

Mark 5:1-20

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[0 : 00] Mark chapter 5. Mark chapter 5. We've been making our way through the gospel of Mark! for the last several weeks. We started it and we declared that it is the briefest of the gospels and it moves rather rapidly but we have slowing it down just a little bit.

It's taken us some time to get here. Mark's favorite word is immediately or straightway. Depending on the translation you will read, you will see that again this morning because Mark is moving in rapid session.

He is writing. It does us well to be mindful of this even in our text that we will have this morning. Mark is writing to a non-Jewish audience.

So he's writing to the Gentiles in the Greek mindset. He's writing to those who are really action oriented. There's not a whole lot of emphasis on the teaching of Christ in the gospel of Mark. There's not a lot of emphasis on the manners and customs of the Jewish people in the gospel of Mark because he is writing to the non-Jewish audience. And he's trying to declare the message of the gospel.

[1 : 03] Now, when we get to the end, there are some matters we'll deal with there but we know that Mark more than likely is writing based upon his listening to the preaching of Peter. He had been a traveling companion at least for one partial, one missionary journey of Barnabas and Paul.

He went home a little bit early and then he went with Peter and listened to Peter declare the gospel. But there's one resonating truth that we find in the gospel of Mark. We're introduced to it in the very first few verses of the first chapter and it is found, the bookend of it is found when Christ finally gives up his life on the cross near the end of the book and that is that Jesus is the son of God.

But even in the reality of that, there is so much that is uncertain about him. There's so much differing responses of individuals. One thing that Mark emphasizes and we'll see it again this morning is the demonic reaction to who this individual is, that he is the son of God, that without a shadow of a doubt, this is not someone that we think or we might believe.

Jesus himself declares that when he came, the kingdom of heaven was there. John the Baptist said the kingdom of heaven is near. Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is here. There's a big difference. You can be near where I'm at and then you can be here where I'm at. With the appearance and the coming of Christ was the arrival of the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of heaven was established the moment he began his public ministry and it finds its culmination when he calls his people to himself, comes back in all of his splendor and glory and the king ascends to the throne when he comes on that white horse and the last enemy is cast under his feet and the throne is established forever and ever and ever.

[2 : 50] But we are living within the rank and file of the kingdom of heaven now. Jesus has displayed that reality through his power, through his teaching and then we are just coming out of the fourth chapter where he veiled much of that teaching because the multitudes were declaring that he was doing these things by the power of the demons.

And so the multitudes were not receptive. They were actually denying the truth that was being displayed to them through the healing of the lame and the casting out of the demons. And so they wanted nothing to do with it and they began to blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

So Jesus in his teaching began to speak in parables and he was disclosing the truth to those who were near him. He was interpreting the parable and declaring the things to them.

He was veiling the truth to the crowds that were gathered around him and this led us to the reality that we do not come to the true understanding of who Christ is mentally. It is not in a mental ascension and we do not understand it intellectually.

We cannot listen to the truth being declared to us and comprehend it. But rather we come to an understanding of the truth by experience, by being with Christ. It is within the realm of the relationship that we understand who he is.

[4 : 04] And that led us to the place, the end of the fourth chapter, where Christ says, and I don't want you to miss this because this is so essential to what we'll see this morning. That he said, let us go to the other side.

Sometimes we forget about that because on the way to the other side, Jesus fell asleep in the boat and the seas began to overcome the boat and the people thought they were dying in the boat and Jesus gets up and tells the sea to be still.

And so we forget that it was Jesus who said, let us go to the other side. But this morning, we have the opportunity to find out why he wanted to go to the other side.

So if you're physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand up and we read the word of God together in Mark chapter five, starting in verse one, we're going to read all the way down to verse 20. It says, they came to the other side of the sea and into the country of the Gerasenes.

And 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 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.

[5 : 17] 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, what is your 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 and 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 2,000 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.

[6 : 29] The very man who had had the Legion and they became frightened. Those who had seen it described to them how it happened to the demon possessed man and all about the swine.

And they began to implore him to leave their region. And he was getting into the boat and the man who had been demon possessed was imploring him that he might accompany him. And he did not 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.

He went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him and everyone was amazed. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this day.

We thank you for your word. We pray now, Lord, that every distraction would be cast aside and that it would be the very word of God that would speak to our hearts and minds. May it not be the interpretation nor the opinion of man but may it be the very word of God that does its great work within us.

