

Mark Ch5 v 19

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[0 : 0 0] up to the moment when Christ will come to Calvary and there he will sacrifice himself in the place of his own people for their sins. And the whole of the gospel is filled up with narratives of the journey of our Lord towards Calvary. And here we have one of these narratives, but I believe that even within these narratives we can see a picture of the whole gospel story itself. And I believe here this morning in this text we have exactly that. You see at the end of Mark chapter 4 we read from verse 35 that Jesus gets in the boat and he crosses the sea. And in crossing the sea he has to go through a storm. And by going through the storm he reaches the other side. And there he redeems this one man from his life of sin. And you know if you were to paint a picture of the gospel would it not be exactly that of the Jesus who crossed the storm, who came through the storm of the humiliation as the shorter catechism puts it, of being born in a lowly state. The storm of coming through the every trial and temptation of being in this world. And the storm of going through

Gethsemane. And the storm of Calvary itself where Jesus came through the storm. He crossed the storm in order to redeem people from their sins. But you know it goes further than that. Because this man, you know if this man was to tell his testimony of what happened to him, he would say, Jesus crossed the storm in order to redeem me. You see this man, it didn't matter supposing Jesus did heal anybody else. But as we read it, he was driven out of the Decapolis. So this man was the only man whom Jesus healed when he crossed the storm. And this man could say, he crossed the storm in order to redeem me, in order to save me from my life of sin, in order to bring me back from the clutches of the devil, in order to save me. He came across the storm. And you know friends, as a Christian in here today, we can say the exact same thing. We can make it as personal as that. Jesus crossed the storm. He came through the storm in order to redeem me and you from our lives of sin. But you know it goes further.

The picture goes further. Because this man would be able to say, he did for me what I couldn't do for myself and what nobody else could do for me. We read in verse 4, 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. No one could do anything for this man. No one could go near this man. No one could save this man. This man couldn't save himself. And so this man's testimony was, he did for me what no mere man could do for me. The God man saved me. And he saved me from my life of sin. And if you're a Christian in here. And if you're a Christian in here, you can say that exact same thing. He crossed the storm for me. He came to save me personally. But he did for me what I couldn't do for myself. And he saved me from what nobody else could save me from. He saved me from my life of sin. I want us this morning to see five contrasts in the story of this man. Five opposites, if you like, that I believe are apparent in this story. And that each individually will give us a lesson this morning. Five contrasts, five opposites that we find in the story of this man who was demon possessed. The first contrast, the first opposite that I want us to see was that he was living his life amongst the dead. We read in verse three, he lived among the tombs. Here was a man who was alive naturally. Yes, he was demon possessed, but he was alive. And he was living his life amongst dead people. He was living his life amongst people who were not alive. He was living his life in the places of the dead. And you know, people would look at him and the lawyer was demon possessed. They might say, what is he doing? Why is he living his life amongst dead people? What attraction is there in these places?

What does he find entertainment in these places? But this man was so gripped by sin. He was so demon possessed. He was so demon possessed. He was so demon possessed. He was so demon possessed. His attraction, his entertainment, his life was found among the tombs, among people who weren't alive. He was alive.

But the people whom he would spend his life around were dead men and dead women. But my friend, I want to say this morning that that's a picture that you and I, if we are Christians, can relate to. You see, if we look back, before our lives were saved by Christ, we were living people naturally, living our lives among dead people spiritually. You see, the Bible tells us that we were dead in our trespasses and sins. We were dead spiritually, yet we were alive naturally. And naturally, we were living our lives among these people. And in the places where these people, where the devil had his playground, if you like, where there was no entertainment and no satisfaction, no attraction. You don't need me today to describe these places to you. You know what these places are and you know what they're like. They're the places where the devil gets his entertainment. The theatres of this world in which we were so often a part of, and we would go to, and we thought there was attraction there. We thought there was entertainment there. We thought there was satisfaction there. But really, they were places filled with people who were dead. Dead in their trespasses and in their sins. And there's no attraction there. You know, I wonder if this man, after he was saved by Christ, I wonder if he looked back on his life and he said, why did I ever go there? Why did I ever spend my time amongst the tombs? There's no life there.

