Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Dominating Powers, Part 2
Scripture: Mark 5:1-20
Code: 41-23

We continue in our study of the gospel of Mark and go back to chapter 5 and the opening twenty verses which we took a look at last week and we'll complete this morning.

The purpose for which Mark writes is laid out in verse 1 of chapter 1, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." This is a history of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, as is the gospel of Matthew, the gospel of Luke and the gospel of John. There are four Holy Spirit inspired, divinely authored records of His life and ministry. And even those four with all that they contain can't begin to tell the whole story. In fact, John reminds us that all the books in the world couldn't contain the record of everything that our Lord did.

But the purpose of the writing of these gospels is stated for us by John at the end of his gospel. He sums up not only the reason for his own gospel, but for all the others, when he says, "These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you might have life in His name." The purpose of the writers is that you might believe that Jesus is the Son of God and in so believing have eternal life through His name. That is the reason we give such careful attention to these gospels, and it's a tremendous joy for us again to be going through the record of Mark.

Now how can Jesus demonstrate himself to be the Son of God? He can do it with supernatural knowledge. He can say things that have never before been said and for which He is the sole authority, such as in the Sermon on the Mount when the people were astounded that He spoke as one having authority within Himself which was very unlike the rabbis who always quoted someone else. And, of course, the comment about His teaching was, "Never a man spoke like this man." He was demonstrably more wise, more erudite, more learned, had more knowledge not only of the things that people were familiar with, but supernatural knowledge that had to come only from the mind of God, of course, than anyone ever. And so He demonstrated His deity with His knowledge and He said that, He said, "Believe Me for My words."

But He also demonstrated who He was, demonstrating His deity by His works. The Old Testament says that when the Messiah comes, when the Savior comes, when the Redeemer comes, He will literally fulfill the Old Testament promises of a new creation, a new earth, a renovated earth as Isaiah describes it in great detail. It's very different than the world we know today, the fallen world. There will be a wholesale renovation of the planet, followed by the implosion of the universe and its

replacement by a new heaven and a new earth. If He is to be the Son of God, then He must demonstrate the power that God has over created order, and He does that.

He controls the wind, as we saw in chapter 4. He controls the waves. He creates loaves and fish. In fact, on two occasions, one the feeding of the five thousand, and we'll see a little later the feeding of the four thousand and that's only the men, you can add the women and the children, massive occasions in which He created food. He has power over the physical world as demonstrated by His ability to give life to dead people and to give organs to people whose organs are diseased, and limbs, new fresh functioning limbs to people whose limbs are deformed, paralyzed, or in some way injured or amputated. He has this power.

The Messiah must have power over the created world, the physical world. He must have power over another realm and that is the supernatural world since Satan is the prince of the power of the air, the ruler of the darkness who has extended his rule across the planet earth and runs the world's system. The Messiah, the Son of God, if He is in fact the Son of God must be able to have a display of power over demons and over Satan. We've already seen how Jesus has confronted demons on several occasions in the early chapters of Mark and vanquished them from the people whom they possessed. He has already demonstrated His power to withstand and triumph in temptation with Satan. Throughout His entire ministry, He demonstrated this power to command the demons and they succumbed to His every command.

Back in chapter 1 verse 32 it says, regarding His ministry in Galilee and Capernaum, "When evening came after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city had gathered at the door and He healed many who were ill with various diseases and cast out many demons. And He was not permitting the demons to speak because they knew who He was." When He didn't want them to speak, they couldn't even speak, they couldn't even acknowledge who He was.

On the one hand, there were occasions, we already saw them, when the demons burst out and said, "We know who You are, the Holy One of God." In this case in Mark chapter 5, the demon again knows who He is, "The Son of the Most High God." Jesus wanted to minimize that kind of testimony of demons for the same reason that the Apostles didn't want testimony from a demon-possessed person in the book of Acts, because it's not to the advance of the Kingdom necessarily to have as your agents, demons.