And we ask that in the end you'd be glorified by it and we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. I want you to see this morning the battle for a life.

[7 : 40] The battle for a life. When I read the word of God in particular in the New Testament there are certain things which I must come to the conclusion of.

One of those things that are beyond a shadow of a doubt is that God is in complete and absolute control of all things. That is the sovereignty of God. God is sovereign.

Nothing lies without the realm or outside of the realm of his control. Nothing lies outside of the realm of his knowledge. Being sovereign he knows all things he controls all things he understands all things and he comprehends all things.

And by the time we get to the New Testament we understand that God became flesh and dwelt among us and we call him Emmanuel. That Jesus is fully God and fully man.

There are portions of the New Testament which make it adamantly clear to us. Jesus had full comprehension of everything that was about to take place. He knew about his betrayal he knew about his death when he chose the twelve he chose the one that he knew would betray him. [8 : 53] He declared the manner of his death the timing of his death and even the location of his death repeated times. That is that Jesus was fully aware of all things that were taking place.

And that is why we must come to the conclusion that when Jesus says he's going somewhere he's going there for an intended purpose. When he said he had to pass through the region of Samaria on his way from Galilee going to Jerusalem rather than following the normal custom and going across the Jordan and going through that avoiding that rather unclean region of Samaria Jesus said we must go through Samaria.

We know that the reason he had to go through Samaria was because there was a woman that was going to be at the well at the wrong time of the day that Jesus needed to talk to. And so that assumption leads us to this reality.

When we read this chapter when Jesus said let us go to the other side of the sea he wasn't saying it because he wanted to go on vacation. Even when he said let us withdraw away from the crowds the reason for their withdrawal is so that he could impart to those who were with him.

In just a brief amount of time he would go to Caesarea Philippi which is north of the Jewish territory. It seems to be a region most unlikely for Jesus to take his disciples.

[10 : 16] It gets him away from the crowd and even then he does not take them there just so he could seclude himself. He takes them there for that is the very region in which he will pose the question who do you say that I am?

And if you know anything historically about the region you will also know that that region was the house of a multitude of false gods. So Jesus was putting his followers around a place that was declaring anyone to be God and said but who do you say that I am?

Jesus had a reason for going there. When Jesus declares the day before let us go to the other side there had to be a reason for him going to that region which if we're honest we don't completely know where it is.

If you look at the maps in the back of many of your Bibles you will see if it is any map of inequality whatsoever there were probably two different locations that will be marked it could either have been this one or this one we don't really know.

We don't have to know because Jesus was not showing us a good location to go to Jesus had a reason to be there and the reason was the man he met. And we know that beyond a shadow of a doubt because after this brief encounter he goes back.

[11 : 25] You say well he had to go back because the people made him leave my friend be careful because nobody makes Jesus do anything. Nobody. And so his departure assures us that he went across the sea took his disciples through the storm so that the disciples could learn he controlled the seas as the psalmist cries out he is the one that by his might and splendor causes the mountains to rise and says to the violent sea hush be still and all men stand in awe and fear of him and those in the boat knew that full well but there was another reason because there was a man on the other side that needed to be fought for.

There was a battle of spiritual significance that needed to be fought on the shores of the sea and I want you to see why Christ went there. Why did he fight this battle?

Number one we see the desperate condition of the man the desperation of the man somebody said pastor you're just now getting to number one I know it's okay I only got ten points and we won't I'm just joking I'm joking so we see the desperation of the man the text tells us that there is one man Luke tells us there's one man Matthew tells us there's two friend that is not a contradiction in scripture for if there were two surely there was one Mark and Luke fix their focus upon the one that is in the most desperate condition Matthew tells us that this man who was desperate was not alone there was also another with him but there was one who was far worse than the other and we notice the desperation of the man because it says they came to the other side of the sea the very place that Jesus said let us go and when he got out of the boat look here's Mark's word immediately or straight way a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met him this man ran up to him now that's rather uncommon and the reason it's uncommon is because this is a man who is living among the tombs he is unclean even among the Gentiles that's not a good place to make yourself at home he is we know from the book of Luke he is also unclothed he's not wearing anything and we know that he is tormented he's an outcast he's cast aside he's put in a place that people hope to forget about