[7 : 49] There's no attraction there. There's nothing for me there. And friends, is that not exactly what you say this morning as a Christian? When you look back on your life before Christ and you look at the things that you did and the places where you were, do you not say, why did I ever go there? There's no entertainment there. There's no real satisfaction there. There's no attraction for my soul in these places. And if you're not a Christian in here today, you might be looking at me and saying, is this man saying that I'm living my life amongst the tombs? That's exactly what I'm saying. If you live your lives in places where there's dead people and they're dead in their trespasses and in their sins, oh, don't get me wrong. There's plenty of innocent places. But you know exactly what I'm talking about. The places where the devil gets his enjoyment and sin is all that's there. And it's so consummated by sin. And it's there that you dwell and it's there that you spend your time. Then yes, you are living amongst the tombs. You are living in the dead places. And perhaps you're even here this morning and you're not a Christian. But you too can look back and say, well, I don't really find enjoyment there. I don't find attraction there anymore. I spend time there, but it's not for me.

And if you're here this morning, there's got to be a reason why you're here this morning and not a Christian. And perhaps the reason is you're searching for the place where you will find attraction, where you will find something for your soul that is meaningful and gives and fills your soul with that something good that we were singing about. He fills the hungry and the thirsty. And if you are hungry and thirsty this day, then you've come to the right place. Because here you meet with living people, people who are alive in Christ. But more importantly than that, you've come to meet with the living and the true God. And that, my friend, is a good place to be. This man was living his life amongst the dead people. And it's only when we are saved that we see the contrast. The second contrast that I want us to see in this man's life was the power of Jesus versus the power of the demons.

You see this, Jesus comes off the boat and immediately it tells us that the man ran towards him. Now, this man was demon possessed. And obviously, the demons had possession over most of his faculties.

But I would not say that the demons had possession over all his faculties. And the reason I say that is because when this man saw Jesus, he ran towards him. Verse 6, when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. And it has this idea of worship, this falling down on his face before him, has this idea of worship. And this man, yes, he was demon possessed. And the demons had possession over a lot of his faculties. We'll see that in a few moments when you hear the voice of the demons from within him.

And the demons had possession to take him to the tombs and to cut himself and to break the shackles. But I believe that this man coming to Jesus was not the power of the demons, but the power of Jesus.

[11 : 53] You see, as sinful man, it is not sin that goes towards Jesus. Sin is the opposite of Jesus. God cannot look on sin. So sin would go as far from Jesus as possible. But this man, so in knowledge of his sin, and because of his sin, he goes towards Jesus. Why? Because the power of Jesus draws him to him.

Calvin puts it as being irresistible grace. This man must go towards Jesus because the power of Jesus is such that it draws him to himself. And you know, I don't need to do much explanation in that because if you're a Christian, you know exactly what that's like. There is something in this Jesus, the power of this Jesus is such that it draws you to him. And you come because of your sin. It's not your sin that goes towards Jesus. It's because of your sin that you go towards Jesus. This man realizes that he is not right. But in Jesus, he sees the one who can cure him. And because of his problem, he goes to the solution. It's not his problem that goes to the solution. It's because of his problem that he goes to the solution. And that's exactly our testimony this day if we're Christians.

It's because of our sin that we go towards Jesus because he draws us to him. But I believe it's right to look at the power of the demons as well. We see it so evident in this chapter. It tells us when the voice comes, when Jesus asks the man, what is your name? And the demons reply, my name is Legion, for we are many. Now, Legion is a military term that speaks of about 6,000 soldiers. Such was the power of the demons within this man. It was like 6,000 soldiers, all with one accord. You see, that's what the power of the demons have as a benefit for them. There is no divisions within them. They are all of one accord, all seeking to wreak havoc in the life of this man, all seeking to destroy this man in sin.

6,000 strong, all with one accord. And they have such a grip on this man's life, such a power in his life that they've really ruined his life altogether. And my friends, this morning, I want to reiterate what I find in this passage, that the power of evil, the power of the devil and his demons this morning is a strong power. Why do I say that? Because it's what Paul says in Ephesians 6 verse 12, he says, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil. In heavenly places, my friend Paul is saying, the enemy, the foe, the one whom you're battling with, the devil and his demons and the evil powers, this is not flesh and blood. This is not some small foe. This is a powerful foe. Every single day as a Christian in battle with this foe, you be reminded of the fact that this is not an easily defeated foe. This is a strong foe, 6,000 strong in this man, all with one accord. And look at the power that they had. And Paul, because of that, says, you must armor yourselves with the armor of God. You must take the sword of the Spirit. You must be ready to face battle with this foe, because if you're not, if you're not, he'll defeat you in battle.

