

An Unlikely Convert

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 12 May 2024

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0 : 00] Please take your Bibles again and turn to the book of Mark, the second book of the New Testament, the book of Mark, chapter 5.

If you were with us last week or weeks preceding that, our pastor has been teaching us from this book. Last week, we heard about the storm and the fact that Jesus promised that they were going to get to the other side.

He rebuked the storm and here they are on the other side. Mark, chapter 5, and I'll read verses 1 through 20. This is the word of God.

They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain.

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. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills, he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

[1 : 10] When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. 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. But Jesus had said to him, Come out of this man, you evil spirit. Then Jesus asked him, What is your name? My name is Legion, he replied, for we are many.

And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, Send us among the pigs.

Allow us to go into them. He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about 2,000 in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

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

[2 : 20] Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man, and told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

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

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. Amen. We're thankful we can hear the Word of God preached.

How blessed would you be to have the living Lord Jesus Christ come to your town and to meet him face to face.

That was the blessing of these garrison people in Jesus' days on earth. This was a Gentile region, a non-Jewish people.

[3 : 22] And this was the destination to which our Lord piloted the boat. As we saw last week, Jesus and his disciples caught in the storm on the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus revealed the glory of his sovereign power over all creation.

Yes, even the wind and the waves obeyed him. They also revealed his care for his own when they asked, Don't you care for us?

Oh, he cares. Jesus cares for his people. And it also revealed the weakness of his disciples' faith in the storms. And today we learn why was it that Jesus steered this boat through the storm to the other side of the lake.

A miserable man, a slave of demons, was waiting for them on the other side. And at the end of this episode, we find that Jesus gets back in the boat and goes back to the other side of the lake.

In other words, Jesus would cross this huge lake, would go through this life-threatening storm for one demon-possessed man to be set free from Satan's power.

[4 : 40] I wonder if that's your view of the Lord Jesus. He's just that good. He's just that gracious and merciful that he would cross the lake for one slave of Satan.

And I just remind you that if you do not belong to Jesus Christ, that is your condition this morning. Still a slave of Satan.

So, dear church, I have four points for you today from this text. The first, verses 1 through 5, the demoniac madman. Secondly, verses 6 to 13, Jesus' victory over Satan.

Number 3, verses 14 through 17, the remaking of the madman. And verses 18 to 20, the mission of all the redeemed. So we begin with the demoniac madman.

Verses 1 and 2, they went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. And when Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him.

[5 : 48] Now, as beautiful and scenic as this region was, overlooking the glorious sea of Galilee, living here came with a price.

It was the terror of the terror of the dead. We don't even know his name. It's not given us. But he was a scary man with an evil spirit.

And actually, we'll find that he has many demons living inside of him. And these evil spirits, fallen angels, serve the cause of their master, Satan.

Make no mistake about their aims. They're out to destroy the image of God in man. They're out to spread misery among the sons of man.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record for us this event. And together they paint a horrid picture of Satan's debasing and dehumanizing of this man.

[6 : 48] Destroying what God made him to be. And that's the way the devil takes out his malice against God. By destroying his image in man, his highest creation.

It's still his aim today. He promises pleasure and leaves behind misery and despair. It is the undoing of mankind that we're looking at here this morning.

So consider this undoing of man. After their fall into sin, you remember how God made garments for Adam and Eve and clothed them with those garments.

So Satan unclothes man. Luke chapter 8 verse 27 tells us that for a long time this man had worn no clothes.

He's running around naked. And that's Satan's aim. What God clothes, Satan unclothes. We see it even in our own day with what he does with pornography.

[7 : 56] What he does with provocative clothing. And it's all to the debasing and dehumanizing of women. And the destruction and dehumanization of man.

Unclothing what God has clothed. Young people have nothing to do with the unclothing of your bodies. Showing off what God means to be clothed.

Don't play the devil's games. He's out to destroy and dehumanize mankind. And then God made us secondly to be social creatures, didn't he?

For relationships and interaction with other people. With God himself and with a wife, a husband, a family, neighbors, relatives.

And that too reflects the image of God. For in the Trinity, you have the three persons in the one God enjoying fellowship and relationship together. God has said it's not good for the man to be alone.

