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TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

Mark - Lesson 5A

Mark 5:1-20

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- Last week’s teaching consisted of Jesus’ display of authority and power over the chaotic waters of the Sea of Galilee.
 - This was off the brink of what I called an exhausting day full of rejection, conflict, and much teaching.
 - Jesus would tell His disciples and the twelve that the time had come to sail across the way to the region of the Gerasenes.
 - It would be through their travels across the Sea of Galilee that a terrible storm sought to disrupt the peace of the passengers.
 - And while this storm persisted, Christ remained at rest and peacefully asleep.
 - Like any normal passenger, the disciples were in great fear for their lives doing all they could until they came to the end of themselves to turn to Christ.
 - It would be through one simple command that Jesus would speak to the storm, and it would be still to the point of being perfectly calm.
 - Not only were the “insiders” able to witness Jesus’ power and authority once again, but they witnessed His identity even more.
 - And as we ended last week, we asked a question that even the disciples asked themselves:
 - “Who is this man, that even the winds and the seas obey Him?”
 - Well, if that demonstration of the Deity of Christ was not captivating enough for you by way of seeing His Authority and Power, then tonight most definitely will.
 - Tonight, we will witness one of the most graphic scenes regarding demon possession, but above all, Jesus’ authority over the demonic realm.
 - I invite you to open your bibles and turn with me to Mark 5:1-20.

Mark 5:1 They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes.

Mark 5:2 When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him,

Mark 5:3 and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain;

Mark 5:4 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.

Mark 5:5 Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones.

Mark 5:6 Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him;

Mark 5:7 and shouting with a loud voice, he *said, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!”

Mark 5:8 For He had been saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”

Mark 5:9 And He was asking him, “What is your name?” And he *said to Him, “My name is Legion; for we are many.”

Mark 5:10 And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

Mark 5:11 Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain.

Mark 5:12 The demons implored Him, saying, “Send us into the swine so that we may enter them.”

Mark 5:13 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.

Mark 5:14 Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and in the country. And the people came to see what it was that had happened.

Mark 5:15 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.

Mark 5:16 Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and all about the swine.

Mark 5:17 And they began to implore Him to leave their region.

Mark 5:18 As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him.

Mark 5:19 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.”

Mark 5:20 And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

- Let’s Pray.
- Well as we approach tonight’s text, I want to warn us that it will bring about a sobering reality in which we currently face in our world today.
 - It is the reality that demon possession is very much real and exists in the world we live in whether you want to fully accept it or not.
 - And because our text tonight presents us with this very real reality, we are forced to stare its truth in the face, especially amongst recent events.
 - The reality is, you cannot look at our world today and hear about the growing and grotesque actions of people and not surmise a dark influence behind these actions.
 - What we are going to witness tonight is an overwhelming account of how demonic possession occurs and its impact upon human beings.
 - Yet at the very same time we will see the conquering authority and power of Christ over the demonic realm and Satan’s agenda towards image bearers.
 - We can rest in the fact that the growing evil activity of demons/unclean spirits in this world is only temporary, for they have a definitive end.
 - Mark will give us a picture of that end tonight and surprisingly enough the demons themselves are aware that their time is limited.
 - With that being said, let’s look at our first five verses for tonight.

Mark 5:1 They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes.

Mark 5:2 When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him,

Mark 5:3 and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain;

Mark 5:4 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.

Mark 5:5 Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones.

- Mark’s account thrusts us into another scene in a different part of the Galilean region.
 - As we briefly mentioned in our teaching last time, the region they have arrived in is known as “the region of the Gerasenes”.
 - This region of the Galilee was known as the country of the Gadarenes according to Matthew’s gospel.
 - This area was a relatively small village located midway on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.
 - The region of the Gerasenes encompassed many other cities, one of which was a city named Gerasa which stood 37 miles southeast of the lake.
 - I mention this because with the immediacy of Mark’s gospel, it could paint the picture that everything within these verses is taking place right off the shore.
 - If you were to imagine verses 1-5, they serve as the backdrop, if you will, for setting up the scene that will take place upon the start of verse 6.
 - It’s almost as if Mark has summarized some general information for us from verses 3-5 and paints a summary of sorts for who this demon possessed man is.
 - The text mentions that immediately as Jesus is getting off the boat that He is met by “a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit”.
 - Although Mark and Luke mention that one man is present upon arrival, Matthew’s gospel mentions that two men were present.
 - We can surmise that Mark and Luke’s account have their focus on one of the two men, more specifically their focus is on the one in the worst condition.
 - Notice the living conditions of this demon-possessed man in verse 3. The text mentions that he lives “among the tombs”.
 - Burial tombs during this time were the equivalent to what we know today as a graveyard.
 - The only difference with the tombs within the region of the Gerasenes, more specifically near the Sea of Galilee, was that they were carved from the stone in the cliffs of the hills.
 - As one commentator states “These were probably cave-like rooms cut into the rocks of nearby hills which served as tombs.”