But nonetheless, they expressed the truth about Him because they knew the truth about Him. And in the book of Mark, as we already know, the only testimony so far to the reality of who He is has come from demons. In fact, we won't hear a human being acknowledge Him as the Son of God till the very end of the book of Mark when a Roman centurion says, "Truly this was the Son of God."

Did He have power over nature? Absolutely. Did He have power over the physical world? Absolutely. Did He have power over the supernatural world of demons, the forces of hell? Absolutely.

There are many occasions in the four gospels in which we see this power displayed, none is as amazing as this one...the one recorded in Mark 5 which is also in Matthew 8 and Luke 8 and it deserves to be repeated three times because it is the most extensive and extreme illustration of His power over unclean spirits. Let's read it again. Verse 1.

"They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes. When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him. And he had his dwelling among the tombs and no one was able to bind him anymore even with a chain, cause he had often been bound with shackles and chains and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces and no one was strong enough to subdue him. Constantly night and day he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains and gashing himself with stones. Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him. And shouting with a loud voice, he said, 'What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You, by God, do not torment me.' For He had been saying to him, 'Come out of the man, you unclean spirit.' And He was asking him his name and he said to Him, 'My name is legion, for we are many.' And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

"Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain. The demons implored Him saying, 'Send us into the swine so that we may enter them.' Jesus gave them permission and coming out the unclean spirits entered the swine and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea about two thousand of them and they were drowned in the sea. Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and in the country and the people came to see what it was that had happened. They came to Jesus and observed the man who had been demon possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion. And they became frightened. Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man and all about the swine. And they began to implore Him to leave their region. As He was getting in the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him. And He didn't let him, but He said to him, 'Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you and how He had mercy on you.' And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him and everyone was amazed."

As I said, if Jesus is in fact the Son of God and the Messiah, and the Redeemer, if He is the one who will crush the serpent's head, then He must demonstrate power over the kingdom of darkness. You remember 1 John 3:8 says, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil." That is part of the divine purpose.

You remember in Luke chapter 11 and verse 20 Jesus said, "If I cast out demons, it is by the finger of God. And if I cast out demons by the finger of God, you know the Kingdom of God has come." The Kingdom has come in the sense that the King has come.

What did He mean by the finger of God? If you go back to Exodus chapter 8, you read the account, the very interesting account of the magicians of Egypt trying to copy what Moses did by divine power. They had their false and deceptive fabrications of things. But eventually Moses was doing things by the power of God that they couldn't duplicate. And so it was the magicians of Egypt who in Exodus chapter 8 and verse 19 said, "This is the finger of God."

In other words, finger is simply a substitute word for power. And it is that very language that Jesus borrows from the Egyptian magicians in His comments in Luke 11 because that would be a very familiar story to the Jewish people, and they would remember that what was going on in Egypt was the finger of God, meaning the power of God and even the pagan Egyptian magicians acknowledged it and Jesus then borrowing that familiar concept and language incorporates it into His statement, "If I cast out demons by the finger of God, then you know the Kingdom of God has come." And there was no other explanation for what He was doing.

So part of His ministry was to demonstrate the power of God over the world of darkness. As we come to this account, I've told there are three dominating powers that are basically revealed here...three dominating powers. Number one is the devastating power of demons...the devastating power of demons. Though demon possession has gone on a for a long time, you see it in Genesis 6, but you don't have occasions of demon possessions being manifest throughout the history of the Old Testament. It also becomes apparent that open demon possession that has visible manifestation through human behavior begins to disappear even in the New Testament. But during the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, demon possession becomes extensively manifest. And it isn't because the demons want to manifest themselves, it is because Jesus brings them out. Demon possession almost exclusively and certainly at an amazing level is revealed during the life and ministry of Jesus and then the Apostles, then it begins to diminish as the Apostles begin to disappear. In this explosion of power that came with Jesus came an explosive revelation of the conflict that demons waged against Him and how much power He had over them.

So with that in mind, we come to the opening seven verses, the devastating power of demons, we've already discussed it. Jesus is in a little flotilla with the Apostles and the disciples coming across the northern Sea of Galilee to the eastern shore. They have encountered a storm in the middle of the night, it's taken them a while because the storm threw them off course. They finally arrive in the dawn on the other side. Jesus spoke and the wind stopped and the waves stopped. We remember that amazing event.