But you know what's great? Is that the power of the demons is no match for the power of this Jesus. We read that in the passage. The demons come, and you know, before they've even said a word, they're already defeated, you see that when they beg Jesus, oh, send us into the pigs. What are they saying? They're saying, we know that in the light of you, Jesus, we have no power. The demons don't even put up a fight because they know that they're defeated. This Jesus has won the war with the devil.

[16 : 57] This Jesus is more powerful than the evil forces and the evil powers. And my friend, this morning, you take encouragement in the fact that the war is over, and this foe is defeated. He might have battles against you. Every single day, you will come into combat with this foe, and he'll whisper in your ear, and he'll do his best to wreak havoc in your life. But you rest assured in the fact this foe is a defeated foe in the sight of this Jesus, because this Jesus is more of might by far. He's more powerful than the power of the demons. And they beg him, they beg him to send them into the pigs.

You know, friends, when we battle the spiritual forces of evil, when we battle the evil one, who is like a roaring lion, we must do so in the strength of King Jesus. You know, what I love about Ephesians 6 is that after Paul describes the armor, at the very end, he says, having done all this, remember to pray. Why? Because you pray for God's help. You pray for Jesus to stand by your side, because with him by your side, you can overleap any wall. You can do all things through Christ, who strengthens you. And you, my friend, will have the power to overcome the evil one.

If you have the armor of God, and you have your Jesus by your side, then this foe's power is easily defeated, because this Jesus is more powerful than the power of the demons.

The third contrast that I want us to see is the people's response and the man's request. You see, Jesus sends the demons out of the man's life, and the herdsmen who see the pigs run into the sea and be drowned. They go into the city and they tell the people, and the people come, and in verse 17 we read, 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 them.

Here you have two contrasting opinions of Jesus. The people who say, depart from us. We don't want you here. And you have the opinion of the man who says, don't let me leave you. The people say, we don't want you anywhere near us. The man says, I can't stand but be anywhere but with you.

[19 : 53] You see, it's the same opinions that we have today. There's nothing new under the sun. You still have the two opinions. The one of the world that says, we don't want this man to rule over us. And the one of the Christian who says, I don't want anyone but this man to rule over me.

But you know, in this story it's so sad to see the world's opinion. Really what they're doing is that they value their earthly materials more than the Saviour. You see, Jesus comes to them and they say, get away from me. You've killed my pigs. And so we don't want you to be here. In other words, they value the swine more than the Saviour. And they say, crucify him. We don't want him here.

Leave us. We don't want you, Jesus. And you know, it's so sad to see the irrationalness of the world.

We see it in verse 15 when they come and they see the man, the demon-possessed man. And he's sitting there clothed and in his right mind. And it tells us they were afraid. Here were people who saw the man who was out of his mind his whole life, living amongst the tombs and self-harming. And when they've seen him like that their whole life, they're not afraid. But when they see the man in his right mind, when they see him normal like everybody else, they say, oh, we're afraid. Oh, there's an irrationalness about this world that values swine over the Saviour. The irrationalness of the world that fears the man in his right mind. And I'm asking you this morning, do you value anything more than this Jesus?

Is your opinions in some way unbalanced and irrational? Are you viewing things in the wrong way? Do you view the swine of more worth than the Saviour? Because then, fourthly, we see the man's request and Christ's response. The man begs Jesus to stay with Jesus. And Jesus says, no. You see, this man wanted to be with Jesus. And many people have asked, well, the only reason he does is because he fears the demons. You see, you have that idea that because when Jesus came, he cast the demons out. And the man says, well, if Jesus goes, then maybe the demons will return. And there's that fear within him. And perhaps that's where his faith begins with. I do not deny that faith sometimes begins from fear.

[22 : 45] But you know, I believe it turns into a love. Because I believe there's people in here today who will testify to the fact that their faith began by fearing a lost eternity. There's people today who say, the reason why I believed to begin with was because I feared dying and going to a lost eternity.