he's not one who would just run up to anyone for most people who approached him tried to bind him and shackle him and chain him and keep him under control but yet here's Jesus landing on the shore and the man runs up to him and it tells us look at what it says in verse 6 seeing Jesus from a distance so in case we missed the point in our mind it's not like the man was walking naked down the seashore and a boat shows up and he goes and sees what's happening this is a man that is in the tombs unclothed uncontrolled and he sees Jesus from a distance and the man runs to Jesus and what does it say and he falls down at his feet you know this text is connected to a grander text as we read this chapter and I love when we read this chapter there are three different people who fall at the feet of Christ in this chapter and all three people are in desperate condition we meet the demonic who falls at his feet here we meet the woman with the flow of blood that can be uncured by any physician who will fall at his feet on the other side and then we meet the leader of the temple who falls at his feet because his daughter is dead we meet people falling at his feet and they're falling at his feet in desperation this man had a glimpse of normalcy and in his normalcy he ran to Jesus for he saw him at a distance and he fell at his feet why would he do it because he was so desperate

Luke tells us and it does us well to read the synoptics to understand it that this demon would often drive him into the wilderness to places of isolation to places of abandonment friend listen there are people who are so tormented by things it drives them to places of isolation and separation and they're living in those wilderness moments of their life and they know how lonely they are they know how isolated they are they don't need anyone to tell them when you've been in that position yourself you don't need someone to tell you we don't need someone to tell us our own state of desperation what we need is someone to show us where we can find relief for it for when that which controls us moves us beyond the sphere of humanity and it moves us beyond the absolute control of ourselves we need to find one that we can run to and fall at his feet you say well it had to be the demons the demons would not just fall at his feet the demons began to cry out later it says that they began to shout but why did they shout because Jesus had been saying to them so the words of the demons which we'll get to in just a moment was a response from what Christ was already saying don't lose the reality of the desperation of this man this man who was on the other side in non-Jewish territory in an unclean region and we see that this is the man that Christ went to the other side to see oh if there's one in scripture that we would say oh he's unfit we can see the lepers and we say oh those are

Jewish individuals who have leprosy and Jesus touches them or we can see the Gentiles or the Syrophenician woman who begs and says even the dogs eat the crumbs from the table and say oh yes but Jesus had mercy on her but what about the unclothed uncontrolled man living in the Gentile territory among the tombs in which Jesus was not supposed to even be attending and he's the one Jesus went to meet and we know that because he's the only one he talked to he said well they ran him off again Jesus is fully God and fully man now we pay attention to this because in case we think we ever get to a place so desperate that even Jesus can't find us look at where he went to find this man he said oh but that man ran to Jesus right but the only reason he ran to Jesus is because Jesus came to his side don't ever lose the initiative is always of God friend in your desperation you do not run to the father and say here I am have mercy on me the father shows up in the midst of your problem and you see one and you say wow there is the one

[18:14] I need it is always the initiative of the father who comes to the desperate sinner for we are unfit and unworthy and we cannot come into his presence we dare not come into his presence we are people of unclean lips who live among people of unclean lips and all we can do is say woe is me and beat our chest and say we don't deserve to be there but yet he comes to our side of the sea and he says he wants to fight the battle for us and we have the opportunity to fall at his feet and prostrate ourselves and say please help me in my desperation then we get to see the second thing that is the display of his power the desperation of the man that Jesus went to meet is met with the display of his power the text is adamantly clear as a matter of fact both or all three Matthew Mark and Luke try repeatedly to emphasize the reality for us no one could control the man he had often been bound with chains and he would break them he'd often had fetters put on his feet and shackles and he would snatch them off he'd often been tied up with ropes and it wouldn't help no one could control the man no power could overrule him he did whatever he wanted to the man himself could not control his own actions for the demons were leading him to do things unspeakable he was gashing himself and he was screaming out loudly in the middle of the night he was running around unclothed in the tombs he would go into the wilderness he was being driven mad and yet he

that no one could control fell down on his face at the feet of Jesus he that no man nor woman nor authority on earth had the power over fell down and cried out for mercy and the demons began to implore him the demons even invoked the name of