[9 : 05] And so Satan drives this man into isolation. Into solitary places. For a long time, he'd not lived in a house, Luke says.

But he'd lived in the tombs. Somewhere around 37 million people in the United States are living alone. And increasingly so.

Some by necessity. Others by choice. But with precious little interaction. And neighborliness.

And relationship with other people. We become more and more an isolated, lonely people. That too is the dehumanization of man.

That the devil seeks. You know, solitary confinement is a punishment. It's not natural.

[10 : 03] But we have self-destructive, self-imposed solitary confinement. It's all part of Satan's aim for the destruction of man.

These antisocial behaviors. And then thirdly, God breathed into man the breath of life. And Satan labors to bring him down to death. Here is this man.

And he's living among the dead. His life itself was a living death. He's one of the walking dead. Physically alive. But spiritually dead.

He's hollow inside. Death and destruction is Satan's aim for mankind. He's out to rob you of eternal life. Which is to know God and Jesus Christ whom he sent.

So Satan is plunging this man toward death. With self-destructive behaviors. We have it in our text. Verse 5. Night and day he would cut himself with stones.

[11 : 02] Flint rocks carved into knives. And cutting himself. And Satan still leads people into such self-destructive behaviors and addictions.

We have cutting and burning of oneself. And other forms of self-harm that result in pain and injury. One out of six people do this at some point in their life.

And it's usually during their teen years. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among teenagers. And we're told that one out of ten high schoolers attempt it every year.

Self-destructive. Self-destructive addictions to various substances. And then we have a fascination with death. Don't we?

Seen in death cults. Death music. Death art. Yet all the while hiding the eternal punishment. That follows death. Death for all outside of Christ.

[12 : 00] This too is Satan's way of destroying the image of God in man. And then fourthly. The God of peace made us to live together in perfect peace.

In peaceful relations. And Satan entered the world to disturb the peace. And to introduce violence where there had been peace. And so to destroy mankind.

You remember how by introducing sin into the world. Death came into the world with sin. And so the first born man born into the world.

Came. Murdered his brother in cold blood. Violence was now part of the world's history.

And is to this day. Chapter 6 of Genesis. We have a global flood. Destroying all who lived on the earth except for eight people. Why? Because the violence was so great on the earth.

[13 : 03] And so here's this demon-possessed man. He's violent. He's a frightening madman. Matthew 8.28 says he was so violent that no one could pass that way. People didn't go the shortest route to get somewhere.

They went around because of the violence of this man. They couldn't pass that way. And so it is the dehumanization of man to not value life as precious.

Whether in the womb or out of the womb. And I don't need to rehearse just how much violence is in our land and in our world today.

And it has always been this way. And this too is the work of the devil, you see. Destroying man made in God's image. And we're told that the men of the region had tried to restrain this man.

Chaining him hand and foot. But he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Now this was not a magic act.

[14 : 13] This was not a sleight of hand. This was real supernatural demonic strength. This was the powers of darkness at work in man.

A legion of demons. Not just one, but many of them. This man's case was hopeless. On earth is not Satan's equal.

And so it seems that they had even given up trying to subdue him. And so he runs naked. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

Spreading the fear of a wild madman on the loose. Children, think of it. Being outside, playing with each other and your friends.

And then you hear these horrid shrieks. You would run inside to mother for fear. When you lay down at night. Law was quiet.

[15 : 13] And then from the hills you would hear it echoing. It's him, mommy. It's him, dad. Fear struck into the hearts of men.

As day and night he cut himself and cried out among the hills. So in this demon-possessed man, we have the uncovering, the revealing of Satan's aims.

What is he trying to do? Not just 2,000 years ago. Not just in the Garden of Eden. But today, in our world. In Bremen.

In the place where you live. In your family. My family. What is Satan's aims? What are his aims? What is he out to do? He's out to destroy the image of God.

In man. Don't be fooled, my lost sinner friend. Satan can come as an angel of light. And hide his real plans for you.

[16 : 10] But here they're uncovered, you see, and laid open for all to see. He wants to destroy you in life. Destroy you in this life. And then wants to drag you down to death and hell.

