

Jesus, a Demon Army, and a Man.

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[0 : 00] Father, we confess before you that we are very, very influenced by our culture without realizing it. And so, Father, texts like this can sometimes be very hard for us to get our minds around.

And some of us have almost an unhealthy preoccupation with evil spirits. And, Father, to be honest, probably most of us live day by day almost as if we're atheists, not even believing that such beings exist or trouble people.

We ask, Father, that the healing medicine of your word would come into who we are and that we would be gripped by the gospel. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Please be seated. So, we're going to talk about demons. So, get your Bibles out and we're going to look at the story.

And we're going to talk about this story, which have demons as an important part of them. Mark 5, verses 1 to 20.

[1 : 04] Those of you who don't have Bibles, the words will be there as we go through this particular story. And here's how it begins. Again, in Mark 5, verses 1 to 20.

They came, that's Jesus and the disciples, they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. And we're just going to pause here for a second. One of you folks, you know who you are.

Last Sunday, I guess I'd mentioned I was going to be preaching about this text. And one of you asked me, it's a very, very good question. Was it Gadara? Was it Gerasene? Or was it Gerga? However you pronounce that word.

Like, which place was it that he went? And maybe some of you have talked to people who are skeptics. And they have a great deal of fun with this text. Because one of the places that I mentioned, if you look at one of the different gospel stories, this story is told in three of the gospels. They have different places. The region of the Gadarenes, the region of the Gerasenes. And some of them will say, actually, this other place called Gergesene. And one of them, I think it's Gerasene, is about 30 miles.

[2 : 05] That's a lot of kilometers from the Sea of Galilee. So people, skeptics, will have a great deal of fun. They'll say, can you just imagine these pigs running 30 miles before they plunge to the end of it?

It's like a pretty ridiculous story. And they'll make fun of it. And others, it just came this week. I had a conversation with one of my friends. And we got talking about the Bible. And he made the very, very standard Canadian comment that, well, the Bible has been translated so many times.

And it's been copied. And there's so many ways incorrectly that you can't really trust anything it says within it. So we just need to pause here for a second. Some of you might or might not know that all those things are going on.

But it's, in fact, what goes on in the culture. And they're very important questions. So let's deal with the first thing first. First, did this take place in the Gadara, or however you pronounce it, or Gerasa, however you pronounce it, or the region of the Gadarenes, or the region of the Gerasenes?

Well, the important thing here is this very, very interesting word, region. That's what's important here in this text. If I was to try to tell you about a place that I used to go to visit, well, here, we'll use a different example.

[3 : 16] If I was talking to a group of people who are back to the Landers, or used to be old hippies, and I wanted to talk about a place that I used to visit, I might say that it's in the region of Killaloo.

But if I was going over the border into the United States, and I met a group of Catholic homeschoolers, I would say to them that this place that I'm referring to is in the region of Combermere.

Now, why would I say that? Well, maybe not only old hippies, but anybody here in Ottawa who's gone and had a Killaloo sunrise beaver tail, you might sort of at least know what the name Killaloo is.

And so if I said this is in the region of Killaloo, you'll have a bit of an idea where that is. Catholic homeschoolers who probably like beaver tails just as much as everybody else, but if they're in the States, they've never had a beaver tail.

Well, a lot of Catholic homeschoolers in this whole part of the world know about Combermere because Madonna House is there, and Madonna House is a really important place for devout, very, very conservative Roman Catholics.

[4 : 13] And if I said, well, it's going to be in the region of Combermere, I haven't contradicted myself. Region is one of those nice words that can encompass many, many, many square miles. Combermere and Killaloo are about 30 miles apart.

But there's a huge area in between that's covered by this very, very simple word, region. So there's no contradiction. One author is using a word that certain people will go, ah, the Catholic homeschoolers, ah, Combermere.

The people who like beaver tails, ah, Killaloo, have a picture. The second thing to go on in this text is, is, you know, what my friends just said.

You know, I have the hardest time in the world convincing my non-Christian friends that what everybody in Canada knows to be true is wrong. And it is just wrong.

But because it's so constantly repeated, people just think that it's correct. It's actually a strength of the Christian faith in the Bible that you'd have a bit of a question as to whether or not it's Gergesene or whether it's the Gerasene, two different places.

[5 : 18] And the strength of it is, is that unlike Islam, which has really, in a sense, no critical study of the Koran, even though there's not as many early copies and there's lots of differences between them, is that Christians want to actually know what the original text was.