And if I ask them today, is that still the same reason why you believe? They say, oh, no. Now I believe in this Jesus because I love him so. And he's my all and my in all. And I don't want to be with anybody else but be with him alone. It's like the story of Peter. You remember when he's in the boat and Jesus comes to him walking on the waves. And Peter says, bid me to come. Why does he say that?

Because being in the boat is not enough. If Jesus is on the waves, Peter must be on the waves too. Because he must be closer to Jesus. That's Peter's desire. And true faith is always desirous to be nearer to Jesus. And my friend, today is your desire to be closer to your Lord. This man, his faith may have begun through fear. But his faith was because he loved the Savior so. I love him because he first loved me. But then we see the response of Jesus. And you know, it might be a strange one at first.

Verse 19, he says, no. No, you can't come with me. You must stay. You see, Jesus had a mission for this man. Jesus was providing for the area of the Decapolis. Because what he's basically saying to the man is, the demons may have gone, but the people still remain. And these people are driving me away. They're driving me out of this region. And because they are, I need you to stay.

They're driving me away. They're driving me away. But you must stay. And you must preach the gospel. You must be an ambassador for me. You must testify to what I've done. You see, what Jesus is doing is making provision for this area. And Jesus always makes provision. Although he might be gone, the gospel will continue to flourish in this area. He makes use of this man. He doesn't need the man, but he uses him. And you know, that's true all down through the years. He has no need for any one of us or our skills or talents. But he uses us for his glory and for his kingdom's cause. And there's a timing for every mission. You know, there was a time when Jesus sent out disciples. There was a time when he sent people to different lands to preach the gospel. But at this stage, Jesus says, no, you must stay.

[26 : 01] And you know, friends, I believe there's a special significance for us here today. There's a time when the gospel was flourishing in our land and we would send missionaries to foreign lands. And that's a great thing to do. And it's still a great thing to do. But sometimes the emphasis changes. And sometimes the word of Christ says, just go to your home and tell your friends and your families of what the Lord's done. Now it's time to go home and to be a missionary in the Decapolis. Now it's time to be a missionary in your own home. Now it's time to go home. And friends, maybe the Lord's voice comes to us and says the same thing. We see the need in our land. And to be a missionary does not mean to go to foreign lands. Maybe the Lord's voice is coming to us and saying, go to your homes and tell them there of what the Lord has done for you. Because I am using you here and I am making provision. You know, friends, there's times when we think the cause of Christ is so minimizing in our land that it's gone.

But this Lord always provides. He will build up the walls of his church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And so we must have the faith to say, I will go to my home and I will tell them of this Jesus and I will be faithful by being used by this Lord. And who knows? Because the fifth contrast is a difference in the Decapolis. We read that the place rejected Jesus. It drove him out.

But then through the demoniac, the man who was possessed by the demons, through his testimony, we read in verse 20, everyone marveled. And you know, if that was the end of the story, we could say, well, perhaps there was a change. Perhaps there was a difference. But you know, that's not the end of the story. If you turn a page with me, and if you go to the end of Mark chapter 7, in verse 31, we read this, then Jesus returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee in the region of the Decapolis. Here is Jesus back in the Decapolis. And it says, verse 32, is that not amazing? Is that not amazing? Here was people who begged Jesus to depart. They begged him to be away from them. And then in a few, I don't know what the time frame was, but very soon they're back.

And they're begging Jesus not to leave now, but to place their hands and to heal them. Oh, my friends, I'm not saying that it was all through this man's witness. I can't say that.

But what I can say is that I know the Lord used him. And he used him in his testimony. That's all his message was. You know, so often we say, I can't be a witness. I don't know enough Bible.

[29 : 45] My friends, if you're a Christian, you have your testimony. And you obey Jesus when he says, go home and tell them what I've done for you. That's what this man did. And look at the difference.

Through God working through this man. Look at the difference in the Decapolis as they begged Jesus not to depart, but to stay. You see, that's the difference this God can bring. He uses men who were taken from the clutches of the devil. You know, another excuse we use is that I'm too sinful.