Well, as soon as Jesus stepped out of the boat onto land. This was the one man welcoming committee of the garrisons. Verse 6 says, when he saw Jesus from a distance.

He ran and fell on his knees in front of him. And this madman. That no one was able to subdue.

Has now met his match. In Jesus Christ. The Lord of all. And so we come to Jesus' victory over Satan and his hellish crew. The second point.

Verses 6 to 13. Jesus said his casting out of demons was a sign. A proof that the kingdom of God has come to earth. When you see me casting out demons.

[17 : 07] You can know the kingdom has come. The king is here. And that's what Jesus is doing. Often in his ministry. Indeed, the reason he came, John says. Was to destroy the works of the devil.

1 John 3.8. And here he is. Binding the strong man. And setting his captives free. We have a picture of that. That's what he taught us in Mark chapter 3 verse 27.

Now we have another picture of him binding the strong man. And setting his prisoners free. Now kids, when it says that he was possessed of a demon or an evil spirit.

That means that he was controlled by him. He had come in and taken control of his personality. And so this man's voice is now being controlled by a spokesman demon for the many who are inside.

And so it's this demon in verse 7 that shouted at the top of his voice. What do you want with me, Jesus, son of the most high God? Swear to God you won't torture me.

[18 : 09] Now, demons don't know everything. But notice there's three things that they do know. Number one, they know who Jesus is. And we've already seen this in Mark's gospel, haven't we?

Mark chapter 1 verse 34. As he's casting out demons, Mark says he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was. Mark chapter 1 verse 24.

Here they call him, and here as well, they call him Jesus, son of the most high God. Now that's far more than the crowds realize about Jesus.

And even the disciples were slow at coming to realize that about him, just who he is. But these demons know who he is. These fallen angels know him.

They have no problem identifying him as the son of the most high God. After all, he's their creator. And he's the one they rebelled against.

[19 : 11] And the one who cast them out of heaven. So they know who Jesus is. What else do these demons know? They know their punishment is coming. Swear to God you won't torture me, they say.

You see, there's a fear. The fear of God in them that he's come to torture them. Matthew 8, 29 says that they were saying, have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?

Yes, they know they're headed to judgment. And they know that the date is set. There is an appointed time when we will reap what we have sown for our rebellion against God.

You see, there is no savior sent for the fallen angels. When they fell, there was no savior sent. They were reserved for eternal punishment.

They were reserved in the gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day, Jude 6. The apostle John takes us to that day, that great day. In John chapter 20.

[20 : 16] And John saw in vision what will happen at that great day. To the devil, to all his demons, and to all who are outside of Jesus Christ.

It says the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur. Where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Revelation 20, 10. And if anyone's name was not found in the book of life. He too was thrown into the lake of fire. Our Lord Jesus says in Matthew 25.

Matthew 25. That when the son of man comes in his glory and all the angels with him. He will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. Judging all who have ever lived. And he will separate the people.

One from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He'll put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. And then he'll say to those on his left. Depart from me you cursed into the eternal fire.

[21 : 20] Prepared for the devil and his angels. These demons know what's coming for them. And they're afraid that Jesus come to torment them before the appointed time.

Be sure you're not found out of Christ. In that day. Or you'll have devils and demons to spend eternity with. They know who Jesus is.

They know the punishment that is coming for them. And third they know that they can do nothing without Jesus permission. Nothing. And that's why this man is on his knees and begging Jesus.

It's not a heartfelt submission to Jesus. But he cannot but be on his knees begging.

Because this is the Lord. The sovereign Lord of all. And then we're told in verses 8 that Jesus had said to him. Come out of this man you evil spirit.

[22 : 22] And then Jesus asked him. What is your name? My name is Legion. He replied. For we are many. A full legion of Roman soldiers could be as many as 6,000.

We don't know how many demons were living in this man. We know that 2,000 pigs were filled with demons and ran into the lake. There were many demons living inside of this man.

Remember these are spirits. There's no physical space that they have to take up. So there could be many in this one man. And so he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

Luke has it. They begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the abyss. And then we're told that a large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus.

Send us among the pigs. Allow us to go into them. He gave them permission. And the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about 2,000 in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

[23 : 32] Here's Christ's complete victory over Satan and these demons. As all of them. Not one was left in the man.