- Mark documents that this demoniac literally lived among the dead (unclean).
- These living conditions, I believe, speak to the reality of the demoniac’s demonic activity. It was unclean and deadly activity.
 - No life comes from Satan and his schemes!
- Mark’s description continues to unfold because he mentions that this demon possessed man was not a “normal case”.
 - The text alludes to the reality that this man had strength beyond measure (super-human ability).
 - This man was both unhinged and uncontrollable.
- Apparently, he is so uncontrollable that not even chains could restrain him.
 - It could be assumed that over time, people from the city, at one point, attempted to bind him with chains.
 - They wanted to keep him as far away from the city and civilians as possible, however, due to his super-human strength, binding him in their own strength was only temporary.
- Verse 4 goes on to confirm for us this riveting reality by mentioning that “no one was strong enough to control the man.”
 - This begs the thought that perhaps this was not the first attempt to gain control over this demoniac from the citizens of the region.
 - It could also be assumed that the man’s possession had gotten progressively worse over time, because at one point it seems as if they could bind him.
- Whatever the case, it is clear from verse 5 that this man who was demon possessed was being completely tormented.
 - Mark describes for us in the text that by night and day this man was constantly screaming among the tombs, cutting himself with stones.
 - The Greek language here suggest that this voice inflection (screaming) was an ongoing event that did not cease.
- Imagine those nearby who heard the screaming and screeching both day and night – constant torture and yelling in pain and misery.
 - These conditions in which this man was in was horrific. We have to surmise that this man would have potentially been known by some in the city.
 - But now he has been banished to the outermost parts of the region to essentially be left for dead, amongst the dead.
- The man was so tortured that the demon caused him to consistently cut himself.
 - It’s clear at this point that this demoniac’s condition was like none we have witnessed within the synoptic gospels.
- This brings us to a point that must be acknowledged and that is another characteristic of demon possession: the goal is to deliver torment and destruction.
 - Demonic possession results in erratic and unhuman-like behavior.
 - Let's keep moving to verses 6-10.

Mark 5:6 Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him;
Mark 5:7 and shouting with a loud voice, he *said, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!”

Mark 5:8 For He had been saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”

Mark 5:9 And He was asking him, “What is your name?” And he *said to Him, “My name is Legion; for we are many.”

Mark 5:10 And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

- The scene now picks up in real time and what Mark lets us know is that upon the demoniac seeing Jesus from a distance, he runs and recognizes Jesus’ deity.
 - What is quite interesting is that the text doesn’t mention the distance in which is between Jesus and the demonic, yet the demoniac recognizes Jesus from afar.
 - How is that so? Well this shows us that demons have a general knowledge of who Jesus is within His Deity.
 - This should be mind blowing because they recognize Jesus’ Divine nature and origin yet in eternity’s past disobeyed God’s authority and rebelled.
 - This shows us that there can be general understanding of God but yet still be full denial of His Glory and Person.
 - And yet, isn’t this indicative of how unbelievers who are presented the Gospel of Christ can recognize His uniqueness, but still deny Christ of His deity and power.
 - This friend is the enemy’s exact plan: to sow seeds of doubt and confusion and keep men and women in unbelief so that they may never come to the truth of God.
 - However, we are aware that God’s glory will be made known and recognized by all: both believers and unbelievers – angels and demons.
 - Paul says these words in Philippians 2:9-11:

Philippians 2:9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

Philippians 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Philippians 2:11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- What should cause your ears to perk, is the question that the demoniac asks Jesus upon His arrival.
 - If you notice, the line of questioning is similar to that of the first encounter of demon possession in the synagogue in Mark 1:24.
 - The demoniac ask “What business do you have with me Jesus, Son of the Most High God?”

- We gather 2 things from this line of questioning:
 - 1. The unclean spirit's recognition of Jesus' deity and divine position which we covered earlier.
 - 2. The unclean spirit's recognition of a coming and permanent end. Let's examine this item.
- Luke's gospel provides us with a clearer understanding of the question the demoniac asked.
 - It speaks to the reality that because the demon knows Jesus' divine origin and nature that there will be a future impending judgment that will come.
- This is why the demoniac asked, "What business do we have with each other?"
 - In other words, the time has not yet arrived has it? This doesn't seem like what was to be anticipated this early.
 - Yet again confirming that the demonic realm has some general understanding of what is to come but not in detail.
- The demoniac was correct in the fact that judgment is inevitable however right now is not the right time.
 - This makes sense why Luke's account in Luke 8:31 speaks to this coming judgment for demons this way:

Luke 8:31 They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.