God look at what it says it says in verse 7 what business do we have with each other Jesus son of the most high God by the way the demons know who he is and tremble I implore you by God you say they they implore him by the name of God notice they do not use the name of the covenant God his covenant name they use Elohim which is just God they do not use the name Lord for demons are not in a covenant relationship with him but they say I implore you by God do not torment me and why are they saying this here's the demons begging the one that no one can control for he had been saying to them come out of the man you unclean spirits and again if we really want to understand this and I know hey we're in a Baptist church and this whole spirit thing kind of scares us a little that be biblical and we can say it's there in a word and we're not going to argue with the word and we're going to let the word say what the word says even if it doesn't fit our historical opinions the book of Matthew tells us that the demons are crying out that you have come before your time friend let me tell you something the demons know their time and they look at Christ and say you've come before the time it's not time you're not supposed to be here yet and it's not time you know that Satan knows his day he knows his days are numbered and that's why he's wreaking such havoc that's why even according to the book of Judges man does not progress man digresses for the longer man goes without a king they get worse for in those days there's no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own eyes my friend listen in these days there's no king in America and every man woman boy and child does what's right in their own eyes Satan knows his time and he leads people to do what they want to do as long as they can because he knows it is only man who is oblivious to the time we feel like that we are infinite and immortal and we have all the time in the world and we'll do it when the time comes but we don't know the time but Satan and his demons do they know the reality you've come before the time and then it tells us in the gospel of Luke they say not only have you come before the time but you're going to cast us into the abyss that is they knew where they were going again only man fails to comprehend the reality of where we will be you're coming before you're supposed to and we know where you're going to send us and so they begin to beg him those who are not afraid of anything those who could not be controlled by anyone are begging for mercy from

Jesus don't do it yet for you have said it's coming later and don't send us there and those who could not be controlled I love this they begin to ask Jesus for permission those that the man couldn't control and those that no one around him could control friend listen to me the matters in your life that you cannot control have to ask permission from the one who is in control and they said permit us to go into the swine and they could not go until he said okay he had to give them permission to leave now people read this passage oh man how inhumane of Christ I mean it's 2,000 pigs that run rush down the sea and they drown or rush down the shore and they drown in the sea how inhumane why would he do this why wouldn't he just cast!

them out because if it had not been we would not comprehend the severity of the demonic possession this man was not just wrestling with a small demon the demon himself declared his name to be legion for they are many and in case you wondered if this was actually a destructive possession look at what they did to the 2,000 pigs and that's the one that fell at the feet of Christ that's the one that Jesus displays his power and authority over and in a moment it's done but then we get to the third reality and that is the denial of the multitude the denial of the multitude the herdsmen who are there they run to the country and the cities and they began to proclaim everything that's happened now I'll just be honest with you as I was thinking through this I almost titled this point the disbelief but disbelief implies that you cannot believe something denial implies the fact that even though

[24 : 57] I know it's true I'm not going to act like it is true and so we cannot say this is disbelief and the reason we cannot say it's disbelief because the people who had been don't you love it when scripture talks about you as you used to be like there used to be a man sat at the gate called beautiful and begged for alms you won't find him there anymore because he got some legs one day and began to praise and he went to the temple there used to be a man who sat around the pool waiting to him in you people used to be but they came and they found the man who used to be demon possessed clothed he was sitting first of all at the feet of Jesus he was sitting clothed and in his right mind and they saw him and so you cannot say they disbelieved it they could not deny the

reality that there it is and they knew because the herdsman began to explain to them how terribly frightened see they were not afraid of the man in the tombs with the demons because that was normal that had gone on so long it's okay but it was only when the normal was interrupted with the supernatural they began to be afraid because if we're honest our natural response to that which we cannot comprehend is usually fear this is something so much other than what

I can imagine and so they became afraid and so the simplest reaction to their fear was to deny they could not disbelieve because they could not deny the reality that here's the man that's right but they just decided to deny this individual they began to implore him to leave think about that the man who took care of the biggest problem in society was asked to leave and in case that shocks you just read your church history and what you'll find out is that every time God shows up in church history and cities begin to be changed there are multitudes and multitudes and multitudes of people begging the people to leave because people get afraid of that which they cannot comprehend and they deny the power that is greater than the power that they are used to and they beg him to leave sadly so many people see the effects of Christ they see the work and the power he displays but yet they deny it they cannot disbelieve it because they cannot help but acknowledge that this did happen but they deny the reality because it is better to act as if it did not exist than to acknowledge because by acknowledging it we have to change our life so we see the denial of the multitude what is telling in this account though is that

Christ could control a legion of demons also has the power to control every aspect of creation the Bible tells us that all things were created by him through him and for him and apart from him nothing was created which includes you and I and the creator always rules over creation this is why Christ had the authority to tell the demons to leave and they did but yet he chose not to control that multitude of men he left them in their own denial and he departed one of the telling things is that we find Jesus goes back to his hometown and tells us that he could not that is he chose not to do many miracles there why because of their unbelief he was not limited in authority and power he was not limited in ability But he chose not to do it because he wasn't!

to overrule their free will I know it's a difficult thing to answer but as D.L.

