

Reflection Guide

Mark 5:1-17

Leaders: Consider how to equip your Community to make disciples using the tool we used at Leader training last week. It is a great way to take the encouragement from this week's text and respond practically.

Big Idea: Mark wants to continue to encourage us by showing the sovereign power of Jesus. Jesus transcends cultural boundaries to deliver a gentile of terrifying demonic power. Here he shows that no one is out of Jesus' reach and no one person is so dark or lost that Jesus cannot save. Jesus has stepped off the boat into enemy territory. He's in an unclean land and unclean place amongst the dead he's come face-to-face with a man who's filled with an unclean demon, a Legion he says. Jesus has no swords, no army, no political power, no strength like this man. The odds are stacked against Jesus.

The Man

Is there a more sorrowful picture of human existence than this man? Could it be that this man is simple an extreme example of folks that we know?

The Unclean Spirit(s)

A "Legion" is the basic fundamental unit of the Roman army - 5000 to 6000 soldiers In essence when asked his name this man's response was 82nd airborne or 10th Mountain division. Roman audience would have immediately thought "whoa".

Jesus' Power

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

What Mark is trying to bring attention to in this story is not demon possession, it's the power of Jesus. The demons hate everything about Jesus, yet they can't do anything apart from His permission. They don't have the authority, they don't have the power. Mark wants us to see the Power of this King and the Power of His Kingdom. With His word he calms a violent storm on the seas and with His Word he calms a violent metaphorical storm in a man. That's the "shalom" the "Peace" of the Kingdom of God...what sin has undone, unraveled God is re-weaving, redeeming...making new.

1. THERE'S NO PLACE SO DARK GOD WON'T GO TO SAVE SOMEONE

This is a place where no one would want to go for any reason. Contrary to all reason and expectation, however, Jesus goes there. What feels like the darkest of the dark places top you? militant hinduism in India, Isis in Iraq, Taliban Afghanistan, Boko Haram in Nigeria, Communist in N. Korea, secular buddhism in Japan. Maybe the trite, shallow materialism of suburban America... There is no place that God will not go and will not triumph to save the lost.

What context close to you seems too "dark" for the gospel to work?

2. THERE IS NO POWER STRONG ENOUGH TO KEEP GOD FROM RESCUING SOMEONE

When Jesus is done, it says this man was clothed and in his right mind, sitting there. At the end of the book of Mark, we're going to see Jesus and this man exchanging places. Jesus is naked, stripped even

of his clothes, crying out and bleeding. Jesus is driven into the tombs ... into the tomb. That is how Jesus overcame evil once and for all. Jesus absorbed evil and injustice and sin and death into himself. He died on the cross to pay for our sins so that he could wipe out evil without wiping out us.

3. THIS MEANS THAT THERE IS NO PERSON HE CAN'T SAVE.

They had given up on this guy...they couldn't even contain him physically. But there is no person so far gone that Jesus can't save. Like Paul would later go on to say, he can even save the "chief of sinners." This is supposed to encourage you this morning...b/c there are people who are on your "too far gone list". You may not admit it...but they're there. Consider that the greatest evangelist and church planter in the history of Christendom was, Saul of Tarsus, the churches worst terrorist.

God's grace is greater than all of our sin. So we can go in to the darkest of places with all the confidence in the world, not in ourself, but in the One who has sent us, in whose name we go and in whom exists all power and authority and whose Grace is enough to save the most wretched of men.

**Who close to you have you given up on? What can you do (remember) to recover hope for them?
What's the next step in you bringing the good news to them?**

How does Jesus defeat evil in us?

When you see what it cost him to defeat evil ... so he could heal you like he did the demoniac... When you see the cost, when you see him being willing to be naked and driven into the tombs for you, that shows you how much he loves you. It's seeing the infinite cost that he paid in order to defeat evil that defeats evil in your life.

4. GOD SENDS THOSE WHO NEED HIM MOST

Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." 20 And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.

This man whom Jesus had set free, everyone else had given up on, has now become the first missionary to the Gentiles. It wasn't time for Jesus to go to the Gentiles and He had his 12...but he sent this man back to the Decapolis to proclaim the Good news of God's Great Mercy. *"there is no person that God has saved that he will not use to seek and save others."* (Harry Reeder) No darkness too dark, power too strong, or person too far gone for God. He has called you and I to go and declare the mercy of God and how much He has done for us...for you.

**Do you feel disqualified to bring the good news to others?
Do you currently the sense the power of God over the evil in your life?**

No matter how messed up you are, plunge your messed-up-ness into the grace of Jesus Christ, and you can be a powerful tool for redemption in the world. (keller)

If we are hesitant or fearful about proclaiming the good news to impossible people in impossible situations, according to this story, what must we remember?