They finally reach the other side. They probably didn't know what was going to happen when they got there. They assumed because this is a more rural area, we're going to go over there and get a little rest maybe from the crush of the crowds and these Apostles and disciples can get a little more individual personalized instruction from our Lord. But that wasn't the plan.

As soon as He got to the other side called the country of the Gerasenes, there was a village there named Gerasa, that's why it is called that. Although in Matthew it's called the region of the Gadarenes because there's a bigger city south and east, Gadara that kind of gave its name to the region, so it's the region of Gadara and it's the actual village of Gerasa.

In that area, and there's still a village there today even with the name Kursi. "When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him and he had his dwelling among the tombs and no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain because he had often broken the chains and shackles that had bound him. They were torn apart by him, broken in pieces. No one was strong enough to subdue him." So now he's a wild man and uncontrolled. He is violent, according to one of the other writers. He is so violent that nobody wants to pass that way, he does deadly damage to people's lives. He is a threat to life.

"Constantly night and day," showing his horrendous restlessness. He's screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, gashing himself with stones. We would say psychologically he's a sociopath, but truly in reality he is a demon-possessed man whose own personality and sense of self-control has been totally sublimated. He is now simply a vehicle for demonic expression. They have totally taken the man over.

We find them, as he comes down the mountain in his normal terrifying screaming assault, verse 6 says, "He sees Jesus from a distance and he ran up and bowed before Him." The other people in that region might have not known Jesus, but he knew Him. O, believe me, the word had passed on the demonic internet, whatever that is, so that all the demons everywhere knew what Jesus was doing in Galilee. Whatever the mechanism of spiritual recognition, it wasn't that the man recognized Jesus, it was that the demon did. The demon would certainly know he was in the presence of holy God, God the Son. He is crushed immediately. The demon in the man, demons actually, though one is the spokesman, he bows. The word proskuneo is the word for worship, he falls prostrate at the feet of Jesus and he screams with this shrieking loud demonic voice that has overpowered the human voice and is using the human vocal chords, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus the Son of the Most High God?"

Why does he ask that question? Well first of all, he knows who He is, the Son of the Most High God. They always do. Back in chapter 1 verse 23, the demon said, "We know who You are, the Holy One of God." In chapter 3 verse 11 it says they all said that. Whenever He ran into a demon, the demons

all confessed that He was the Son of God. They know who He is. But what they don't understand is why are You here now? What business do we have with each other, Jesus? And Matthew adds that he said, "Before the time."

I've said this before, I'll say it again. The demons theology is orthodox. They have an orthodox theology proper, that is they know God to be who He is, a Trinitarian God. They have an orthodox Christology, they know that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. They have an orthodox eschatology, they understand that there's a future timetable in which they will be sent to the Lake of Fire and this seems off schedule...off schedule. In Luke it says that he even said, "Don't send us into the abyss, abussos, the pit, the place where God occasionally binds permanently the demons, such as He those who sinned in Genesis 6. Second Peter 2 and Jude tells us they were bound permanently in a pit. Demons don't want to be in a pit. They are evil, they are not just evil but passionately evil and they want to be able to do their evil in the world. They want the freedom to roam and create their havoc, they don't want to be locked into a pit, even if it's not the permanent Lake of Fire. So he comes and says, "Wait a minute, this isn't the schedule, this isn't the time. And please don't send us into the pit." The pit is something they could be sent to then and now, that's not future. The Lake of Fire is future. But it doesn't seem to be the schedule that they're familiar with.

Now that leads us to verse 8 and the second power. The first power is the devastating power of demons. Second is the delivering power of deity...the delivering power of deity. In verse 8 Jesus had been saying to the man, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit," to the demon who was the spokesman, the representative spokesman for all the demons that were in this man and there were many, as we will see. "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit."