And there's literally thousands of ancient texts and there's an actual science that they go through.

And if you read an academic commentary, if you read an academic commentary, you'll come in this particular case to a footnote, which is maybe half a page long, which will go through all of the different ancient versions of the text and how you figure out which one is the correct wording.

It's actually a strength of the Christian faith that you're open to inquiry, open to reason, to figure out what's actually true. And the more they discover ancient texts of the New Testament, the more confident we can be.

And all modern versions following the scholarship will have Gergesenes. That's probably what the original word was. But even if it isn't, you know, if some other studies mean it's the other one, it's not a deal-breaker.

My Combermere and Killaloo example still works. But here's the really big takeaway that we don't appreciate and Mark's original hearers would understand instantly.

[6 : 35] Jesus has crossed the Sea of Galilee, which is really just a big lake. He's gone from the Jewish part of the Sea of Galilee to the area which is primarily pagan. In fact, it is an area that about 100 years earlier, the Romans came in and conquered that part.

And when they conquered that part, many of the residents they killed, many of the residents they drove away. But the main thing is, is that what they did is, in our modern language, is they imposed their culture on 10 of the cities and created 10 cities that would be model cities of the glories of Greek and Roman and pagan culture.

And that's what the Decapolis is. And what Mark has done right here is he's just said, okay, Jesus has now gone into this area where the occupying forces have conquered and have imposed their culture and it's a model of Roman, Greek, wisdom, and culture.

And that's where Jesus now is. So that's an important part of the story. So let's go back to the text. So we'll read verse 1 again. They came to the other side of the sea to the country of the Gerasenes. In other words, they've come to the area of model pagan cities with not that many Jews and mainly those who are pagan.

Verse 2. And when Jesus stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit. Now just sort of pause here for a second.

[8 : 03] What you're going to see throughout the rest of the text and what you see if you read the rest of the Bible is that there's three different ways in the New Testament that the Bible talks about the same being. Unclean spirits, evil spirits, and demons.

It's just three different ways to refer to the same class of beings. In the Bible here, the New Testament very clearly teaches that evil spirits exist.

And unlike in Islam or in other faiths where it will teach that God created both evil spirits, they have different names for them, and angels, the Bible teaches that that's not how things are, that God created only good spiritual beings, which we would refer to them as angels, but some of those angels rebelled against God and turned towards evil.

And that is what we now would call an evil spirit, an unclean spirit, or a demon. And this is a story very specifically, in fact, sort of a very important story to help us to understand that the Bible is trying to communicate to us the reality, the truth, that evil spirits exist, that it's not just mental illness. If you go back and you read the Bible, even in the time of King David, so a thousand years before Jesus, so a thousand years B.C., and you'll go back and you read the story, and Jesus spends, David spends some time with a pagan king, and David gets worried that the pagan king wants to kill him.

[9 : 35] So what does David do? If you go back and read the story, David pretends he's insane. And the story goes, the king said, do I need more insane people here? Get rid of this guy. So even a thousand years B.C., in this part of the world, they understood the difference, but they might get it confused, but they understood the distinction between mental illness, just being crazy, and demon possession.

But I sort of got a bit ahead of myself. But this is what's at the heart of the story. For some of us, it's an easy thing to believe. For others, it's a hard part. But Jesus comes to this area, a showcase for pagan culture. He meets a man.

Well, let's read verse 2 again. And when Jesus has stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit, a demon. He lived among the tombs. Pause again.

I was at Graveyard this week. They're very peaceful places in Canada. In fact, you could almost picture just sitting there having a quiet moment. You know, the bustle of the city all around you. It's green. It's quiet. It's very, very well maintained. And if you have that image of what's going on here, you're all wrong. Because what in the ancient world it would have been is that it would have been a place, in some cases, where there would have just been some maybe covered structure.

[10 : 53] Sometimes it would be like a cave with doors that you could move out of the way. And the bodies are put there. The bones are put there. So what this text is trying to communicate about this man would be more like if you're watching a movie and the police go into a house because they, I don't know, there's been some complaint of noise or whatever.

They're just trying to find the person. They go into the house and as soon as they go into the house, they see that the house is filled with skulls, with bones, and decomposing bodies. Now, if you watch a movie like that, what do you know instantly?

The guy who lives here is evil. And there'd probably be some type of musical sound effect or maybe just an even more awesome silence to grip you with the power of the evil.

That for a person to live amongst bones and decomposing bodies is a sign of great evil. It might be a turning point in the whole movie. And that's what you understand here with this message.