All of them were expelled from him. And sent into the pigs. Now pigs were an unclean animal in the old covenant law. And so it is a fitting thing that unclean spirits should be sent into the unclean animals.

And it could be as well that the reason for this was to show that there were many evil spirits that Jesus cast out.

That they might even see. Look. 2,000 pigs. Under the control of evil spirits. And once again we have the nature of evil spirits.

The self-destructive nature. Because as soon as they enter these pigs, what do they do? They rush headlong. And commit suicide. As it were.

[24 : 35] In the lake of Galilee. So Jesus, the Son of the Most High God, is Lord of wind and waves. Lord of diseases. Lord of demons.

Yes, a legion of them together cannot lift a finger without Jesus' permission. And dear brothers and sisters, this is the Jesus. Who protects you from the evil one.

This is the one who keeps you safe from Satan's aims. And from his power, his hatred of you.

Remember, Jesus said to Peter, Satan has desired to sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon. When you have recovered. Not if.

When. When. How can Jesus be so certain? Because his prayers are effectual. And he watches over Peter. And you are going to fall. But not fall away completely. And when you have recovered.

[25 : 35] Strengthen your brethren. We hear Jesus praying in John 17, 15. My prayer is not that you take my people out of the world. But that you protect them from the evil one.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus is praying for you to be protected from the evil one. Second Thessalonians 1, 3.

Paul says, the Lord is faithful and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. What would happen if he just withdrew his care for us?

And left us to the aims of the devil? Frightening. Frightening. But thank God, Jesus cares for his own and protects us from the evil one.

So we've seen the demoniac madman. We've seen Jesus victory over Satan in casting these demons out. And now we see the remaking, number three, the remaking of the madman.

[26 : 33] Verses 14 to 17. This demoniac madman that no one was strong enough to subdue is now subdued at last by the merciful grace and power of Jesus Christ.

And just as Satan's debasing of this man, tearing down of this man, dehumanizing of this man reveals his aims today in our world.

Even so, this man's remaking by Jesus Christ reveals what Christ is doing in our world today to slaves of Satan whom he sets free by his transforming power.

Even you and me who know him. Now the difference between the man before and after is impossible to miss, isn't it?

Verses 14 and 15. Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside and the people went out to see what had happened. And 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.

[27 : 47] And they were afraid. Oh, the difference that salvation in Jesus Christ makes in any man or woman, boy or girl. He's out to restore the fallen image of God in man.

He's out to restore the very reason for which we were created. The reason to live. To restore man's true humanity. His true dignity that Satan has debased and robbed from us.

So consider with me then several points in the remaking of this madman. First of all, whereas before he was a violent, restless wanderer, living among the tombs by himself, screaming aloud, here he is now sitting quietly at Jesus' feet.

The calming effect of Jesus' salvation. To be at peace with God, at peace with yourself, at peace with others. No longer isolated.

No longer sitting with and out isolated among the tombs. But now sitting with. And sitting with the disciples and with Jesus.

[28 : 56] He sits here as a learner, a pupil at the feet of Jesus. Jesus. What a change. And whereas before for a long time he was running around without any clothes on, he now sits clothed, Mark tells us.

He's got his clothes on. That too is a mark of new life in Christ. Covering up instead of uncovering. And thirdly, whereas before he was out of his mind, yelling, screaming, shrieking, cutting himself.

Now he's found sitting, clothed, and in his right mind. His right mind. A mind renewed, restored, brought back to what God intended for man.

And it's the same man, isn't it? They saw this is the same man who had been controlled by the legion of demons. And yet, it's not the same man.

He's not the same man. Gloriously changed by Jesus Christ. Renewed in knowledge in the image of his creator. Colossians 3.10. Recreated to be like God in true holiness and righteousness.

[30 : 12] Ephesians 4.24. Remaking him. From bearing the fallen image of the devil. To now bearing the restored image of his maker, Jesus Christ.

Remember what Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5.17. If any man, be he possessed by a legion of demons, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old is gone, the new is gone. That's this guy. It's true of him, it's true of any of you. If any of you be in Christ, you become a new creation. Have you been born again?