On other occasions in the New Testament record that He said very similar things to that...very kind of familiar statement to the demons to be told to come out and to be identified as unclean spirits. He commands with divine authority and sovereignty the demons to vacate the tortured streaker.

He also was asking him, "What is your name? What is your name?" The man had a name, I'm sure. Had a name that his mother and father gave him when he was a sweet little baby in their arms, probably a name that had family significance and family meaning and maybe even incorporated into it some virtue or some characteristic they hoped would be true of their little one. But by now, the human name has been sublimated. The man's personality is so totally dominated that he essentially is virtually out of existence. And so the name that is given in reply is the name that relates to the force of demons that now live in him, and so the spokesman demon said to Jesus, "My name is 'Legion' for we are many....we are many." Luke says, "Many demons had entered that man," leading, therefore, to the choosing of the name.

And just to show you how extensive it is, "Legion" is really not a name, it is a military designation. And a legion had up to six thousand soldiers. Six thousand Roman soldiers, it's a military unit of

thousands of men, up to six thousand soldiers. Jesus draws that name out. Some commentators have assumed that the demons were happy to give that name because they thought it might intimidate Jesus, to know that there were that many of them He had to deal with. I don't see that as reality. I think they understood they couldn't intimidate Jesus, they know exactly who He is. But He draws the name out of them. They're not giving the name as a defense mechanism, He's demanding the name because He wants to demonstrate the extensiveness of His power over demons. It's one thing to cast a demon out of a person, it's another thing to deal with thousands of demons with a simple command.

They don't want to come out of the man. They don't want to be sent to the pit. They don't want to even go out of the country because they begin imploring Him earnestly not to send them out of the country, verse 10. They're not ready for the Lake of Fire, that's the future. That's not the time yet. They're not ready for the abyss, they don't want to go there into that place of incarceration where they can't function. They don't even want to leave the country they're in, the region they're in. It's Gentile territory which means it's the territory in which there are probably multiple religions all of them concocted by demons, cause anything other than the truth is a demon doctrine, right? Doctrines of demons.

So they've developed a perfect setting for their promotion of the kingdom of darkness. They have their own religions, their own cults, their own idols. It is a desirable context for their evil operation. And this man, this maniac man is only one feature of their evil operation, no doubt. There probably were many more demons operating in the area through the false religion, without manifesting themselves so that those false religious leaders looked respectable and even moral. They want to stay there with whatever they've got going. They want to continue to do it. It's not time for their eternal torment.

They don't want to go to the abyss, so they have a plan, verse 11. "Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain." Now this reminds us again that we're in Gentile territory, right? Jews don't raise pigs. This is a Gentile operation and it's a large, large herd, according to verse 13, there are two thousand pigs in this herd. So this is a rather significant enterprise. It might even be a village enterprise with that many pigs.

So the demons say to Him in verse 12, "Send us into the swine so that we may enter them." Inevitably someone will ask me, "Why did they want to go into the pigs?" I don't know. I am happy to report to you, I have absolute no inside into why demons want to do anything. I don't operate in that realm, I don't know any demons well enough to ascertain their motivations. I have no idea except to say they want the freedom to do damage. And if you can't do damage through a man, you do damage through animals. Is it possible that an animal could be demon possessed? Obviously it is. It is possible that a demon can literally take over the behavior of animals. Animals are not self-conscious, they don't have a personality, sorry, folks, your dog does not have a personality. You

think it does, it has certain behavior characteristics that are unique to it, but it's not self-conscious. It's not a person. And so, it has a brain and behaviors that demons can dominate. And the very action of the pigs, as we'll see in a moment, indicates what demons do. They create chaos. They remove normal instinct, and normal restraint that even animals have and create violent and deadly results.

Now just as a footnote here, a question that struck me as I was thinking this through, the demons are begging for mercy, it says the demons implored Him. They're begging. It isn't just one request. I mean, it's coming out of this man and this demon in behalf of the rest is begging and pleading with Jesus. And, you know, you might think, "Send them to the pit. The world would be a better place if we had two thousand less demons, or four thousands or however many there were in this legion. Doesn't that make sense? And, in fact, while you're doing it, send them all to the pit. Why not just rid the world of demons?"

