

Mark 5:1–43

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[0 : 00] Mark 5, 1-43. Please stand or remain standing as you are able for the reading of God's word. They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes.

And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with the unclean spirit. He lived among the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain.

For he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but wretched the chains apart. And he broke the shackles into pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day, among the tombs and on the mountains, he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.

And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. And crying out with a loud voice, he said, What have you to do with me, Jesus, son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.

For he was saying to him, Come out of the man, you unclean spirit. And Jesus asked him, What is your name? He replied, My name is Legion, for we are many. And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

[1 : 08] Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. And they begged him, saying, Send us the pigs, let us enter them. So he gave them permission, and the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs.

And the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea. The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country.

And the people came to see what had happened. And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had the legion, sitting there clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

And those who had seen it described to them what had happened, the demon-possessed man and the pigs. And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. And as he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him.

And he did not permit him, but said to him, Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you. And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him.

[2 : 15] And everyone marveled. And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him. And he was beside the sea. Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jarius by name.

And seeing him, he fell at his feet. And he implored him earnestly, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her so she may be made well and live.

And he went with him. And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. And there was a woman who had a discharge of blood for twelve years and who had suffered much under many physicians and had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse.

She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, If I even touch his garments, I will be made well. And immediately the flow of blood dried up and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

And Jesus, perceiving in himself that the power had gone out of him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, Who touched my garments? And his disciples said to him, You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, Who touched me?

[3 : 22] And he looked around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. And he said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well.

Go in peace and be healed of your disease. While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, Your daughter is dead. Why trouble to teach her any further? But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not fear, only believe. And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John, the brother of James. They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.

And when he had entered, he said to them, Why are you making commotion and weeping? The child is not dead, but sleeping. And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was.

Taking her by the hand, he said to her, Talitha kumi, which means, Little girl, I say to you, arise. And immediately the girl got up and began walking, for she was twelve years of age, and they were immediately overcome with amazement.

[4 : 26] And he strictly charged them that no one should know this and told them to give her something to eat. And this is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. I don't know about you, but I love Youth Sunday.

You know, given that I'm an old man and all, reminds me of those first and full days of faith that wanted to praise the Lord and help others to do the same.

I'm so grateful for Young Life, our ministry with you, in many senses, your ministry, trust with us. And of course, it's my prayer and that of the whole staff that this congregation will only further engage itself in the most meaningful of ways for the youth on Chicago's south side.

So I hope that if you're in this congregation, you stop by at that table in the foyer on your way out to encourage, to take something to consider, to pray, to ask a question about what excites them.

[5 : 38] And may our congregation continue to be more deeply, deeply involved. You know, I was away for a couple weeks, so before I hit the sermon, I just want to say thank you for your own prayers for me.

I found myself speaking at a French-speaking conference in Geneva, Switzerland. And I don't speak any French other than Bon Appetit, and I'm not sure if I pronounced that correctly.

I tell you what, I don't know what language we're going to speak in heaven, but we're going to sing in French. It was beautiful. From there, Ben Panner and I made our way to Dubai in the UAE, where we had the privilege of being in a church just about 10 or 12 miles from that Strait of Hormuz, right there at the crucible, the choke point.

And we were there ministering and able to open the word just to people from so many different parts of the world, and then on into Dubai later that day to preach.

And the pastor opened up the service this way. He said, welcome, glad you're here. Just a note, if the alarm should sound in the midst of the service indicating incoming missile strikes, we will wait for the alarm to stop before resuming our service.

[7 : 06] Now, if you'll please stand with me for our call to worship. And I thought, I've never been in a church like that before. But to see God's children in a different part of the world, eager, eager, hungry to be together, nothing stopping them from both hearing the word and proclaiming it to others was just a great treat.

So grateful for your prayers on that. We got to see, we had 92 pastors working through the book of Luke. Of the 92, 23 different countries.

Most of them Arabic speaking in Muslim countries where the word is really penetrating with great power and strength.

So what a privilege. You're a part of that. I'm grateful for your prayers in it. And it all revolves around this person that we read about this morning, this one named Jesus.

Jesus. When it comes to Jesus, who is this? Who is this man? And as important for a sermon, why does it matter?

[8 : 19] Who then is this? And why does it matter? It's really the question that last week's text left off with. You'll remember it.

The final verse in chapter four, where the disciples were with him in the boat. And they provide the question, who then is this?

This Jesus. Chapter five, I think, begins to set out an answer. If the disciples are asking the question, who is this?

Mark wants you to make a decision on that very statement. And in our text, so wonderfully read this morning, he does so not with propositions that you might find in a dictionary or in an encyclopedia. Who is he? Let me answer it. But with stories. Three stories. Just to make sure you didn't get lost in the midst of the reading. It's simply a story about a man who was demon-possessed.