- For in Jesus' first coming, it was not to pronounce judgment but for Him to come to seek and save those who were lost.
 - Or as we read earlier in Mark's gospel, Jesus came for the sick who need a doctor.
 - But do not think that a day will not come that when the trumpet sounds and the sky splits open and Jesus' feet hit the ground, that change won't come.
 - There will be a time of temporary confinement for demons in the abyss until the final judgment where they will be thrown into the lake of fire.
 - Secondly, we see that the demoniac uses a particular title for Jesus in his line of questioning.
 - He calls Jesus, "the Son of the Most High God."
 - This term was often used by the Gentile people to refer to God and the term acknowledges God's residence in Heaven and His Sovereignty (Dan.4:17)
 - So until then, the demoniac knows that his time within this human host has run its course because the Sovereign Lord and King is before Him.
 - To put it another way the owner of all creation has put an eviction notice on the door of that man's life.
 - And what do you do when you are faced with an eviction of this magnitude: You pack up and try to find the nearest exit!
 - It is at this point that Jesus begins to expel the demonic man, but before He does, He follows the Jewish approach of exorcism.

- He asks the demon what his name is to which the demon responds, “My name is Legion, for we are many”
- A legion within the Roman world was an army that consisted of approximately 6,000 soldiers.
 - In other words, this man’s possession increased over time which explains why this man had, what would be deemed, as super-human strength and this degree of torture.
 - Friends, Jesus wasn’t up against one unclean spirit possessing a person, Jesus was up against 6,000 demons fully occupying this one man.
- So with these demons aware of who Jesus is and their eviction notice served, they try to negotiate their terms in the meantime on where they will be banished to.
 - And it just so happens that their quick solution is just a few miles up the way. Check out verses 11-17:

Mark 5:11 Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain.

Mark 5:12 The demons implored Him, saying, “Send us into the swine so that we may enter them.”

Mark 5:13 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.

Mark 5:14 Their herdsman ran away and reported it in the city and in the country. And the people came to see what it was that had happened.

Mark 5:15 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.

Mark 5:16 Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and all about the swine.

Mark 5:17 And they began to implore Him to leave their region

- As the scene continues to unfold, Mark seems to zoom out of the present exchange with Jesus and the demoniac and he zooms towards the distance to a herd of pigs.
 - It would be here that the legion would implore Jesus to send them out to the herd of pigs number about 2,000 in total.
 - The question at this point becomes, why the pigs?
 - As R.T Franc mentions in his commentary on Mark he states: “The ritual uncleanness of pigs from a Jewish point of view would add further point to the transfer; from a man living among unclean tombs the unclean spirits transfer to unclean animals.
 - In other words, the focus of the exorcism would be to restore the image bearer to a proper state and to send the unclean spirits to what was deemed unclean animals.
 - We then see that Jesus allows these demons to enter into the pigs which leads the group of 2,000 pigs to run off of the cliff and drown to their doom.

- The reality was, the only way in which demons can escape the host they are in is if that host dies, therefore releasing them from their captivity in that body.
 - We also witness this same situation after Satan has in-dwelt Judas' body and once He had used Judas, caused him to commit suicide.
- From there, you can only imagine the mixed emotions from the owner of this herd of pigs.
 - On one hand they are in awe at what Christ had done but on the other hand in great frustration at the loss of his livestock.
- So it is with this shock factor at play that Mark tells us that the herdsmen ran to the city to tell others about what was witnessed.
 - The crowd would soon arrive sometime later and see for themselves what Jesus had done for the man.
- This crowd of people are now witnessing the man who was once unclothed, unclean, and unhinged now completely in his right mind.
 - Truly this is not what these folks were used to – maybe some are in complete shock and disbelief.
- This man, once tormented by 6,000 demons, having experienced split personality and superhuman strength, is now sitting at the feet of Jesus – fully restored.
 - This change brings about some key things for us to analyze as it pertains to demon possession versus being indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
- What are the typical response of those indwelt by the Spirit of God versus demons?
 - I believe one thing we can see regarding how the Holy Spirit works versus the uncontrollable nature of demons can be found in 2 Timothy 3:16.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

- That Greek word for inspired here is *theopneustos* which means God-breathed.
 - So although we know that the scriptures have human authors that recorded down the information, the Big A author is God Himself by the person of the Holy Spirit.
 - The Holy Spirit spoke to the “little a” author of scripture providing them exactly what to write in their personality, style, etc.
 - The Holy Spirit didn't turn them into robots or zombies whereby these men did not have access to their extremities to intelligibly write the words the Spirit gave them.
 - These men were in their right mind, with full control of their members, completely submitted to the leading of the Spirit to write what was divinely given.
 - The response of the Holy Spirit leads one to holy things, righteous things, and He dwells richly within the believer.
 - Check out how the Holy Spirit would rest upon Jesus at His baptism in Isaiah 11:2:

**Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and strength,
The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.**

