

Jesus Calms the Stormy Man

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[0 : 00] Amen. Today we're going to look at Mark 5, 1-20, 2021, in which Jesus calms a stormy man.

Last time Jesus calmed a storm with wind and waves, and waves, and waves. And here is a stormy man. We've seen the authority and the person and work of Jesus once round, in the previous chapters, and now we're seeing the same thing, although in more depth and more detail, a second time.

And the set of stories that follow, all around the lakeside, with a lakeside vibe. So we have in, why on earth did I put 135? I didn't mean that.

I meant 435 was the storm on the lake, and we're going to go all the way round to Jesus walking on the water in chapter 6, verse 56.

This bit picks up things like chapter 1, verse 24, where Jesus had another confrontation with a demon, with a man who was possessed by an unclean spirit.

[1 : 25] The man also cried out with a loud voice and addressed Jesus, Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.

So the demon says something of the work of Jesus, to destroy the work of the devil. And who he is, he's the Holy One of God, and gives us a little, in a nutshell, description of Jesus' person and his work.

And in the text that we're looking at just now, I pressed the button. Did anything happen? No? Try again.

No? It went blank, that's no use.

Come back. That's better. So, the text that we're looking at, I'm going to portray it in six scenes.

[2 : 36] It moves through six stages. Watch out for the word to plead or to beg. It crops up four times, and the last of them is rather different to the other.

So there's pleading and begging going on. What the passage does is shows us the characteristics of the works of Satan. There is a real enemy, a real spiritual enemy, and this story shows us in quite graphic detail the sort of things that Satan will do if he has the opportunity.

It also shows us the work of Jesus Christ, that he is superior in power to the evil one, and it shows us something of the authority of the Savior.

We've seen his authority in other examples. For example, his authority to teach, but here we see very graphically his authority over Satan.

And the story also tells us what the goal of the work of Jesus Christ is, which is to bring people to true humanness.

[3 : 51] Christianity doesn't make us less human. That's what Satan does. Christianity makes us truly human, and that's what we find Jesus doing in this story. So let's look at these scenes.

On my first scene, I've entitled The Arrival of Jesus. And there's the picture of it, and you might be able to pick out some of the features from the text.

Jesus had said, you may remember in the previous story, let's go over to the other side, verse 35.

And that arrival seemed to have been put into question by the storm.

The disciples thought we'll never get there, but actually they did. And it's one of those other examples of where what Jesus said happens. It's passed over without comment.

They went across the lake. They went across the lake to the region of the Gerizines. They went across. Well, they did. And it's one of those things when you look back and you think, well, I wonder what all the fuss was about.

[4 : 59] Life is sometimes like that, isn't it? We worry and we fret and it's all a crisis. But what God has said just happens and we perhaps don't always notice it.

I hope my computer isn't going to disappear off the edge. Right. I like the pigs. Jesus' word was fulfilled. Let's pass over to beyond.

And I don't know whether you can notice in the scene there, just pick out some of the things. Woo! I didn't mean that to happen. That are present there.

Okay. Let's look at that in some more detail. You can see perhaps the stormy man. You can see the pigs. The cliff. Let's see what happens.

So, scene number two. It says immediately. That's one of Mark's words. It doesn't necessarily come up in the translation.

[5 : 54] But it says immediately. Immediately when Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an unclean spirit came from the tombs to meet him.

Okay. So, there's the picture. Let's fill in some of the details. Okay. So, I've put in words to correspond to the different bits of the picture.

So, he comes to meet Jesus. The word for meet is almost like to come out as one army comes to meet another, to confront Jesus.

He sort of came out to face up to Jesus. Jesus. We'll come back to that. But let's look at this man.

He lived in the tombs. No one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, for he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore his chains apart and broke the irons on his feet.

No one was strong enough to subdue him. And you notice how Mark is really going out of his way to say, almost repeating himself, look at this man.

[7 : 03] Look how nobody could tame him. Look at his out of controlness. And he does it by repeating twice the word bind.

Nobody could bind him. He emphasized it by several negatives. No one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. And he also emphasizes it by giving us different sorts of chains.

There's hand chains and foot chains, fetters and chains, and he can't be bound around his feet or around his hands. Neither of those chains work.