You know, there are some people who call themselves Christians, some preachers who think that God is in some kind of struggle with the powers of hell. And that sometimes Satan wins, sometimes He wins. That is absolutely absurd. In any fell swoop, in any moment, God could take all demons that exist, myriad, murion times murion, ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, the innumerable, no doubt, millions of demons that exist and He could put them in chains instantaneously.

You say, "How do you know that?" Revelation 20 says, "In the future, in the Millennium, that's exactly what He's going to do. He's going to chain Satan and all his forces for a thousand years." He could do it any time He wanted.

The fact that He doesn't do it now indicates that He doesn't want to do it now, because they serve a purpose which is what makes it so silly for people to run around thinking they can tell demons what to do...binding demons here, binding Satan here, binding demons here. First of all, you have no authority, they're laughing at you like they laughed at the sons of Sceva and say, "Jesus we know, and Paul, we know, but who is that guy?"

But secondly, they fit into the divine purpose. Satan came to God and said, "I want to go after Job." God said, "Go after him cause it serves My purpose." Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter 12 says, "There was given to Him by God allowed by God a messenger from Satan." Messenger is angelos, a satanic angel. That's a demon who created a thorn in his flesh and he prayed three times to have it removed and God said, "I'm not going to remove it because My strength is perfected in your...what?...your weakness and you're going to learn to be humble through this."

And it was Peter, Luke 22, Jesus says to Peter, "Satan desires to have you that he might sift you like wheat." Well, what did He tell him, no? "No, I told him yes." Jesus said yes to Satan, go at him, sift him because when he's converted, he'll be able to strengthen other brothers. When he's come

through this thing triumphantly and his faith is intact, he's going to be a better Apostle and a more effective servant.

God has His purposes. He could stop the whole satanic operation instantaneously, bind them all, or throw them into the pit immediately, even into the Lake of Fire. But He has His purposes. He lets evil run its full course because it brings Him glory. It brings out...it brings out the wonder of His grace and it also brings out the wonder of His wrath. He'll shut it down when He gets ready to shut it down. But He's not ready yet.

Their diabolical desire is to work in the physical world and for now, He allows it. If not through humans, through animals. And like their king, who is called Abaddon in Scripture which means the destroyer. They are destructive. They were destructive to that man. They destroyed his personality. And they made him suicidal as he cuts and hacks at himself with sharp stones. And now it becomes obvious just how destructive they are. Verse 13 says, "Jesus gave them permission,"epitrepo means to yield. If He didn't let them do it, they couldn't do it. He's in total control of all demonic powers...let me say it this way...there's not one rogue, renegade demon in existence in the supernatural world who does anything that God doesn't want him to do, or doesn't allow him to do.

As always, they do what is destructive. So Jesus gave them permission. Why? Why? Well, for one, because when they hit the pigs it would be proof that they had left the man. And they don't want to leave the man. So Jesus is visibly making a demonstration of His ability to free a person from thousands of demons. Secondly, this proves the massive supernatural power that He has. And, thirdly, to do this puts on display the destructive purposes of demons because it doesn't take long for them to destroy the whole herd.

Verse 13, "And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea..." by the way, about two miles south of the old village of Gerasa, town of Kursi today, there's this kind of slope and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them, and they were drowned in the sea. And the theological term for his is sooey-side (laughter). Or maybe we could call it a swine dive, I don't know, but let's not get too theological here.

The destruction came fast, really fast. There's no comment by Matthew, there's no comment by Mark, there's no comment by Luke into why this happened. But it does reveal, as I said, the man's deliverance, but it does reveal, as I said, the man's deliverance. It does demonstrate the power of Jesus to deliver the man and it certainly manifests the deadly intent of demons.

They are chaotic. The pigs become violent, chaotic, mad, self-destructive like the possessed man. They've become what he was. I know PETA would be disturbed by this. They would probably conclude that two thousand pigs is worth more than one man. And the socialists and the liberals who

write about this say, "Oh, ho, this is a horrible thing, this is an indication that Jesus was anything but God because He just destroyed the economy of the village."