- Do you notice how the Holy Spirit interacts with those in whom He occupies?
 - The Spirit of the Lord is gentle, He rests upon us and within us.
 - He does not overtake us in the sense of being out of control.
 - He does not torment us. He does not cause us to respond in ungodly ways because there is no darkness in God.
 - Therefore, it must be clear that being possessed by a demon versus being led by the Spirit of God are two completely different things.
 - And both present two completely different results.
 - In any case, what the people of the Gerasenes witness is a completely different man, but with what changes they see, they insist that Jesus leave their city.
 - Luke 8:37 tells us that the people’s desire for Jesus to leave was motivated by fear of what they saw.
 - I find the reaction of the people of the region to be quite questionable.
 - You just witnessed Jesus expel a legion of demons from a man.
 - You would expect much rejoicing and thankfulness for complete restoration of someone they would have known, yet that is not the case.
 - It’s almost as if they would have rather kept the demoniac around in his deprived state than for him to be in his right mind.
 - And isn’t this quite telling of how we deal with Christ moving in the darkened areas of our hearts and lives.
 - That we would rather deal with our darkness than give Jesus room to invade those areas even if it cost us something of great value.
 - I mention this because there are some scholars that suggest that the economic loss of the herd of pigs played a part in their request for Jesus to leave.
 - Whatever the case may be there, you have to love Jesus’ response. This is classic Jesus! This is how He responds to their outrage and fear. Check out verses 18-20.

Mark 5:18 As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him.

Mark 5:19 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.”

Mark 5:20 And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

- We see from Jesus’ expelling of Legion and making the man whole two separate

responses: We have the crowd's response and the healed man's response.

- And as we have stated in previous teachings, there will only be two responses as it comes to the Gospel of God being made known: belief or unbelief, response or no response.
 - The healed man who was once deemed unclean and unhinged has now been transformed by Christ and he now desires to be with Him.
 - He doesn't just take the healing and walk away, but there is a genuine desire to follow Christ where He goes.
- However, Jesus' response to the man marks what I see as the beginning of evangelism to the Gentiles.
 - Notice, specifically, verses 19 and 20 after Jesus tells the man he can't go with Him.
 - Jesus gives him a directive and tells him to "go and tell all and report to them what the Lord had done and how He showed him mercy."
- This is different than Jesus' healings and miracles before, because prior to this point, Jesus would tell people, to "speak these things to no one."
 - However He gives this, what we can assume a Gentile man, a directive and lo and behold the man follows suit in perfect obedience to Christ.
- The man travels across the 10 cities also known as Decapolis and tells the people of the great and mighty things Jesus has done for him.
 - If you read over this too quickly you might have missed this slight detail – pay close attention again to verse 19 and 20.

Mark 5:19 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."

Mark 5:20 And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

- Mark uses two words interchangeably at the conclusion of Jesus' demonstration of His Authority and Power over the demonic realm.
 - He uses the Greek word *kyrios* in verse 19, similar to what we witnessed when Jesus and His disciples were in the fields and His disciples were hungry.
 - It was there that Jesus declared He was Lord of the Sabbath.
 - We now see that Mark's play on words connects Jesus right back to being Lord over creation but more especially Owner overall, even having power over the demonic realm.
 - This is yet another dimension by which the disciples are able to see their Messiah.
 - Jesus' power is both reverential and marvelous!
 - This is in fact the disposition of the man that was once possessed – and a Gentile at that!
 - He moved from being possessed by a legion of demons to now being securely

kept by the very mercy of God through Christ Jesus.

- The reality for this man in the region of the Gerasenes is the reality for all men and women who move from being unclean to clean – unbelief to belief.
 - This dynamic transformation will either cause one to tremble in fear or marvel in awe at the very power of God through His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - We should marvel at the fact that our Great God and King Jesus Christ has the Power to conquer the schemes and ploys of the enemy, sin, and death!
- This news of Jesus’ conquering and triumphant power is worthy to be shared as this Gentile man did throughout the Decapolis.
 - Hearing of what Christ had done in him reminds me of what Psalm 66:16 says:

**Psalm 66:16 Come and hear, all who fear God,
And I will tell of what He has done for my soul.**

- Do you have a story on your lips about your life that speaks to the love and saving Power of your Lord and Savior?
 - Are you willing to carry His name throughout the land telling about how He moved you from death to life?
 - If the Lord could meet the man controlled by a demoniac, He can most definitely meet you!
 - Rather than your fear of God and the unknown moving you away from God, may the power of His word move you ever so towards Jesus.
 - I would like to think that it was through this unashamed boldness of this man, once demon possessed now free, that makes known Christ amongst the Gentiles.
 - Although the forces of Satan are great, friends there is none greater than our God.
 - Let's Pray.

Citations:

- John D. Grassmick, [“Mark,”](#) in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 122.
- R. T. France, [The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2002), 230.