And he also gives us two strong words for what this guy does with the chains. It says he breaks them apart. And he breaks the irons.

He rips them up and smashes them out. And this is this guy. You would not like to have him living in a house next door to you. And it says, no one was strong enough to tame him.

[8 : 08] Last sentence there. No one was mighty enough. So it raises the question of power. And so far we have not met anybody with the might and the strength to tame this man.

So that is emphasized. There's also an emphasis on the place where he lives. Several times it's mentioned tombs.

He lived in the tombs, verse 3. Night and day among the tombs, verse 5. Tomb isn't a very nice place to live. I remember when we went to Cyprus, to Maria's hometown in Paphos.

There is actually Tombs of the Kings. It's a tourist attraction. And you walk along and there are little caves dug out.

And the corpses would be laid on shelves in these caves. You know, about that sort of size. And yes, if you were homeless and you really wanted to live somewhere, you could find shelter living in a tomb.

[9 : 20] But it's not a pleasant place to live. And it sort of gives us the characteristic of Satan's realm. Place of death. Place of decay. Place of far from God.

And what else are we told about this man? We're told in verse 5. Night and day. So I give him a sun and some stars.

24-7. He's crying out. The word for cry out has a croaking sort of sound. He cried out. So, you know, never anything quiet there about him.

And he also cuts himself with stones. He does a sort of self-destructing, self-harming thing. That shows us something of the work of Satan.

It's a demonstration of Satan's work. This is what Satan would like to do to each of us, if he could get enough hold on us. He would like to take us into the place of death.

[10 : 27] Satan doesn't bring life. Jesus does that. Satan brings death. Satan doesn't make us richer and better people and more the people that we want to be.

Satan sucks the life out of us. He takes away human dignity. Satan would like to see us all subhuman. Like this man. You notice that later on he's clothed at this point.

Presumably he's just running around naked. He doesn't have his dignity. Satan takes away that. He's completely unrestrainable. It needs a strong man to bind him. You might remember that Jesus told a parable about the strong man, didn't he, in chapter 3, verse 27. He says, if you're going to do anything with Satan, you need superior strength. And somebody's got to come and bind up Satan, who is the strong man. We need a stronger man than Satan. There's certainly something here about Jesus' power. [11:28] This man has no peace. Day and night he's crying out. And we could add that he's isolated, without wholesome company or community.

In Matthew's account, there are other people in the same situation. But I don't think they would make particularly helpful friends. As Mark tells us, he just focuses on this single man. So I'm going to say he's isolated. He doesn't have wholesome company. There's not people around him to bring any warmth and any affection and any wholesomeness into his life. This is the man under Satan's power. And I say, this is what Satan would like to do to each of us. So don't let Satan do that to you. Don't think that Satan, with his temptations and his offers and his lies, is offering you anything good. This is where it all leads.

[12:35] And if you find yourself to be in Satan's empire, get yourself out. Cry out for help. Say, Lord Jesus, you alone can get people out of this sort of pit.

Get me out, because I need to be out of it. Let's go to the third scene here. So in verse 8, it says, when he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. Now the word to fall on his knees, it's translated in English as several words, but it's just one word, sort of fall down. Sometimes it's translated to worship. And I think you can perhaps fall down in front of somebody with different motives in your heart.

But this man fell down in front of Jesus. And he shouts at Jesus, at the top of his voice, he shouts in a mega voice, what do you want with me?

What is it between me and you? Why are you interfering with me? Jesus, son of the most high God. Interesting that his understanding of exactly who Jesus is can't help but be revealed.

[13:53] And then he says, swear to God that you won't torture me. So hopefully we'll find out something about this swearing aspect.

And it says that Jesus had been saying to him, come out of the man, you unclean spirit. So basically we have a contest which is expressed via words.

The man is saying, why are you interfering? And Jesus is saying, evil spirit, come out of him. So taking it a bit at a time, he came to meet or to confront Jesus and he falls down before him. Interesting. He shouts out in a mega loud voice, Jesus, son of the most high God. He recognizes Jesus even as he's trying to confront him.

And he says, swear to me, I adjure you, is one way of translating it. This is a funny thing because usually the exorcist says this to the demon.

[15:01] You've got that in Acts 19 verse 13 where an exorcism takes place. And the exorcist says to the demon, I charge you to come out. I put you under oath to come out.