Not really. By the way, in the whole story, Matthew, Mark, Luke, the owners of the pigs never say anything about their dead pigs. And if it was a village enterprise which it well could have been, they never complain about that either. It really didn't destroy the whole herd. They just had a premature pork sale. They had been planning maybe for those pigs to go on a little bit longer. Some of you who work with animals, I mean , how long do you have a pig before you're ready to make bacon and pork chops and all that?

What happened was, they probably developed a kind of an export business they had so much pork. They started moving in all directions making it available. Believe me, they were down at the water getting them out of there. It didn't destroy the meat, in fact it probably preserved it for a little while, you know, being in water and it was cool and nobody complained. They just didn't have that kind of plan for slaughter and marketing. But it was probably a more genteel way to take the life of a pig than to take his life another way, I won't describe for you. Anyway, those things aside, those are not the point, nobody seemed to complain about that. Everybody understood what was happening. This man was different and the pigs were acting like that man.

Who is the man that did this? They don't know Jesus. This is Gentile area. Who's doing this? Well the instant response in verse 14, "The herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and in the country." And Luke says the same thing, reported it in the city and in the country which means they just went all over every place. The people living in the city, the people living in the rural areas and they moved as rapidly as they could to spread it around. This leads me to think that it's probably a village enterprise, maybe it wouldn't be one person or a couple of people who owned this vast a herd but rather the whole village and everybody was in on it, the people in the area.

Nonetheless, the people all came to see what it was that had happened. In fact, Matthew says in Matthew 8:34, "The whole city came out...the whole city came out." Everybody, all drawn by the bizarre testimony...What happened? The violent man that everybody would have known...what? He's bowing down and the pigs all dove into the sea? This is beyond comprehension for them. They come to find out what happens. Nobody demonstrates anger over the pigs being drowned and nobody sadly demonstrates joy over the maniac being subdued. And they had gone to great efforts to try that, chaining him up repeatedly and he always broke the chains. And that's not the issue. The issue of the maniac being subdued and the issue of the pigs being drowned, isn't the issue.

Verse 15, "They came to Jesus and they observed the man who had been demon possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind," sophroneo is the Greek verb, it means to be sane, sensible, in control. There he is clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion. And look at the response? They became frightened. Strange. They used to be frightened, they wouldn't come

near this guy without being frightened, right? He was so violent, he scared them all, he scared them to death. Now he's clothed and not naked, the transformation is total, he's seated, not rambling aimlessly, restlessly. He's harmless, not dangerous. He's quiet, not screaming. He's among the living, not the dead. He's peaceful, not tormented. And now they're frightened? Who's frightened them?

They're frightened of Jesus. They're scared out of their minds. Phobeo, phobia, it means to be terrified. They're in a continual condition of terror because they now know spiritual, supernatural powers greater than anything they had ever experienced is present. It's the same trauma of holiness that you have throughout Scripture. When people come into the presence of God, believers, or non-believers, and are terrified. You see it with Manoah when he comes home and tells his wife we're going to die. She says why? Because I saw the Lord. And if I saw Him, He saw me, I saw holiness, He saw sin, we're dead. It's the same experience that Ezekiel had when he had a vision of God, went into a coma. Isaiah had, pronounced a curse upon himself, "Woe is me, I'm cursed, I'm a man with a dirty mouth." It's the same experience John has in Revelation when he has his first vision of the glorified Christ moving in his church and he falls over like a dead man, terrified.

It's not been a long time since we saw this reaction. If you go back to chapter 4 verse 40, just across the page there, when Jesus was on the boat with the disciples, they were afraid. They say in verse 38, "Teacher, don't You care that we are perishing?" They were very afraid. And then in verse 40 when He stilled the storm, He said to them, "Why are you afraid?" Because in another one of the accounts it says they were afraid when the storm came and they were exceedingly afraid when the storm stopped. It's more frightening to have the God of the universe in your boat than the storm outside the boat...terrifying to be in the presence of divine power. The disciples were frightened after the storm was stilled, frightened of the presence of Christ because they knew they were exposed. And so it with these Gentile pagans. They know they're in the presence of one who is supernatural, who is divine, and they are...and rightly so...frightened.

