith With An Extreme Promise – Verses 35-36

³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”
³⁶ Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

5:35-36 Jairus’s crisis made him feel confused, afraid, and without hope. Jesus’ words to Jairus in the midst of crisis speak to us as well: “Don’t be afraid; just believe.” In Jesus, there is both hope and promise. The next time you feel hopeless and afraid, look at your problem from Jesus’ point of view. Then don’t be afraid; just have faith.

Jesus Raises Jairus’ Daughter From The Dead – Verses 37-43

³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James.
³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” ⁴⁰ But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). ⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

5:38 Loud weeping and wailing were customary at a person’s death. Lack of them was the ultimate disgrace and disrespect. Some people, usually women, made mourning a profession and were paid by the dead person’s family to weep over the body. On the day of death, the body was carried through the streets, followed by mourners, family members, and friends.

5:39-40 The mourners laughed at Jesus when he said, “The child is not dead but asleep.” The girl was dead, but Jesus used the image of sleep to indicate that her condition was temporary and that she would be restored. Jesus tolerated the crowd’s abuse in order to teach an important lesson about maintaining hope and trust in him. Today, most of the world laughs at Christ’s claims. When you are belittled for expressing faith in Jesus and hope for eternal life, remember that unbelievers don’t see from God’s perspective.

5:41-42 Jesus not only demonstrated great power but also showed tremendous compassion. Jesus’ power over nature, evil spirits, and death was motivated by compassion— for a demon-possessed man who lived among tombs, a diseased woman, and the family of a dead girl. The rabbis of the day considered such people unclean. Polite society avoided them. But Jesus reached out and helped.

5:43 Jesus told the girl’s parents not to spread the news of the miracle. He wanted the facts to speak for themselves, and the time was not yet right for a major confrontation with the religious leaders. Jesus still had much to accomplish, and he didn’t want people following him just to see his miracles.