[9 : 27] A young girl who was dying and then dead. And then a woman with a disease. And in each of the stories, there's this riveting disclosure of who then is this.

And why it matters. I hope you have Mark 5 open before you. The first story, in the first five verses, Mark cuts a figure of a desperate man who is in utter despair of life on account of demons that are hell-bent on his destruction.

I mean, you can see it there. Chapter 5, 1 to 5. A man from out of the tombs with an unclean spirit. Could not be bound. Had been bound. But nothing could hold him. Nothing and no one had strength to subdue him.

And verse 5, so tragically, poignantly put, night and day, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

[10 : 52] This self-harm. A desperate man in utter despair on account of demons that were hell-bent on his destruction.

Now I need to say something right away. Right away. It claims that he had an unclean spirit. I don't know what you think about devils or spirit world.

One writer said, there are two equal and opposite heirs into which our race can fall about devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. That's probably the majority view of the world in which we live.

We have many other ways to account for self-harm. Indeed, self-harm is not always the consequence of devils.

Please know that. And yet he says the other is to have such an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.

[12 : 03] If you want to know what I believe, I do believe that there is a devil and little devils. The fallen angels that rebelled against God's supreme authority, their time even began before man and woman and humanity was created.

There was a spirit world and created beings and a host of whom tried to mutiny the heavens and therefore were cast out.

I believe there are these things in existence. The text, for this morning's sake, I don't know what you think concerning it, but the text assumes their existence.

But it's what the spirit calls Jesus that I want to occupy your interest for a moment. So you have this desperate man, but when you look at verse 6, he saw Jesus from afar.

He falls down before him and he cries out, What have you to do with me, Jesus? Here it is, son of the most high God. That's an interesting title.

[13 : 35] Remember the disciples' question, who then is this? And you have now the spirit world providing one way of answering the question.

Jesus is the son of the most high God. That's a fascinating title. It doesn't come out of the blue in the scriptures.

And Bible words generally have Bible meanings. In Genesis 14, 8, it's the title Melchizedek, who appeared before Abraham as a king of peace, was given.

The son of the most high God was the one without lineage to whom all honor was due. It's the same term that Balaam will ascribe to a shadowy figure that would emerge in the distant future to save God's people from enemies that were held bent on their destruction.

It's the same title that a king named Nebuchadnezzar will use to speak of Daniel's God, of being all-knowing over all things.

[14 : 43] It's the title that King David himself will use in Psalm 57 to speak of one who is above even him in stature. So when you hear this title, just read and moved over in the course of 43 verses, we have the spirit's delineation of who then is this.

According to the demonic world, Jesus is the one who comes to us without lineage to whom all honor is due.

He's the one who saves God's people from destruction. Once distant, now here. He's the one who's all-knowing. He's the one who is king even over kings.

Here he is. And the man meets him. Just beyond the tombs and outside the city gates. The demon, or as we will see, legion, many, are somewhat startled by his coming.

He says, what? Don't torment me. I adjure you. It's almost as if it's not time yet for our rebelliousness to be called into an account.

[16:08] The end of time is not here. We are still yet loosed upon the world to kill and destroy and mar the very image of God among men.

That's all they're out to do. And so here we have it. Jesus asks him a question.

What's your name? And there are many. And they make a request, don't they? They know that Jesus is superior to them.

And the voice begs him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there. And they say, send us to the pigs.

And he gives them permission. And the unclean spirits leave the man. Enter the pigs. The herd stumbles over the bank into the sea and drowns.

[17:09] Certainly indicating that they have no other pleasure in the world than to destroy things. And if they can't destroy people, well, they'll destroy whatever they're capable of inhabiting.

It feels to me that it's just so true. Demons would destroy, harass.

You know, there was a monk by the name of Martin Luther who was so convinced when he was trying to translate the Bible into German that he said, man, I'm just getting spiritual opposition.

That the legend is that he picks up his inkwell and throws it against the wall of a castle splattering the ink, hoping to, in some sense, inkify or make manifest the demon that he thought was in his room.

Whether there was one or not, I'm sure that many here today feel at times the weight, the cloud, the sense of spiritual opposition.

[18:12] And this poor man cried. And the Lord heard him. Delivered him. Put him in his right mind, he says.

That's just another way of talking about what happens when Jesus helps us. It's right there in verse 15. They come and he's sitting clothed in his right mind.

Oh, to be in our right mind. That's what Jesus can do for those who are harassed. He puts them in his right mind. The devils simply are satisfied to destroy lesser creatures until the final judgment would come.

Frighteningly, in other words, they still linger until the consummation of the age. They still harass. They still rebel against the Lord.

They abandon the carcass of the pigs and they roam in search of others to destroy. It makes me long for the day when they will be done with entirely.