Now that brings us to the final power that's manifest here and it will just take me a couple of minutes to express this to you. We saw the destructive power of demons and the delivering power of deity, how about the damning power of depravity? Most of us would like to believe that that kind of miracle would cause a revival, right? We'd like to read that the whole town, Oh my, said, "Sir, we don't know who You are, by the way, what's Your name? And could You please tell us who You are and where You come from and tell us, can You deliver us from the powers of Satan? Can you deliver us from the powers of darkness? Can you...can you change us? Can you transform us? What is Your message? What kind of person are you? Where did You come from? Tell us, please tell us. We've seen Your power, we want to know Your power in the way this man has experienced Your power. We want to know what this transforming power is."

We would like to think that a miracle on this scale, so massive, so manifest would be convincing. That's now how they respond, however. Verse 17 says, "And they began to implore Him to leave their region. Go away, Sir." By the way, Luke says, "All the people said it." It is a universal cry, "Go away." Shocking. Instead of wanting to hear more, their depraved, sin-hardened souls, not only the terror of holiness, terror of divine presence as they see as far more dangerous to them than this perverted lunatic, and all the demons in him. They're more afraid that God may be in their presence than they are that Satan is in their presence. They're comfortable, to a degree, with Satan. There's not a word of thanks from anybody for the deliverance from the terror of this violent man. There's not a word of thanks. There's not an expression of joy. There's not a query about who He is and where His power comes from. They would rather be terrified by Satan, frankly, than by God, cause Satan doesn't impinge on their sinful behavior.

They're more comfortable with Satan than with God. They're more comfortable with sin than holiness. Such is the nature of depravity, that's how all sinners are. It is more comfortable to be in the presence of evil than to be in the presence of righteousness. That's one of the reasons that the world hates Christians. The massive forces of evil are more welcome than the mighty power of God. A son of Satan far more welcome than the Son of God. Such is the deadly power of depravity to damn the sinner. And you can do a miracle that is beyond all contradiction and that miracle with all of its power cannot overcome unbelief, cannot change the heart.

Witness the response not only of these Gentiles, witness the response of the whole nation of Israel. What did they say? "We will not have this man to reign over us, crucify Him." John 3:19, "Men love darkness rather than light cause their deeds are evil." "There's none righteous, no not one. There's none that does good. They're all gone out of the way. The preaching of the cross to them is foolishness. They're of their father, the devil. They're dead in trespasses and sins. They walk according to the course of this world. They're under the power of the prince of the air, driven by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life."

As powerful as that miracle is, the power of depravity is stronger. That miracle will not break the hard heart as the whole life and ministry proves. There has to be another miracle wrought and that's the regenerating power of God has to come into the heart and break the hard heart and replace it with a heart of flesh. They didn't want any more of Jesus. They didn't want any more of His holy presence.

So, He responded to their request, verse 18, "As He was getting into the boat," that's so sad, "got in the boat to leave." Never came back there again, I told you that last week. But He did go into Gentile territory later on, we'll see that in chapter 7 in a minute. But He left. Got in the boat and left. Just so sad. What an opportunity, what a demonstration of the wretchedness, the blindness and the deadness of the human heart.

On the other hand, verse 18, "The man who had been demon possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him." This man doesn't want to live another day without Jesus. I'm convinced that there was more conversation with that man and that he is not only delivered from demons, but he is now a disciple of Jesus Christ. I think he's committed to following Christ with all that he knows, with all that is in his heart, he's begging Jesus. He doesn't want to go another day and take another step unless it's in the presence of Christ. This tormented soul has been reborn into a fresh new sanity, sociability, purity for the first time he has desires to be with one that is holy. He wants to be with the living and not just the living but the one who has in Himself the life. He would never want to be anywhere but beside his eternal benefactor. That's what a disciple is, isn't it?