God. It's a very strong expression. And interestingly, the demon tries it on Jesus. I charge you. I make you swear before God that you won't torture me.

See what he's afraid of. And Jesus says, Jesus has been saying, come out of this man. And Jesus says, what is your name?

And the man replies, my name is Legion, for we are many. A Roman army unit of many thousands of people would be called a Legion.

And the man designates himself by that name. We are many. And he now begs Jesus not to send him or send them out of the area.

[16:05] So you can see what's happening in this contest. There is resistance and conflict. It's rather interesting. Some things that Jesus does, there's an instantaneous result.

It's rather illuminating that in this particular conflict with Satan, it isn't all over in an instant. There's a tussle. And the demon doesn't just give in.

The demon tries it on Jesus. I adjure you. Well, you're not adjuring anybody, actually matey. But he tries it out. And there's resistance and conflict. And also, it seems to me, there's a certain illogicality, inconsistency about the demon's approach.

It doesn't seem to make sense. Why does he confront Jesus and then fall down before him? Why does he march out to sort of face up to him but then find he's falling down before him?

And why does he say, you are the son of the most high and accept his superiority but then try to take charge of Jesus by saying, I command you not to torture me?

[17 : 17] Seems illogical. Maybe that's a feature of satanic mentality. I don't know. It just seems to me to be illogical. But what does come out of here is, even in this tussle, even, and it isn't over in a moment, it is a tussle, the superiority of Jesus keeps shining through.

So Jesus doesn't give in to his commands and Jesus, the demon begs Jesus, verse 10, knowing that really, despite all his bluff and bluster, he needs permission from Jesus to do whatever he's going to do next.

And here's a feature about the work of Satan in this present age. He is active, but he is under the control of the Savior. He needs permission to do whatever he's going to do.

The superiority of Jesus. That was scene three. Let's move to scene four. The defeat of Satan. Satan cast cast down.

So what happens is, verse 11, we have our attention drawn to a herd of pigs. Now, I rather like the way I drew those pigs in the end.

[18 : 40] I think I got the hang of drawing pigs. Pigs are, of course, an unclean animal. The spirit is an unclean spirit. And the area in which this is all taking place is pretty much an unclean area because it's largely a Gentile area.

So there's some things here that fit together. Although, I must say, I don't understand the logic of all of it. And the demons begged Jesus, send us among the pigs, allow us to go into them, and he gave them permission.

So here's another example of them begging and being given permission. Jesus says, okay. Okay.

So the demons go into the pigs and the pigs, like lemmings, decide that it's so unbearable that squealing and rushing, they jump down the field, over the edge of the cliff, and into the water.

And there were a lot of them. Two thousand pigs rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. They rushed, and we now have the man free.

All that was oppressing him on the inside has gone fantastic. And again, I'm going to repeat this, we see the supremacy of Jesus.

[20 : 21] And we see the futility of Satan's strategy. So I'm not quite sure why did he ask for the, to, why did the demons ask to go into the pigs?

Would they not have foreseen that the pigs would find this so unbearable that they'd rush out into the sea? I don't know. It doesn't seem to make sense to me. But there's something here which, as it turns out, is futile, isn't it?

Satan doesn't find all his plans beautifully fulfilled. He finds his plans all gone skew-whiff. And I attribute this to the supremacy of Jesus.

That was scene four. Let's go to scene five. The aftermath aftermath of a wonderful deliverance. So we come to verse 14.

Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside. So they didn't just go back to the owners, they blabbed it to everybody.

[21 : 26] Do you know what happened? This was amazing. Do you know what happened today? Remember those 2,000 pigs that we used to have? So they tell a lot of people.

And the people come out to see what happened. Verse 15. When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons.

We keep on being reminded, this is what he used to be like. He used to be possessed by the legion of demons. And notice what it says, he was sitting there I don't know whether he's ever sat still in his life before.

He's been running around and cutting himself and shrieking. He's sitting and he's dressed and he's in his right mind.

He's healthy minded, he's in his right mind. He's seated at the feet of Jesus, clothed in his right mind.

[22 : 30] He's a wonderful place to be. It seems to me to describe what being human is meant to be.