Unless you're born again, Jesus says, you'll never see or enter the kingdom of heaven. Are the marks of conversion found in your life? Are you a new man, a new woman, a new boy, or a new girl?

Have you come to Jesus Christ to have him remake you? And to restore his image in you? Are you in your right mind?

[31 : 22] Are you thinking right about who God is? Who you are? Your sin? Your greatest problem in life? How to be right with God?

What's going to happen when you die? Are you in your right mind? Are you sitting clothed at Jesus' feet, learning of him?

Is the word of God the loudest voice in your ears today? Or is it this radio talk show or this music station?

What is the predominant voice that your ears are now turned to? Your mind is now being renewed with. Is it God's word? All of Christ's sheep, hear his voice and follow him as he is renewing them in their right mind to receive the word of God and the love of it.

Are you a doer of it? Not perfectly, but that's the trajectory of your life. You were going your own way, not his way. And you have turned and you have been turned by this powerful Savior.

[32 : 32] And now you are obeying him. You are following his way, not your own way. Not just hearing the word without doing it.

And so deceiving yourself. Oh, don't be deceived. Are you being made new in the attitude of your mind? Are you putting off the old ways and putting on the new ways?

You see, the fact is no one can be saved by Jesus Christ and remain the same that you were before. It is impossible. It cannot happen.

When the life of God comes into the soul of a man, it changes. It's just science. It's just theology. It just has to be the life of God in the soul of a man.

New creation. The old is gone. Everything is different with Jesus in the soul. A man who is now alive in Christ is not the same as when he was dead in trespasses and sins.

[33 : 40] A man following Jesus is not the same as when he was following the ways of this world and the ways of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit that is now at work in those who are disobedient.

You see, you're different when you're following Satan, the spirit of disobedience, and when you're following Jesus. My lost friend, you may say to me, but I'm not demon-possessed.

No, they don't need to possess you if they've already deceived you. If they've already got you thinking wrong about God and his holiness and his love and his justice and his wrath and his grace and mercy in Jesus Christ, they don't need to possess you.

If they've already got you living for the wrong world, living for this world, following its ways, instead of living for the world that is coming when Jesus returns and the Lamb is all the glory of that world, they've already got you living for yourself and not for Jesus Christ.

Well, they don't need to possess you. They've already got you. And you're doing just what the demons want you to do, the spirit of disobedience, to disobey God, to have it your way, not his.

[35 : 17] Ignoring your sin and guilt, ignoring death and judgment to come, ignoring repentance and faith in a living Savior who would forgive you, they've got you right where they want you.

Enslaved to your sins with chains you cannot see and chains you cannot break. He doesn't need to possess you to lead you to hell.

If he can simply tempt you and find you following him, he's got you. For everyone who sins is the slave of sin, Jesus says. So come to Jesus Christ, who alone can set you free from Satan's power.

For if the Son will set you free, you will be free indeed. Jesus Christ opens up so many doors of hope that are otherwise hopeless and despairing.

This man's case was despairing, wasn't it? A legion of demons inside of him. He was done for. No hope at all.

[36 : 25] But Jesus blew a door of hope open, didn't he? This Jesus whom he falls down before, this Jesus breaks the power of reigning sin and sets the prisoner free.

So come to him. Pray to him. For your imprisoned loved ones, we have a chain-breaking Savior.

We have a Satan-freeing Lord. And believers, if the Lord had not been on your side, let Israel say, if the Lord had not been on our side when our enemies rose up against us, what would we be today?

What sin would you be enslaved to? What lie of the devil would you be walking around with a hook through your nose and not even know that he's got you by his chain?

Oh, we were in this condition, you say. Oh, no, we weren't possessed, but he had us. He had us by the nose, and we were following. And we had no power to free ourselves.

[37 : 37] Titus 3, 3 and following, at one time, we too, talking to believers, at one time, we too were foolish and deceived, disobedient, and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures.

Okay, we weren't running around naked. We weren't running around cutting ourselves, perhaps. But we were foolish. Oh, the insanity of sin.

And we sinned every day. Self-destruction. Why doesn't she stop? Why doesn't he clean up his...