[19:26] You know, the larger catechism of our Westminster Confession of Faith asks the question, what shall be done to the wicked at the day of judgment? And the answer actually includes what will happen to this spiritual world that is in rebellion against the Most High God.

Let me read it to you. Their answer is in the day of judgment, the wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand and upon clear evidence and full conviction of their own consciences shall have the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them and thereupon shall be cast out from the favorable presence of God.

I just love that phrase. He casts them out of the man. They will on one day be cast out of the favorable presence of God. They will be cast out of the glorious fellowship with Christ from his saints away from his holy angels into hell to be punished with unspeakable torments both of body and soul with the devil and his angels forever.

I love that. This declaration that God will not always permit them to roam and destroy.

Which, by the way, is the answer to the aim of the sermon. Not simply who then is this but why does it matter? It matters because the good news of the Christian message is that there will be a final day where they will no longer be able not only to rebel against him but wreak havoc in the world in which you and I love and destroy those in our midst.

[21:14] I suppose what comes up inside me is a desire to fall down and worship the Most High God and to pray that he'll put an end to a rebellious spirit world.

But, wait, I mean the news gets even better. Not one story is enough to answer the question of who then is this.

Not only will demons be cast out unable to harass but the enemy of death is also going to be defeated once and for all.

That's the second story. It begins there in verse 21. My Bible reads it this way. When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side a great crowd gathered about him and he was beside the sea.

Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name. And seeing him he fell at his feet and implored him earnestly saying my little daughter is at the point of death.

[22 : 26] Come and lay your hands on her so that she may be made well and live. And he went with him. Now lift your eyes from the text for a moment because he's going to place a story outside of that opening and not return to his story until you put your eyes back on verse 35.

While he's still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further? Not only are there demons that have authority and power but the most high gods over them but there's another enemy that's even greater, more complete, total. I mean, death is the end sentence for all of us because whether harassed or not by demons we ourselves have disobeyed the Lord was the reason for Brittany's prayer of the confession of our sins and the absolution of that given the work of Christ but you and I know that we are subject to death have been in ministry for 40 years stood over a lot of graves the ones of children are the hardest you don't need six people you just need a dad to carry a white box you need a nurse to come into the birthing room and remove the baby in your presence who breathed only for a minute or two you need a small church family to gather around the graveside of a five-year-old who no longer lives here it is who then is this?

can he do anything? this one Jesus nice to know that he's the most high God who's sovereign and above all but can he is he capable of defeating overcoming the one enemy that has a grip on us all evidently he looks at the man there verse 36 overhearing what they had said he says to the ruler of the synagogue do not fear only believe and he allowed no one to follow him except Peter James John the brother of James he goes to the house evidently a very religious man he saw a commotion people wailing rightly so people weeping with good cause and evidently they sense that he believes he can do something and his power over death is met with laughter and mockery so he puts them all outside

I'm still right there in 40 he takes in only the father and the mother takes her by the hands pronounces these words little girl I say to you arise and immediately the girl got up and began walking 12 years old and they're overcome with amazement I bet they were he said by the way I think she needs lunch indicating this girl's gonna go this girl's gonna grow this girl's gonna become a woman this girl's alive stunning who then is this according to Mark this riveting story would indicate that he is one who has the power to call death to give up its host to life don't get the theology of it wrong what it really signifies then is that the enemy given our rebellion and the consequence from the garden has been reversed in this one

[28 : 03] Jesus that the most high God has come as a man to save the children and all from the destructive forces of death that he is the Lord of life stunning I've been texting a dear friend nearly died this week praying Lisa and I bringing you before the Lord the Lord of life one of the few times ever in my text I capitalized every word the way some of you do in every text life life is power over death because he is life it isn't just that he has the power of life he is life he created life nothing was created without him he's able to reverse the subjects that are given to death

Heidelberg Catechism wonderfully asked this opening question what is your only comfort in life and in death I love that they put them both what's your comfort in life and in death and the answer is that I am not my own but belong body and soul in life and in death to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ he has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil he also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven in fact all things must work together for my salvation because I belong to him Christ by his Holy Spirit assures me of eternal life who then is this this this this this Jesus is his life that's the comfort if you're not a Christian and you wonder how are these Christians standing over cemetery plots!

and yet not grieving as those who have no hope this is the hope of the Christian message that that in Jesus we have one who defeated death even his own death the power of his own resurrection is the indication or proof that he was not subject to sin not subject to death and therefore God raised him on the third day and all who grab hold of him have life now now this again the sermon is not just who then is this I hope you know why it matters because you're gonna die and I'm gonna die and on that day when others stand around one question only needs to be asked were you in Christ

because to be cut off from the source of life is to be subject to death even a second death from which you will never recover