This is a man who chooses or is forced to live amongst decomposing bodies and bones. And by the way, if you know somebody who doesn't find that as a sign of great evil, you better keep your eye on them.

[12 : 15] Because that's not a good sign about your friend. You better really keep your eye on them. So let's go back to verse 3. It's going to describe the effect of this. It's almost in a sense it's like this very powerful biblical picture of the end result, what it is that an evil spirit, a demon, desires if he has more and more influence over you where he will push you.

And so the rest of these first verses, we'll read verse 3 again. He lived among the tombs and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. Now this isn't like a good example of a spiritual power.

It's an image of a man who's so out of control and does so many violent things that the people want to try to control him and it's a type of mad frenzy.

It's a type of evil frenzy. It's a type of evil adrenaline rush that's going on inside of him, not something which is good. He lived among the tombs, verse 3, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart and he broke the shackles in 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. This is a man who is completely and utterly tormented.

[13:45] You'll see it's implied here, it's made clear in another version. He doesn't wear clothes. That's not a good sign. It's not a good sign. He doesn't wear clothes.

He lives where nobody else lives. He's completely and utterly tormented. He's completely and utterly cut off from other people. And by the way, the word that's used throughout this is a really important word in the original language.

It talks about him being demonized. And the reason it's really important is that you see there's a range of being demonized. There's everything from just our normal, I'm going to talk about it more later on, different types of temptations or different trains of thought which are bad that might be in a sense encouraged by an evil spirit.

And it goes right from that to something which like you see here where somebody is completely and utterly overwhelmed and consumed and in a sense possessed by the actual evil spirits.

And the word is demonization which implies a bit of a process, a bit of a range. But here you see the end. So what happens? The man comes to Jesus.

[14:51] Verse 6, And the demon possessed man when he saw Jesus from afar he ran and fell down before Jesus 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. Now just sort of pause. It's really a very interesting dynamic that goes on here in the original language.

First of all, if you read the Gospel of Mark from the beginning to here, you'll see that this is the highest, this is the most profound statement of the divinity of Jesus seen in the Gospel of Mark up until now and it comes from a demon possessed man.

Jesus is the son of the most high God. He is of the very nature of the most high God. It is a profound trinitarian statement and it comes from the mouth of a demon possessed man.

At the other hand, the other thing about I adjure you, what's happening in the original language is that the demon possessed man is trying to cast a spell on Jesus to bind him.

[16:01] Isn't that interesting? This most profound Christological comment married with an attempt by the demon possessed man to cast a spell on Jesus to bind him. It shows the loss of the intellect and the irrationality that goes on as we come more and more if any person comes under the influence of an evil spirit.

So what does Jesus do? Of course he can't be bound by a spell. That's ridiculous as we're going to see. Although maybe the original readers would wonder what's going to happen because this demon possessed man is trying to cast a spell on Jesus.

So maybe many of the original hearers maybe in some pagan cultures if they were hearing this for the very first time they would wonder what's going to happen. But we see in verse 8 for he was bound what is your name and the man replied my name is Legion for we are many and he begged him earnestly not to send them notice that he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

Now just pause here for a second. What he says is we are an army of demons. That's what he's saying. We are an army of demons inside this man.

It's an attempt to intimidate Jesus. And then the going from a he to a them shows that in fact as we're going to see in the text that the man is possessed demonized by far more vastly more a legion is anywhere from 3 to 6 thousand people so this is a very large number of demons which are in this particular man.

[17:53] So what's going to happen? What does Jesus do? Is he intimidated? Once again remember pagans might go whoa what's going to happen next? We know the story we've already heard but let's look at it again.

Verse 11 now now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside and they begged him they begged Jesus saying send us to the pigs let us enter them so Jesus gave them permission and the

unclean spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs and the herd numbering about 2,000 rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.

Now we have to pause make sure we understand what's going on in the story. First of all I don't know how many of you know this logicians actually have named a fallacy after this story.

If you go up and look in the internet google the Gadarene fallacy you'll see that logicians actually talk about this. And there's two versions of the Gadarene fallacy that come from this story and it's an important way to understand another a fallacy means that if somebody says this or believes this and they believe it should be true it's actually a fallacy it's something that confuses them.

And one version of this if all of the right people in all of the right positions are all thinking the same thing and all going in the same direction it doesn't mean they're right.

[19 : 21] All the pigs all think the same thing they're all going in the same direction all go to their death. This is a really important fallacy for Christians where so much of the culture actually thinks that things are right or wrong and we disagree.