He's destroying himself. Because sin is insane. It's not your right mind. You need to come to yourself. Come to your sense. Jesus can do that.

And he did that for us. No, we were foolish, disobedient, and enslaved to all kinds of passions and pleasures. But when the kindness and love of God, our Savior, appeared, he saved us.

[38 : 42] Not because of righteous things that we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us by the washing of regeneration, the new birth, by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the blood of Jesus.

And so here we are, sitting at Jesus' feet, soaking up his word, wanting to hear, wanting to learn, wanting to be remade into his image.

What a glorious Savior he is. All praise to him. Well, when the townspeople, and those living in the region, saw this change, that had come over this demon-possessed madman, they were afraid.

What is the power? This able to do this to this man, we chained and bound in fetters, and he'd just break them like they were paper. Here he is.

They met a power stronger than Satan's legions. And they're scared. The people are scared. And they also, it says that they went and told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man, and told about the pigs as well.

[39 : 51] And then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region. They found Jesus' power fearful to them. They weren't in control of Jesus. They couldn't even control the demon-possessed man.

And now here's a stronger power, and we're not in control of him. Oh, this power is fearful outside of Christ. In Christ, it's all for you.

Outside of Christ, it's all against you. They had a right, a reason to fear, as enemies of Christ. But then they also told them about the pigs, and it seems there's maybe a hint here that they saw this can be costly, having Jesus in our region.

It might cost us something to follow Jesus. We might have to give up this and give up that. Yes, it will cost you something. And everything it costs you is a gain to have Christ.

Paul says, I willingly counted all of it rubbish to gain Christ. But to look at it from outside, you say, oh, I couldn't give that up. I couldn't give that up.

[40 : 57] You see, that's part of the insanity of sin. You couldn't give that up. What is there standing between you and Jesus for which you'll go to hell instead of receiving him and the blessing of salvation that's in him?

It's insanity. It's the lie of the devil. And so their response is clear. Leave us alone.

Go away from here. They didn't want the Son of God in their midst. They would have rather had the demon-possessed man, still demon-possessed, and the 2,000 pigs still grazing on the hillside than to have Jesus here.

Can you see what they're doing to Jesus? They count him as nothing. And is it not true today that some of you have been saying to Jesus, leave me alone.

Leave me alone. I've got too much living yet to do. As if you would be the loser for having come to Christ. Leave me alone, at least for now.

[42 : 03] I don't want you yet. I'm having too much fun going my way. I don't want a king ruling over me. No. I don't want somebody's laws and commands.

I want to be free to do what I want to do. Unrestricted. And all the while, you're doing the will of the spirit of disobedience.

You're a slave. You just don't know it. True freedom is found in Christ. Let me tell you the most frightening thing of all. It's not this demon-possessed man. It's that Jesus might answer your request and just give you what you've asked.

Leave me alone. We don't ever read of Jesus going back to the garrisons. Leave us alone.

And the next thing we read is that Jesus got in the boat and left. Be careful, sinner friend. You're sermon-proof. You hear the gospel week after week and you say, leave me alone.

[43 : 06] Leave me alone. He might just turn and leave. This could be the closest you ever find yourself to Jesus. Run into His arms and He will save you.

Well, the door of opportunity can close for good. And what will these garrisoned people have to answer for on the day of judgment when Jesus says, I came to your town and you didn't want me there?

Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart. Come. Come to Christ. Oh, come to my heart, Lord Jesus.

There's room in my heart for Thee. Ask Him to forgive you and save you to make you a new creature in Christ. Well, that's the complete victory of Jesus over Satan and then the remaking of the man.

And lastly and briefly, we have the mission of all the redeemed, verses 18 to 20. As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with Him. It's interesting. In this event, there are three times that Jesus was begged to do something.

[44 : 16] First of all, these God-hating demons begged Jesus that they might go into the pigs. And Jesus said, Yes. He answered their request.

Go. These Christ-rejecting people of that region begged Jesus to leave them. And He got in a boat and left. He said, Yes, I'll do what you ask.

But when this newly converted man, so full of love to the Savior, wants to remain with Jesus and go with Him, Jesus says, No. He did not let Him. Is it not clearly a blessing from the Lord to not always get what we ask for?