To be able to sit at the feet of Jesus, to be clothed, so there's a dignity and a wholesomeness, and to be right minded. He's not scared out of his wits, he's not all over the place, he's just thinking

things through.

That's a good place to be. Sorry? Yes, that's right, exactly, exactly. The, sorry, I missed one bit out. Now, what is the response of the crowd? So, when they see this, rather than saying, let's give Jesus a round of applause, they fear. Did you notice that?

They saw the man there, and they were afraid. And they begin to say, this is far too uncomfortable for us, we're not up for this sort of thing. Loonies running around, as long as, but we have our pigs, yeah, we can cope with that, but people being changed like this, this is something that we're uncomfortable with.

[23 : 53] And those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man, verse 16. And, notice the footnote, told about the pigs as well.

We saw him healed and cured, and we saw your pigs drowned.

He told them about the pigs as well. Well, and then we have another begging.

The people began to beg Jesus to leave their region. It's quite ironical, isn't it? Here's somebody who has come to this poor man whose life has been a complete misery, and he's delivered him from Satan.

The chains he broke, the physical chains, but really was chained by the evil one, wasn't he? And Jesus, in a sense, broke those unseen chains. And what's the response of the people?

[25 : 05] They say, we don't like this. We don't like it so much that Jesus, we would really prefer it if you got on the first boat out of here as soon as possible.

I don't know whether you would say that to Jesus. I don't know whether you would say to Jesus, having seen what you can do, having seen the effect you have on other people, I would really like you to go away as quickly as possible.

I don't know whether you would say that, but that's exactly what these people said. And here's the frightening part. Here's the frightening part, that he said, okay, they begged him to go, and he went. Seems to me to be a very frightening part of that. So, scene six, verse 18.

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. So, here's yet another begging.

[26 : 21] Let's see it built up. So, there's my picture. You can see we've now got a town in view. Does it show if I do that?

No. Okay, there's a town here, which we hadn't had brought to our attention before, but there is a place where he could have called home.

And Jesus is getting into the boat and the man is saying to Jesus, please can I come with you? Please can I come with you?

Can I be with you? Can I be in your presence? Can I be one of your disciples? What happened to the man who had been demonized? He asked if he could come with Jesus.

He begged if he could come with Jesus. And this is the first time in the story that Jesus says no. Jesus says yes okay to the demons you can go into the pigs and he said yes I will when the people begged him to go away but ironically strangely when this man says to Jesus I want to be with you Jesus says no definitely not instead I want you I got a job for you to do what he says in verse 19 go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you so he puts it in terms of what the Lord God has done and the man puts it in terms of what Jesus has done the man went away and began to tell in the ten cities the

[28 : 08] Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him and that last bit of the story is rather surprising isn't it you'd say if you'd expect if the man wanted to be with Jesus Jesus would say yeah carry on come along with me but he doesn't he says no I've got a job for you to do only you can do this I want you to go back to the people that have known you the people perhaps that you grew up with and you are uniquely placed to say to them this is what the Lord has done for me and in a way this man will be one of the first evangelists to the Gentiles he will be one of the people who takes the good news of Jesus to those who were not traditional Jews and I wonder whether we can reflect on that whether

Jesus might say to us there's things that you might like to do but I have a job for you to do that only you can do there's a place where you can witness which you are particularly equipped to do and that's the place I want you to be telling people what the Lord has done for you I want you to be a witness an evangelist and there's a place for you to do that sometimes Jesus tells us not to linger with him but to go out in service and work so you might think that the real high Christian life is

somebody who has a quiet time all day long and they're reading the scriptures and praying all day long maybe some people are called to that but other people Jesus says okay we've been praying and reading long enough now I want you to get out and tell people now I want you to close up your Bible don't forget your Bible but close up your Bible and go and live in the world where I've put you be a witness to me and tell people what the Lord has done for you six scenes showing us the evil that Satan tries to do he's a vandal he diminishes he will suck the life out of us he will destroy us that's what Satan does this story reveals it very clearly what does the Savior do the Savior only he can deliver us from Satan only he has the power to do so and what does he bring to us he takes away the chains he makes us human he enables us to be like this man seated clothed in our right minds at the feet of Jesus that's what Jesus can do ask him to do it for you call upon him to break your chains ask him to bring you to that place of being seated at his feet we're going to sing