We might be the only person in the company the only person in a room the only person in a class the only person in the faculty that disagrees. And that's why the second version of the same fallacy is really really important.

That if you are in a situation where all of the people who are in the right position think the same thing and they're all going in the same direction and you disagree with them it doesn't mean you're wrong.

If the people who are all in the right positions all with the same view and all in the same direction think you're wrong it's called the gathering fallacy. They still have to prove you're wrong.

They can't just say well you must be wrong. You know like if everybody in the Starbucks thinks that the Bible is just so many translations and so many versions and all that you can't trust it.

[20 : 24] It doesn't matter that they all think it. They're wrong. They have to prove it. They're sort of surprised that they can't. That's the first thing here. But here's the most important thing about this thing. So Jesus allows the demons to leave the man to go into the pigs.

And that's one of the very important signs that this story remember it maybe you don't remember I didn't say it at the beginning of the sermon. What we're reading when we read Mark is an ancient biography of Jesus and a biography where much of it is an eyewitness account but all of it is based on eyewitness accounts and written within the time frame of the eyewitnesses still being alive including eyewitnesses who don't like Jesus.

And Mark in fact as most of the gospel writers gives enough historical evidence so that when the gospel is written and this particular text might have only been written 17 years 16 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus that a person reading it for the first time could go and check and see could he find the herders could he find the man who had the demons did he hear about this is it true and so the claim is that this is true and what we can see here is that the man cannot have been mentally ill because no amount of claiming about mental illness would explain the behavior of the pigs.

This is a story which is making a very strong claim about the existence of evil spirits that they're real. That's the first thing. The other thing though is that this story actually touches at our hearts and our value because many many many people are troubled by the death of the 2,000 pigs.

Many are troubled by the death of the 2,000 pigs. Such a waste. Why did Jesus allow it? How can we trust Jesus if he allows something like that to happen?

[22 : 26] So let's walk towards it. Here's what's so wise about the text and so unwise about our doubts. And it's an un wisdom.

Our doubts might come from one of two sources or both. But here's this. Here's the wisdom of this. Jesus says the life of one man is worth more than 2,000 pigs. Do you believe that?

Do you believe that one man's life is worth more than 2,000 pigs? You see on the left human beings are a bit of a problem. I keep breathing out stuff that's destroying the ozone.

I'm causing all this problem supposedly that's going to bring the whole planet to a collapse. And so for many of us on the left we go, I don't know if one human being is worth more than 2,000 pigs.

Really? Shame on you. Do you really think that? You really think that 2,000 pigs is worth more than one human life? If there was a story in the newspaper and for some reason it was able that if for some reason whatever it is, if you killed the 2,000 pigs a child would live, would you hesitate over that decision?

[23 : 34] If you hesitate over that position, I say to you, shame on you. And from the right, you go with the economic value of the 2,000 pigs. The right aren't left out of this either.

We can't just say, oh, those social justice warriors. No, no, no. If you go, oh, 2,000 pigs, that's worth clicky, clicky, clicky, click. Shame on you. Jesus is wiser.

One human being is worth more than 2,000 pigs. Always worth more. And on one level, if all that happens is that for the price of 2,000 pigs, a very powerful story about the reality and the nature of demons is given to us, it's a very small price to pay.

But why do we even doubt the goodness of Jesus? Like, what is it about our heart that we would doubt the goodness of Jesus that for whatever reason that he allows it to happen, that it's only for good?

I'm just going to ask you one for instance. Remember I told you that he's in a region that about 100 years earlier had been occupied by the Roman forces. The locals, many of them, of course, were killed, many of them driven out.

[24 : 49] Pagans are placed there. They make 10 model cities to extol pagan Greek and Roman culture. And we might all forget for a moment that, of course, Jesus and his disciples are a conquered people.

They are under the thumb of the Roman authorities. The Romans are in charge and the Jewish people are a conquered people. And what difference would this make in the entire story if I told you that those 2,000 pigs were meant to feed the army of the oppressors?

Would it make a difference to you in that story? Imagine you're watching a Second World War movie and it's a story about Holland or it's a story about Norway.

And part of the story is that some Norwegian or Dutch, we'll put Norway, some Norwegian freedom fighters are able to go and destroy pigs that are going to feed the Nazi troops.

We would make a movie of that and we would cheer for the Norwegians as we should. No, I'm not saying that's what's going on, but have you ever even thought about that?

