**From Fear to Faith – Spiritual Warfare**

Mark 5:1-5:20

A man often walked through a cemetery on his way home. One night, though, unaware that a new grave had been dug in his path, he tumbled in. For some time he struggled to get out of the 7 foot deep grave, but finally gave up and decided to sleep there and see if help would come in the morning.
An hour later, a farmer out coon hunting came walking through the cemetery and he too fell into the grave. He immediately tried to get out and started jumping to see if he could reach the top and pull himself out – He, of course, was unaware of the first man who had fell in, until this man reached over in the pitch dark, laid his hand on the other’s shoulder and said, You can’t get out of here. – But the coon hunting farmer did – and quickly too.

Our graveyards are filled, with potential that remained just potential. Lost, forever.

This is a tragedy.

Why does it happen?

Because the thief comes only to steal kill and destroy

But Jesus has come that we might have life

Today we are going to take a new look at the issue of spiritual warfare – primarily using the story of Jesus delivering a man with a legion of demons – to better understand how we too may be delivered from things that haunt or oppress us – that keep us from being truly free – that keep us from achieving our God-given potential –

We will see we can have victory – even in the midst of life’s storms.

Jesus had been teaching the people from a boat pushed out from the shore a short distance ([4:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mk+4%3A1)).

Evening had come; so Jesus decided to go over to the other side of the lake ([v. 35](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mk+4%3A35)).

Mark mentions no reason for this decision - yet.

We know that on the way over – Jesus slept in the stern of the boat – and while he slept – a terrible storm came up that caused the disciples, several of whom were fisherman, to fear for their lives.

So they woke Jesus – and

Mark 4:39 says, He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

The sovereign Lord spoke and his creation immediately responded.

Jesus also rebuked his disciples for their lack of faith ([v. 40](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mk+4%3A40)).

Jesus had expected them by this time to have demonstrated more mature faith.

"Faith" here means faith in God's saving power as it is present and active in the person of Jesus.

There was something about him revealed to them on this occasion that they had not experienced before.

Verse 41 "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

As we will find out, when God desires to exert His power, all creation has to obey Him.

**Mark 5:1-20 (NIV)**
1  They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.
2  When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him.
3  This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain.
4  For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him.
5  Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

6  When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him.
7  He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!"
8  For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!"
9  Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many."
10  And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

11  A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside.
12  The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them."

13  He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

14  Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened.

15  When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.

16  Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man--and told about the pigs as well.

17  Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

18  As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him.

19  Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

20  So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

How did this man come to be demon possessed?

He didn’t just wake up one morning and say: "Hey, I’m demon possessed."

This wasn’t something he was born with. OR something that he just came down with (like the flu or a cold).

People open themselves up to spiritual attacks – often opening doors – without knowing it.

King Saul rebelled against God

I Samuel 16:14 tells us: "Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him."

In I Samuel 15:23 the prophet Samuel condemned Saul with these words: "rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king."

Saul deliberately rejected God’s authority in his life.

The Bible implies that this demon possession that came upon Saul came because his rebellion was "like the sin of divination, and (his) arrogance like the evil of idolatry."

Now, whether it was because this man in Mark 5 had been arrogantly rebellious or because he had practiced consulting the spirit world to divine his future… or because of some other reason - this man in the graveyard had become demon possessed.

**Matthew 12:43-45 (NIV)**
43  "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it.
44  Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order.
45  Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation."

Jesus now returns to consider the incident that started this whole discussion, the exorcism of v. [22](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=mt%2012:22). **Matthew 12:22-29 (NIV)**
22  Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see.
23  All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"
24  But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."

He wants the man who was liberated, along with everyone else present, to realize that freedom from demon possession is not enough.

Ownership by the devil must be replaced with ownership by Christ (cf. [Rom 6:15–18](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=ro%206:15-18)).

Otherwise one’s release is only temporary.

Moral reform without Christian commitment always remains inadequate.

Jesus likens the situation to a house made ready for new occupants which still stands vacant.

Squatters will soon move in.

No person can live long without serving someone.

Satan will always return to attack that which is left defenseless, and each success leads him to increasingly worse designs, whether, as here, to literal repossession by an even greater number of demons (the number seven may indicate completeness of possession) or with the more widespread degeneracy of repeated sin, which characteristically renders humans more insensitive to their guilt (cf. [Rom 1:18–32](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=ro%201:18-32)).

The “rest” the evil spirit seeks here contrasts sharply and ironically with the rest Christ offers ([11:29](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=mt%2011:29)) and links this controversy with the Sabbath controversies of [12:1–14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=mt%2012:1-14).

This "man with an evil spirit" appears like a guard, a sentry, a demonic junkyard dog strategically placed to stop Jesus from entering this area.

**This is occupied territory.**
Mark’s description of this tormented man is graphic.

He lives in a graveyard, sleeping among the cave-like tombs where dead bodies are buried.

Now to a devout Jewish person, this type of setting would be repulsive, because coming in contact with a corpse would make you spiritually unclean.

This the kind of setting you’d find in a Wes Craven film or a Stephen King story, yet here we find Jesus standing there, standing in occupied territory.

This man lives isolated from all human contact.

He’s violent and out of control.

People were unable to restrain him.

In fact the word for "subdue" in v. 4 is the Greek word for "tame" and it almost always refers to "taming" wild animals.

This guy was as out of control as a wild animal.

He’s so tormented that he howls and wails day and night.

He also mutilates himself with stones, slashing and cutting himself.

Now let’s look at this demonized man’s encounter with Jesus.

Everything in this encounter shows the subservience of the demons to Jesus.

The demonized man falls down at Christ’s feet in an act of submission.

This is also the only time in the New Testament where Jesus asks a demon to identify itself by name.

 The word "legion" referred to a contingent of 6,000 Roman soldiers.

So what we have in this poor man is an entire army of demonic spirits, which explains why he’s so tormented.

The demons beg Jesus not to send them out of the area, which is another indication that we’re dealing with occupied territory here.

Apparently the demons would rather live in an animal host than be banished from the Ten Cities region where they had such free reign to wreak their havoc.

So Jesus allows them to go into a herd of pigs, but of course the irony is that the presence of evil in the pigs drives them into a frenzy that ends in their death.

JESUS CAN DELIVER PEOPLE FROM THE POWER OF EVIL.

It’s interesting that Jesus here doesn’t do what other exorcists in his generation did to expel demons. Most exorcists back then would use formulas and incantations, rituals and other methods to try to expel demons. But Jesus merely commands the spirits to leave, and they leave.

Jesus still today has the power to set people free from their captivity to evil.

You might not be demon possessed like that man in graveyard, but you’ve struggled with your own personal demons for too long.

You’ve struggled with the demons of failure…
of guilt…
of shame and remorse.

You’ve sensed that these demons have dominated you, held you under their control, held you in an addiction you can’t let loose of.

And you may have always thought: "I got myself into this. I can get myself out."

But all you’ve ended up with is an uneasy feeling.

The demons are still there.

And you’re still not healed.

Despite what the world may tell you - you can’t solve all your problems on your own.

There are demons in your life that only Jesus can heal.

The birthplace of our legion of overwhelming issues is often among the tombs, in the past.

When we go back and remember our childhoods, some of us discover abuses that shaped us and trapped us.

Will we trust Christ to take away from us what we cannot take away ourselves?

Conclusion

We must notice that Jesus left the multitudes to go and deliver this one man.

This helps us understand our worth to Jesus

He cares for us – for you

As we partake of Communion this morning, lets come to the One who cares and who can set us free.