I'm I know it's sounding serious but I'm talking about good news here I mean the news is good not only does he have authority over demons he has power over death not only will the harassment of the former one day be a thing of the past but eternal life will be a thing of our future and I saved the last story for last that little story tucked in the middle there you can put your eyes on it again she interrupted the death story with her disease you go from a man with a demon and a daughter in death to a woman who's subject to suffering disease sickness 12 years one of the gospels says I want to say that who then is this what you're going to see in this story in the middle is that he's got something not only for them later and for you later but he's got something for you now which is why I think it's in the middle they got a big word for these things a story within the story they call it an intercalation I had to say that slow so I could get it right it's inserting something in between other things I had to look it up online because Mark does this nine times in chronology it's like leap year or that extra day in February they put something in the middle in order to even out the hole in chemistry it's like a molecule from what they say or ion I don't know what it is gets into an empty space between layers of a host compound without changing its structure now in biochemistry and again I don't know what I'm saying I'm trusting the computer I'm reading it describes the insertion of a flat rigid molecule directly between stacked pairs in the DNA double helix this is a big word with big stuff in geology which to me makes a little more sense it's like sediment between different layers but in literature it's a story between stories to drive home the center of the whole thing and so you've arrived really at the center of chapter 5 with this woman suffering suffering a medical issue that was unsolvable evidently she spent all her money on it and was only worse not better

[34 : 41] I guess she needed Medicare where someone else would pay for it no at any rate she had an abnormal bleeding we don't know the reason for which she had it but she she starts to think about who then is this who then is this she says who then is this that will put an end one day to the demons and their control who then is this that will deliver people from death she says if I can only get close enough to him to touch him I'm sure I can be made clean you see this is the issue not only was her particular malady personal but it kept her from meeting with God's people it was social she was unclean so in the present world even her isolation meant she couldn't easily walk into the presence of God or God's people she was shut out now in this life from all the things that he might do for her in the next life and so she touches him

I mean you read the story it's just riveting he senses power has gone out from him he says who touched me the disciples say you gotta be kidding me I mean this we're like you're like a rock star and they're just you know the paparazzi are all around what do you mean who touched you everybody's touching you he said oh no no no now somebody's standing in this crowd not just looking for my autograph somebody somebody's standing here and needs something done for them today not only that somebody's standing here that needs something done for them today but they believe I can do it and it happened she's frightened big crowd she comes he looks around verse 33 woman knew what had happened to her comes in fear and trembling fell down before him told him the whole thing and he says daughter oh I love the word daughter you know you got the daughter the young 12 year old

Jairus' daughter and death you got another daughter this grown woman needs God's help now some of you need God's help now and he can help now see this is why we pray for healing this is why we pray for healing this is why the bible says if you got an issue physically and you need healing it's overwhelmed you it isn't that he will heal everyone but he does heal I mean let's put it this way as I asked one of my uncles what do you believe about this stuff he says the gospel is explosive and he's right it's explosive it says to call the elders and have the elders come and pray for you this is why we pray for one another isn't that right Doug because God heals he can take disease come on now he can get all kinds of things he can take fingers that don't work with medicine and other things and prayer put you back in the kitchen he can take alcohol from your life amen amen

I know I got some witnesses there he can heal have hope he can heal he can do something in the present I believe it I'll pray with you we'll pray with you we'll weep with you we'll wait with you we'll ask him we'll ask him again who then is this let me shut it down who then is this Jesus is the most high God who will one day vanquish all demons Jesus is the one who defeated death on your behalf and offers you the promise of eternal life Jesus is a very present help in the day of trouble

and that's why it matters that's why you need Jesus his mercy in the text interestingly verse 19 was met with marvel verse 20 his his healing of the daughter his authority over death was met in verse 42 with amazement his power for the woman he says let me now give you my peace these are all there and if you didn't catch it the thing that's most amazing to me is subtly hidden in these three riveting stories is the singular response in each of them somebody is falling at the feet of Jesus did you see it

I mean put your eyes on it verse six when that man saw Jesus from afar he ran and fell down before him when the ruler came from the synagogue in verse 22 and seeing him he fell at his feet verse 33 but the woman knowing what had happened to her came in fear and trembling and fell down before him this is this is this is the implication of the application of the proposition if the proposition is he's this most high God and the application is it matters then the thing that happens is people begin to fall down and worship him have you done that are you doing that do we look at him this morning in other words can this word spoken by your pastor on this day culminate in your worship that's what is supposed to happen word is supposed to culminate in worship we fall down at the feet of [41 : 43] Jesus we fall down and cry holy holy holy our heavenly father help us to find you in the story of our own life yes our story may you meet us in our story each one today according to their need but for all of us Lord may we respond beyond marveling at what Mark says beyond being amazed at what those in his day saw but may we respond with worship in Jesus name to him to hear him to hear