[25 : 58] Like, why is it in our heart, brothers and sisters, that we doubt the goodness of God and the wisdom of Jesus? Why is it that we doubt that he does not have a good reason for why he allowed that to happen?

A reason that when we see him face to face, he will tell it to us and we'll go, gosh, that's a good reason. I am so sorry, Jesus, that I ever doubted your goodness and your wisdom in the affairs that are described here.

So what happens? You see, in some way, in this story, if verses 3 to 5, you get a picture of what it is that if an evil spirit starts to have more and more of a hold or role in your life where the demon wants to lead you, in the rest of the story, you're going to see a very, very simple but powerful picture of where Jesus will lead you, where the Holy Spirit will lead you.

Let's look. Verse 14. The herdsmen fled and told it in the city about what, you know, the pigs all rushing into the sea.

They told it in the city and in the country and people came to see what it was that 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.

[27 : 40] He's sitting with people. He's in control of his faculties. He's clothed. He's having a good time with Jesus and the apostles.

That's where Jesus will always lead you, to free your mind and make it work properly, to lead you to be at peace with others and with him.

To help you regain who you really are, that's where the Holy Spirit will lead you. That's what the gospel will do in your life.

But notice that people are afraid and here we see something which is quite profound and very, very amazing. amazing. Look at verse 16. And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs.

And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. Now this is really quite an amazing thing if you think about it for a second.

[28 : 50] And it really goes to the very, very heart of the gospel and how God deals with us as human beings. If you think about it for a second, here's Jesus by a mere act of his will can cast out thousands of demons from a man.

These people can't tell Jesus what to do. Like how can they deal with that power? But they ask him to leave and he leaves. You see, what the Bible describes in the overarching big picture of what it is for us to be human is that God made human beings.

He made you. He made you with the purpose and the intent that you would know your creator. You would know God with love and affection and trust. And then in a sense, in the cool of the day, you would be able to walk with him and have sweet conversation and be completely and utterly naked and completely and utterly unashamed.

And that's how God made us to be. That is what we were really designed to be. And we used our freedom. You can't have love without freedom. And we used our freedom to turn away from God, to seek to be a God ourselves, to no longer trust God, to think that God had evil purposes and would hurt us.

And we turned away from God to be God's ourselves. And as a result, we no longer are comfortable revealing who we really are. And we're no longer, our relationship with other people is always dealt with in problems, some good moments and some bad moments.

[30 : 18] And our relationship with the creation is all messed up. And God, in his love, seeing our freedom and desiring to preserve our freedom, he sends his son to do what we cannot do.

And he sends his son who suffers the trials and temptations that we do only without rebelling against God, accepting the father's will, never breaking communion with God, living a life that even his enemies said was sinless.

And out of love, this man who by a mere act of his will can cast demons out of a human being, this man allows himself, he's going to Jerusalem to die, he dies on the cross, how could that man be bound?

The only reason he can be bound is it is his love for you and me and his obedience to God that puts him on the cross. And on the cross he dies.

His destiny is offered to you and he takes your doom, your wrongdoing, he says, I will take upon myself and I offer you my perfect life.

[31 : 26] And we freely accept or reject. So it gets right into the heart of it. But some of you might say, no, no, no, no, George, George, George, George, George, George, you missed something in the story.

He doesn't really accept the demon possessed man who's now healed. And I have a worry that I'm like that guy. Yes, Jesus might do something in me which is really wonderful and helpful, but at the end of the day when I want to get into the boat with him, he won't pick me.

He won't pick me. But that's to not understand the story. In fact, the story ends in something very subtle but very powerful and very profound.

Look what happens in verse, continue reading at verse 18. As Jesus was getting into the boat because the people wanted him to leave, the man who had been possessed with demons begged Jesus that he might be with him.

And Jesus did not permit him but said to him. Now here what we see is it's not that Jesus says, you know, I don't like you. I think I have better fish to fry than you. You know, I don't know.

[32 : 32] You know, you're probably a pagan. No, no, no, no, no. Jesus gives him, commissions him and gives him a mission. Entrusts something very important to him. Look what Jesus says.

Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he's had mercy on you. And the man went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him and everyone marveled.

You know what is so wonderful? In the gospel, it's done very subtly. Later on, go home and read Mark chapter 8. If you read Mark chapter 8, just before Mark chapter 8, there's a very famous story in the gospels where Jesus feeds 5,000 men.

And in two of the gospels, there's a second story which is told. Jesus feeds with a few loaves and fishes 4,000 people. And where is this?