Does it not teach us that He knows better than we do what is best for us? And why we must ever pray, But not my will, Father, but Yours be done.

And why did Jesus not let Him go? Well, because He had something better for Him to do. Verse 19, Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how He's had mercy on you.

[45 : 20] Oh, mercy. He could go everywhere and say, My sins, they were many. But His mercy was more.

grace that is greater than all my sins. And so this new convert at once shows the great change that's come upon Him.

It's now God's way, Christ's way, rather than His own. He wanted to go with Jesus. Jesus says, No. You go home to your family and you go tell others what I've done for you. And He submits.

He puts Himself under. His master. You see, He's not just sitting at the feet of Jesus just to pretend that He's a disciple. He is a disciple. And when Jesus says, Go home, He goes home. Though His heart was yearning to go with Him.

He obeys. He's been made new. He's a new man in Christ. And so, verse 20 ends by saying, So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis, that means ten cities, how much Jesus had done for him.

[46 : 21] And all the people were amazed. Oh, Jesus had indeed done a lot for this man. Had had great mercy on him. He hadn't treated him as his sins deserved, but forgave him.

He set him free from the power of the devil and from the devil's end in hell. He gave him new life in Christ. Life as it was meant to be. Designed by the Lord to restore the image of God.

Peace with God. Fellowship with Him. Restored to true humanity, to His family, to His neighbors. Given a reason to live. a life that is really life.

Worth living. A Savior to glorify. So he went and he made known this Savior in ten cities.

The Decapolis. All around that region. I doubt if he thought at the moment that he had important work to do. But as he went, he saw just what the Lord meant for him.

[47 : 23] I wonder, has Jesus saved you and brought you out of Satan's kingdom of darkness and death and put you into the kingdom of God? The kingdom of light and love. Has He forgiven all your sins and made you a new creature?

He's done great things for you. He's shown you great mercy. He's changed your eternal address from hell to heaven. Your status from child of the devil to child of God.

And those merciful works are not to be kept silent in you. You are to go and to tell what your Redeemer has done for you.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. Those he redeemed from the hand of the enemy. If Christ has set you free from the reigning power of sin and Satan, go tell your family.

Go tell your neighbors and friends what great things the Lord has done for you. And tell them that what He's done for me He'll do for you as well. He's no respecter of persons, anyone who comes to Him.

[48 : 21] He will never turn away. The mercy I receive is offered to you in the gospel. The grace I've received it's offered to you who are here right now. He's offering it to you.

His power is stronger than any power of sin and darkness. Ten cities. Who would have thought that this man would be qualified to be a missionary to ten cities?

Grace Fellowship Church, can we aim at this city? Can we aim at this city? Bremen? One city? That we might tell this city what great things the Lord has done for us?

Maybe you don't live in Bremen. Your city. Just one city. Not ten cities. Just one. Your family. The family where He's put you. That family. That's your mission field.

Where you live. Where you work. Can you go there with this gospel and tell what the Lord has done for you? So our Lord goes through the storm and crosses the sea for one poor slave of Satan to set free.

[49 : 28] Will we go across the yard and tell our neighbors what the Lord has done for us and will do for them? Don't miss the love of Jesus that brought Him all the way from heaven to seek and to save what was lost.

A love that would take Him to the painful and shameful cross to pay for our sins. This is the one who loves us to the end and protects us from the evil one. So worthy of our praise.

The hymn writer says, I need more than one tongue. Oh, that I had a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise. Not a one of us who can sing these words from the heart but once were slaves of sin and Satan.

And so it is to you, Lord Jesus, that we lay all of our honor and praise at your feet. Thank you for setting us free. We would not be here this morning.

We would be elsewhere seeking our own passions and pleasures, thinking we were free while all the while we were chained. Thank you for setting this man free so long ago to encourage us that whoever flees to Christ will be set free.

[50 : 35] And we pray that this freedom would come even today to others who are still mournful and despairing because they have not this salvation. Bring them to Jesus Christ and send them home on their way singing a new song.

Even praise to our God that many might see it and live. Send us on our way with that good news in our lips. And all glory be to our Savior in whose name that we pray, even Jesus.

Amen. Amen.