Moody said there are two wings on a bird it is the will of man and the predestination of God take away one and you're just flying in a circle you've got to have them both intact he would not overrule their denial he could have but he didn't which leads us to the fourth and probably the greatest thing and it is the declaration of the truth the one who would not deny was the man who was sitting at the feet of Christ which makes a lot of sense because it's hard to deny the one you're sitting at the feet of and as Jesus is getting in the boat he begs him to go with him he implores him so as adamantly as the people were imploring Jesus to leave this man was imploring Jesus to go with him same word used there because it's the same force so as much as they wanted him to go this man wanted to go with him but Jesus wouldn't let him now this is telling we need to understand this because there's a thing biblical scholarship called the messianic secret and by biblical scholarship we don't always mean people who accept the

[30 : 26] Bible we just mean people who study the Bible and that is that Christ tried to keep the reality that he was the messiah secret and they use that as their emphasis his ministry in the Jewish region when he goes and tells people to go home and says tell no one about what I've that messianic secret that's a lot of information to give you but you were ready for it I can see the excitement on your face but just so you understand because I want you to be fully equipped able to defend your faith that when someone ever comes to you and say Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah they only did that after he died people point to scripture!

see he! he told them not to tell anyone what he did he didn't want the credit always look at them and say but where is he and if it's within the Jewish territory say ah there you go now we got to turn to the gospel of Mark because here Jesus tells him but go home to your own people and declare to them what great things the Lord has done by the way that word Lord is only used for God so he says go home and tell them what great things God has done for you who did it friend Jesus so Jesus is implying that he is the God doing the work and the man doesn't miss out on that for he goes home and begins to tell all that Jesus did for him those two words now are being used interchangeably!

there is the man he is in non Jewish territory and he goes into the region of Decapolis which is the Gentile region the ten cities originally and he begins to declare the truth of who Christ is and he declares the reality of how he delivered him not only from demons but from his desperation and

how he restored him and made him new why could he!

do it there because the Jewish people were looking for a savior who would deliver them from Roman rule and Jesus came to deliver man from Satan's rule and there was no chance of being misunderstood in Gentile territory the Jews were looking for a temporary savior Jesus came to be the eternal one there's no messianic secret but Jesus was keeping things within the Jewish territory according to their time for he had not come to be their king in the land he had come to be the king over all men and until the resurrection that was not evident to anyone at least in Jewish history it is only then that they understand he did not come to set up a throne here for Jesus himself said if I came to set up my throne now I would call down to me legions of angels and it would be set up but in the gentile territory where that was not a concern of being misunderstood for they were happily living with under the

Roman empire and within the Roman empire and they were not looking for a temporary deliverer they would understand oh we have found one who is greater and we have found one who is the true savior of all men this is the truth to be declared there is no messianic secret in scripture there is just a reality of are we prepared to really understand and accept who Christ really is Christ didn't come just to make your life better here and now that's what the Jews were looking for he came!

[33 : 47] to set you free from that which you cannot control so that you can live with him eternally and he can rule over your heart and your mind forever and ever and as S.

Lockridge used to say when you get done with all the forevers amen he did not come just to change your world temporarily but he came to impact your life eternally and until you are ready for that then you don't have a truth to declare you say well what can I declare the greatest truth that can ever be told is the very thing that Jesus told him and I'm wrapping up Jesus said go tell what great things the Lord has done for you you know the greatest truth that you could ever declare you say pastor I I don't have an answer for all those questions either this is my 20th year in pastoral ministry I've been asked just about every question I can think of and still people come and ask me other questions I with him and no one no matter how hard they may try could have ever convinced this man that he had never been in that place he would say

I don't care what you believe but for me I do know that I once was a man unclothed gashing myself being led into the wilderness controlled by and see what he does with them let's pray father we thank you for this day we thank you for the opportunity we have to be gathered together oh what a joy it is to see you draw individuals to yourself what a beautiful thing it is to see a baptism and to be able to worship together with the church family Lord how much wonderful it is to sit at your feet and have you speak into our hearts and minds Lord lead us now as we seek to be used by you for your glory we ask it all in

Jesus name amen