It's going to happen about a year later. Where are those 4,000 people who come to seek Jesus out in the wilderness and spend so long with him that they run out of food because they're lapping up every word they say?

[33 : 33] It is where this man goes. He goes. And the same people who want Jesus to leave.

This man is so used by God that 4,000 people spend days with Jesus and run out of food. And Jesus feeds them with a remarkable miracle.

You see, Jesus, if you're here this morning and you might say, you know what? Guys don't pick me. Or girls don't pick me. Bosses don't pick me. Hockey teams don't pick me.

The military doesn't pick me. Nobody picks me. Nobody likes me. And Jesus can't like me. That's a lie that comes from the devil. Jesus never turns anybody aside.

He never does. He never, ever, ever, ever does. I have some points. I'm not going to put them up. They'll be on the screen. They'll be sort of summarize some of the things I say.

[34 : 40] I just want to end with one other thing. Here's the thing which is so important to understand is that the more you and I are gripped by the gospel, I mean, when we receive Jesus as our Savior and Lord, not only does it mean that whatever is demonic within us will be cast out and that you can never be possessed by a demon, but there's something else which is so really important because the way most of us experience demonic temptation is this.

Something goes bad in our family and we're tormented by it. We're tormented. Why is it that my husband did that?

Why is it that my wife did that? Why is it that my kids did that? Why is it my parents did that? And it torments us, it torments us, it torments us.

And we never stop to think that we're not God, we're not the center, like what is it about, like why is it that all of a sudden our pride is so inflamed as if everything that happens to another person's life is all about me.

And the other thing that goes on, which is how most of us experience demonic temptation is this. A few days ago, you say something to somebody and it's really cutting, it's really cutting.

[35 : 58] Or you tell a lie and you get away with it. Or you do something to hurt a person and then as the days and the weeks go on, it wears away at you, it grinds at you.

And you think to yourself, I am such a loser, I am such a failure, if only everybody knew, I am such a liar. Why is it that I say things? That's the thing about me.

I think people know about me, I can't let people get close to me, because you know what it is?

That's just what I'm like. I put people down, I put them in their place, I'm filled with foul language.

If they only knew how bad I was, and we're tormented, and we're tormented, and we're tormented, and we're tormented by it. And the reason we come to church to hear the gospel is this.

On the cross, Jesus knew about that bad word. He knew about your pride. He knew that you would lie. He knew all about that, and when he knew about it, he still knows that about you, and still he died on the cross for you, and every single wrong thing you have ever done, and whatever punishment should properly come upon it, that fell on him because it would unmake you, and there's nothing missed.

[37 : 21] And when you stand before Jesus, it will not be because you were really good at never telling a lie, or putting somebody in their place, and putting somebody down.

No, you stand before Jesus clothed with his perfect relationship before the Father. You stand before him, and you can say, Father, I am so glad.

I have nothing of merit that I can offer to you to make myself right with you. I stand before you with the merit of Jesus. And as this truth grips us to humble us and say, you know, it's not about me, it's not all about me, it's not all about me, and while the gospel grips us to understand that Jesus knew that too, and so I can say to the Father, Father, forgive me for a line, and I can say to the person, forgive me for a line, because I can be humbled by the gospel, and through being the gospel, I can begin to have that type of self-possession whereby the devil cannot say, you failure, you loser, you are so dirty, you are so unclean, you are, no.

I'm made right with God by the death of Jesus. And I stand before God not only because my sin has been dealt with, but because his righteousness closed me, and I have no other ground than that to stand before him.

Satan, be silent. Shut up. I will cling to the cross. I will remember Jesus. He is my identity.

[38 : 59] He is my freedom. He is my standing before God. And thanks be to God, I have no other. I invite you stand. Just bow our heads in prayer.

Father, we ask that the Holy Spirit would move with might and power and deep conviction amongst us, that you would help us to be gripped by the gospel, that you would help us to be gripped and taught by these words, that you would help us, Father, neither to start to live like pagans where we are worried about evil spirits everywhere, behind every bush and in every stream and in every nook and cranny, that we neither live like pagans nor that we live like atheists, as if there are no evil

spirits, that you help us to watch, but most of all that you would grip us with the gospel, that we would be fed by your word, and that when Satan tempts us to despair, that you would make the gospel more dear and more clear to us, that you would help us to share the gospel with each other. Father, we ask for this mighty work of you in our lives, all for your glory, and all God's people said, Amen.