I'm too sinful to be used by God. You know, if he used a demon-possessed man, if he used a demon-possessed man, can he not use you? You've never been demon-possessed, I don't think. But you know, I don't marvel. I don't marvel alone that he uses the demon-possessed man. I marvel that he uses me because I don't know the demon-possessed man's sin, but I know my own sin, and I know my own life. And I marvel that this God can use sinners like me and like this man. And because of that, I know that he can use you. If we're willing to be used, he can use us in his service. And who knows what can happen? You know, this is a further reminder never to doubt the power of this God. Do we doubt this day that God could not fill this church again? Do we doubt that he could not turn this whole nation back? Do we say, oh, well, Scotland's time is done. Why? Why do we doubt that? Why do we say these things? Because we're doubting the power of this God, the power of a God who can use demon-possessed men to change a whole region. If he can do that, what stops him from changing Lewis and Scotland and this world? We must believe. You know,

I said there was five contrasts. I said a lie. I've got one final contrast. There's one final difference I want to make. And it's a difference. This morning has all been about contrast. And there's one final one. There's a contrast of how you walk out these doors this day. You see, if you're a non-Christian, this morning you've sat and you've heard the story of a man who was taken from the clutches of sin and taken into the service of the Lord. And you can leave this morning and say that's good for him.

But it's not going to be me. Or you can leave this morning and you can say, isn't it amazing how God worked in his life? Won't he work in mine? Won't he convert me? And you can leave this morning praying to God that he would change your life just like he changed the demoniacs. But you know, if you're a Christian today, there's a contrast in how you can leave too. You can leave this church this day saying, well, Scotland needs to change. Lewis needs to change. We need revival in our lands.

[33 : 18] We need a difference to be made. And we can go and we can talk about it. And that makes no difference. Or we can leave here this day and we can pray to God as a united front. And I'm not saying revival will come. But I'm saying we can leave here and we can pray to God as a united front asking him that he would use us. It doesn't matter who we are or what we know. He can use us to be used in his service. And who knows? We can leave this place saying, well, I've heard that, but I'll implement it later on. Or we can leave here with the voice of Jesus ringing in our ears. Go home and tell your friends of what I've done. Because by doing so and by God working through us, God can change this place.

Do you believe that, friend? Do you believe he can make a difference? With man, it's impossible. But with God, nothing is impossible. Let us have the faith to believe in him. Let's pray.

Our gracious God, we pray that you would give to us the faith to believe in who you are. The faith to believe in the all-powerful, almighty God who this day sits on heaven's throne and who is in control of all things. We pray that you would give us the faith to go to our homes and to be witnesses and ambassadors for your name's sake. Oh, we pray that you would help us. For we so often go wrong. We so often do not put you first, but we put ourselves first. Help us to pray to you. We pray that you would pour down your spirit amongst us. Pour down your spirit to be with us and in us and in this land and in this nation again. Give us the faith to know that you can do it. And you can do so much more than we can ask or even think. Fill us with a great faith, a childlike faith that believes in the power of our our Lord and our God. In your name. Amen.

Our concluding psalm this morning is Psalm 40. Psalm 40 from the Scottish Psalter. That's on page 259. Psalm 40. Sing the verses Mark 1 to the end of the double verse Mark 5.

This is a messianic psalm. Words in which our Lord spoke. But you know it's words that we can speak to and I believe words which the demon-possessed man could speak. Especially verse 5. O Lord my God, fool many other wonders thou hast done. We must one believing in the wonder-working God. We'll sing verses 1 to the end of the double verse 5. Standing to sing to the tune here, child. I waited for the Lord, my God.

[36 : 53] I waited for the Lord, my God, and patiently in air, and then to thee, he filled in my heart, my voice, and and tried to hear. He too, he from the fearful pit, and from the mighty clay. And on and on, he set my feet, with respect to the■■■, his name her ■■■■■■■■, I hope he confirmed. He and He-

He pulled inside of the church and we reviewed the bride and to the glory Rooter shipY. And he In my mind, the God to magnify.

Many shall see, and thou shalt fear, and on the Lord rely.

O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord rely.

Respect thee not, the proud or such, as turn aside to life.

[38 : 59] O Lord my God, who many are, the wonders thou hast done.

Thy gracious thoughts to us were far above all thoughts are gone.

In order none can recommend to thee if them declare.

And speak of them, I would declare, and can be numbered.

In order none can recommend to thee, and can be numbered.

[40 : 31] For evermore. Amen.