

“Tell Your Story” - Mark 5: 1-20 (also in Matthew 8 and Luke 8)

TODAY we mark the words of Jesus in Mark 5:19 where he says: ***“Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you.”***

- 1 And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes.
[Gadarenes]
- 2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him, *[Matt. 8:28 says there were 2 such men – he was eyewitness]*
- 3 and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; *[Luke 8:27 says he had not worn any clothing for a long time]*
- 4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him.
- 5 And constantly, night and day, among the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out and gashing himself with stones.
- 6 And seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him;
- 7 and crying out *[shouting]* with a loud voice, he said, “What do I have to do with you, Jesus Son of the Most High God?” *[i.e. “What business do we have with each other?”]* I implore You by God, do not torment me!” *[Mt.: “before the time” i.e. of judgment]*
- 8 For He had been saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”
- 9 And He was asking him, “What is your name?” And he said to Him, “My name is Legion; for we are many.”
- 10 And he began to entreat Him earnestly not to send them out of the country.
[Luke 8:31: “not to depart into the abyss”]
- 11 Now there was a big herd of swine feeding there on the mountain side. *[c. 2000-v.13]*
- 12 And they *[the demons]* entreated Him, saying, “Send us into the swine so that we may enter them.”
- 13 And He *[Jesus]* gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand *of them*; and they were drowned in the sea.
- 14 And those who tended them ran away and reported it in the city and *out* in the country. And *the people* came to see what it was that had happened.
- 15 And they came to Jesus and observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the “legion”; and they became frightened.
- 16 And those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and *all* about the swine.
- 17 And they began to entreat Him to depart from their region.
- 18 And as He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was entreating Him that he might accompany Him.

- 19 And He did not let him, but He said to him, "**Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and *how* He had mercy on you.**"
- 20 And he went off and began to proclaim in Decapolis [*the area on the SE side of the Sea of Galilee*] what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone marveled.

OBSERVATION

From wild sea to wild man – and Jesus subdues both

This story most likely occurs on the following morning, after the storm

The region of Decapolis is on the SE side of the Sea of Galilee – some 15 m. from Capernaum

The disciples are still in awe of who Jesus is – they will become more in awe today

When arriving on the shore one demon-possessed man approaches Jesus (or two according to Matthew who was present). The man was undoubtedly naked (Luke says he had not worn clothing for a long time) and badly cut and bruised from the chains and shackles that he had broken and from gashing himself repeatedly with stones. He had run from the tombs (caves) above the seashore when he saw the boat pull in – running to Jesus. A scary sight to be sure.

This is a man long banished from his city to live in the tomb caves on the seashore. He had “often been bound with chains” because of the “spurts” of demon activity in his that made him crazy and out of control. The account in Matthew (8:28) says no one could pass on the road near the tombs because of this crazed man. The supernatural strength of the demons allowed him to continually break free of the chains and shackles and caused him to gash his body with stones. He was a pitiable mess.

First astonishment – this crazy man bows before Jesus (v. 6) and in a voice not his own, from deep within his being, a demon or demons cry out something like “what business do we have with one another – why are you bothering me (us).” NOTE: the demons know exactly who Jesus is – the Divine Son of God – and they bow before him out of fear, wondering why he has come.

Never doubt that Satan and his demons are in fear of and subjection to Jesus.

Second astonishment – Jesus communicates with the demons, asking their name. (v. 8,9) Jesus already knows the answer, but as always, the effect is for the teaching of the disciples. The demons answer back “Legion” – a name, typically numbering in the thousands. We can assume that there were some 2000 demons in this man since 2000 pigs drown in the sea (v. 13). The disciples undoubtedly were, as are we, floored at imagining thousands of demons in this one man.

Third astonishment - The demons know their ultimate punishment. (v. 7) They beg not to be tormented (Mark) and sent to the abyss (hell) before the time of judgment (Matt. 8:29). And Jesus seemingly grants their request by sending them into a herd of pigs (an ultimate insult for a Jewish audience). That the pigs drown in the sea implies that the demons lost their

temporary home in the pigs and were banished indeed to the abyss. Note that this is the first recorded “swine dive” 😊

Fourth astonishment – The man is miraculously healed by Jesus. (v. 15) He is now (1) sitting down “at the feet of Jesus” records Luke – probably in coherent conversation and praise, (2) clothed – probably given him by the disciples; spiritually symbolic of his new relationship with God, (3) in his right mind – with no ill effects of the years of mental abuse. (4) Luke further reports in 8:36 that the pig-herders told the townspeople that this man had been “made well” (literally: “saved”) – so we might well assume that Jesus had transformed his soul as well as his body. “Made well” spoken of by Dr. Luke might well imply that the man was also (5) physically healed of his many wounds.

Fifth astonishment – The crowd and probably the disciples become frightened (v. 15)– not now at a crazed, possessed man, but at his complete transformation by this man from Galilee. “Who is this man” still rings from the previous miracle of the calming of the sea. Although he has freed them from the tyranny of this wild man in their region they beg him to leave (v. 17).

Sixth astonishment – Jesus sends the man back to “his people” to tell his story. (v. 19) The man wants to be with Jesus – commendable and understandable. Yet Jesus places a higher priority on his witness of God’s mercy. He obeys Jesus and “everyone marveled.” God is glorified.

Seventh (and final) astonishment - This story is about us. We are the demon-possessed man.

BEFORE WE ARE CHANGED BY JESUS -

We are born and live bound by the chains of sin

We are controlled by the evil one and his demons.

We are naked before God – just as Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness
when they broke fellowship from God

We are “out of our senses” – blind and lost

We live in the tombs of death – destined for an eternity of death, apart from Jesus

ONCE WE ENCOUNTER JESUS –

We bow before Him – knowing He holds the keys to eternity and our future

We are helpless apart from His intervention

We have had our chains of sin broken and removed

We are now children of the King – not of the evil one

We are clothed in righteousness – a royal clothing not our own but ours forever

We are in our right mind – now able to discern truth by the Spirit within

We no longer live in death, but in life – eternal life

OUR CALLING -

Though Jesus wants me to “abide with Him” in relationship he calls me to “my people” I am to “tell my story” to all I can – specifically of:

- 1) what great things the Lord has done for me and
- 2) how He had mercy on me, i.e. of His GREATNESS and MERCY

FURTHER APPLICATION OBSERVATIONS

√ This incredible account is not told to teach us about demon possession. This was a unique occurrence to overwhelm the disciples with the power of their master – just as the previous night’s storm had been unique and supernatural in its power. This Jesus could not only take care of a monstrous storm, but he could even handle 2000 demons at once. Wow!

√ This story is meant to show us the unlimited power of Jesus and how great was our redemption. The horror of that man running out of the tombs should remind us of the horror of who we were before Jesus transformed us. We may not have looked physically as he did, but our soul was as wild and untamed as he - until Jesus transformed us.

√ We are reminded that we are never in full control of our own selves. Either we are serving the evil one or we are serving the Lord. Satan’s rule of our life is founded on hate and destruction. God wants to rule us out of love and rebuilding.

Matthew 6:24 No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other.

√ We are to learn that no one is so far gone that he cannot be fully restored by the love and power of Jesus. Never give up on the one who is so steeped in sin and life abuse that he seems an impossible candidate for salvation. This story reminds us that nothing or no one is out of the reach of God.

√ Your story of mercy and redemption has power and will impact lives. You know yourself far too well – the evil self that has been subdued. Imagine that bad self-amplified and running “wild” and you have a horrible picture of what you would be apart from the Savior. Practice articulating what you have been saved from – its telling will cause “marvel.” God calls you to tell your story to “your people.”