But there's another surprise here because in verse 19 Jesus responds to him in a way that we might think is a little bit odd. Verse 19, "And He didn't let him, He didn't let him." It wasn't appropriate for him to go with Jesus, but He said to him, verse 19, "Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you and how He had mercy on you."

You mean, You're going to send this guy to be a missionary? Absolutely. You say, "He has no training." Humph, this is a good reminder, isn't it? How much do you have to know to be a missionary? How much do you have to know to be the only missionary in the country? This, by the way, is the first preacher Jesus ever sent out. He hasn't yet sent out the Apostles. He hasn't yet sent out the 70. This is the first person Jesus ever sent out to preach His name and he is a Gentile who had a really messed up past. And when he gave a testimony, it was like, "I don't how to tell you this but I used to be a naked maniac." Oh. Okay. "Living in tombs and..."

Go home, He says, go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you. Here He identifies Himself as the Lord. And how He had mercy on you. Oh, this is so wonderful. What does it take to be able to witness for the power of Christ? The fact that He's worked in your life, right? From the moment you were converted, from the moment you were transformed, you inherited immediately the responsibility to proclaim the name of Christ. Go to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you and how He had mercy on you.

True faith shows itself in...what?...obedience. "And he went away, verse 20, and he began to proclaim in Decapolis." Decapolis...Luke says the whole city. Well that would be the first point. Mark adds Decapolis...Decapolis is a region of ten cities, hence deca, a league of ten Greek-influenced towns east of the Jordan. And he worked his way through ten cities. This man who knew nothing but a testimony that would be absolutely only possible to explain by the power of God in Christ.

Did his ministry have an effect? Look at chapter 7 for a minute. "A little while later, Jesus goes back into Gentile region of Tyre through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee in the region of Decapolis." Jesus makes a visit to the Decapolis region. "And they brought to Him one who is deaf and..." Wait a minute, why would they bring somebody to Him who was deaf? He didn't minister in that area. He

had only been there one time, the encounter with this maniac.

Listen, the witness and testimony of that man had been going on in the months before Jesus came and they were bringing people to Him, people who needed to be healed. That's the wonderful story. And, of course, Jesus responded, touched the tongue and the ears of this deaf and mute person and healing came. Verse 1 of chapter 8, "In those days when there again was a large crowd."

The man's witness about Jesus Christ had let that whole region know who He was and when He came back, the crowds were there to receive Him. What a faithful man.

What was the response to his testimony? Back to chapter 5 verse 20, the end of the verse, "Everybody was amazed, thaumazo, to admire with wonder. Here's the first missionary Jesus ever sent out. Does that tell you a little bit about grace? Remember Isaiah, he said, "Don't send me, I'm a man of unclean lips?" Well this man could have said, "Don't send me, whoa...I've got a terrible reputation. If I get anywhere near people, they're going to run." This is grace upon grace, is it not? Transformation changes everything. And he was obedient.

What did he know? You say, "Well, maybe I'd be more obedient if I knew more." Huh, what did he know? He knew he had been transformed. If you're a Christian, you know that, don't you? Then you're responsible to be as faithful as he was.

Well, we will end it there. Father, what a tremendous blessing to be there, to be there on the eastern side of the lake, to be eyewitnesses by Scripture of this incredible occasion, to kind of live through it. How wonderful is that? To see the glorious mercy of Christ to this horrendously tortured soul and to see him become the first missionary, first missionary in the New Testament, sent out by Jesus. What mercy and what grace. And what faithfulness he exhibited, so that there was a readiness to receive Jesus when He came. Would you remind us of our responsibility? And we can't shirk that by saying we really don't know enough. If we know enough to be saved, we know enough to tell somebody else how to be saved. Make us faithful in that regard. Again we thank You for this magnificent portrait of the glory of our Christ. He is always more wonderful to us, more astounding, more astonishing, more glorious with every glimpse. May we demonstrate our appreciation and our love for Him in our faithfulness, we pray, Amen.

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