

## He Lived Among the Tombs; Mark 5:1-13

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They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes, and when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit. He lived among the tombs and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain for, he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart and he broke the shackles in pieces.

No one had the strength to subdue him night and day among the tombs and among the mountains. He was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. And when Jesus saw or when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him and crying out with a loud voice. He said, what have you to do with me?

Jesus son of the most high God, I adjure you by God do not torment me. For he was saying to him, come out of the man, you unclean spirit. And Jesus asked him, what is your name? He replied, my name is Legion for we are many. And he begged him earnestly not to send him out of the country. Now a great deal, a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside and they begged him saying, send us to the pigs, let us enter them.

So he gave them permission and the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs, and the herd numbering about 2000, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea. The herdsman fled and told it in the city and in the country, and people came to see what had happened. And they came to Jesus and saw the demon possessed man, the one who had the legion sitting there clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.

And those who had seen it, described to them what had happened to the demon possessed man and to the pigs. And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him, and he did not permit him, but said to him, go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you.

And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And everyone marveled. So it's startling to me as I think back to the miracle that we looked at of the calming of the sea. We said one of the. The distinguishing facts about that miracle was that was probably the most visibly stunning miracle that Jesus performed.

So many of Jesus' miracles weren't necessarily visually stunning in the sense that for many of the miracles you had to know the backstory behind the miracle, to really be shocked by what Jesus did. You had to know that this man had been born blind. You had to know that this man had been a paralytic for 40 years and had been sitting by the pool waiting to, to get into the pool.

You had to know that the, the food, the baskets of food weren't full when the disciples started, but there was instead just a few loaves of bread and a couple of fishes. You had to know these things. You had to know the backstory in order to be shocked by what Jesus did. But this miracle in

particular, along with perhaps his walking on the water, this miracle was the most visually stunning of Jesus' miracles.

You didn't have to know anything to see this man speak to the wind and waves and the wind and the waves immediately produce a great calm. You had to know nothing to be stunned by that. So the most visually stunning of Jesus' miracles is now followed up with the most spectacular exorcism of demons in all the scriptures.

In fact, the most spectacular exorcism of demons in all of human history is right here before us. This is not the casting out of one demon. This is the casting out of so many demons, those who can rightfully call themselves legion because they are so many and so powerful. Jesus cast them out and he does so definitively.

So let's pick up from verse 14. They pick up the story here from verse 14. As we read that, the herdsman fled and told it in the city and the country. So this is after the casting out of the demons. They go into the pigs and they throw themselves off the ravine into the water, and they drown in the water.

After this, we read that the herdsmen fled, told this in the city and in the country. So in my mind, I picture that there's these herdsmen, there may be some distance away from the action that's happening. Maybe they, they're far enough away that they can't hear the interchange between Jesus. And the demon, the demonized man.

But nonetheless, perhaps they can see it or perhaps they are close enough that they can hear it. But in neither case, they look and they see this interchange happening. They see these boats that are come up on the shore and Jesus and some of the other disciples get out of this boat and some of the other boats, and they can see this demonized man.

They know who he is. They've known him for years, and they know what he's all about. And so he runs up to Jesus and perhaps they're expecting this big fight. They're expecting to see some Jews get beat up, jump back in their boat and get away as fast as they can. Perhaps that's what they're expecting and whether or not they can hear the interchange, they can another nonetheless, see what happens.

They can see that the demonized man, who Matthew tells us has a habit of beating up people that walk nearby is instead falling before Jesus' feet. And then we see Jesus and him have this, this exchange of words, and then we see this visible change in the man. This visible, something that happens in the man, and then almost at the same moment, the herd of pigs that we're guarding or watching over, something happens to them.

And we don't know exactly what this is, but somehow something has happened to these pigs, and then the next thing we know, they are rushing into the sea and diving into the sea and drowning into the sea. So you can imagine what their thoughts are all about as they see this happen. This is not exactly what they were expecting to happen.

This is the opposite of what they were expecting to happen. And so we're, we are told that they fled, they're fearful, they, they see this thing, they're filled with fear. They fled and they told it in the city and in the country. So I pictured them running back to the near city, which we said last week would've.

Probably been the city known as Kersha in the Aramaic or Gersha in the Greek. So they probably run back to the city. It's probably a good distance away. But on the way they're telling everybody that they see they're, they're passing people in the fields in the countryside and they're telling what just happened.

And they get back to the city, they go through the city gates, A crowd collects around them and they tell the story of what happened there. People are listening intently. And then after hearing the story, we read that people came to see what it was that had happened. So now they come back with a crowd of people from the city.

They come back and the, the sheep, the, , pig herders, obviously they want to clear themselves of the possible guilt of losing 2000 pigs. So they come back to verify their story. So the people came back to see what it was that had happened, verse 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.

So there we see, as we said last week, that is a picture of genuine conversion. That's a picture of salvation where this man that we're told three things, he's sitting clothed and in his right mind. So first of all, he's sitting meaning that he's no meaning, that he's no longer wandering aimlessly. We were told earlier that he wandered aimlessly day and night.

He wandered among the tombs, restless without rest. Now he's sitting and resting, and he's sitting, of course, at Jesus' feet. So now he's no longer wandering. He's now resting at Jesus' feet. Secondly, he's clothed. Luke tells us that he had long ago stopped wearing clothes. So now his clothed meaning to us that he is now no longer living in shame.

His shame is now covered. We said last week, we could even think of this metaphorically as now he's clothed and the righteous robes of Christ, but even nonetheless, we could say that he's, his shame is now ended. Jesus has taken his shame. No longer is he wandering, he's now resting. No longer is he walking about in shame, but he's now clothed.

And then thirdly, we're told that in his, he's in his right mind. In his right mind. The word that Luke U or Mark uses, there is a word that sometimes is trans translated to be a sober judgment or sober mindedness. For example, Romans chapter 12 and verse three, I say to everyone among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with.

Sober judgment. That means judgment. That is not inebriated. Judgment that is not distorted, but instead it's plain and clear judgment. , elsewhere, it's often translated as self-controlled. Same word. Titus chapter two, verse six. Likewise urge the younger men to be. Self-controlled, or Peter from first Peter four, verse seven, to the end of all things is at hand.

Therefore be, and here's the word again, self-controlled and a different word, sober-minded. So the idea of self-control, we get that that's, that's plain, that's evident for us to understand what self-controlled means. Self-controlled means to be in control of your own faculties, to be in control of your words, to be in control of your actions.

This is a description of the character of the Christian. The character of the Christian is a self-controlled character. We are in control of our thoughts. We're in control of our words. We're in

control of our actions. Not perfectly, but that is the character description of the Christian. So this man is described as being self-controlled in control now of his words, in control of himself, in control of his actions now, which is the exact opposite.

Of what he just was. He was anything but self-controlled. Just before this, he was controlled by others. He was controlled by the, the demonic, by the dark, by the kingdom of darkness, he was controlled completely and utterly by them. Now he is self-controlled. He's in control of himself. So the picture here is the picture of the epitome of a transformation that has taken place.

This is, as we said last week. This is Scripture's premier picture of a radical transformation from lostness to conversion from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. This is scripture's premier picture of a transformation that is radical in every, , in every aspect of it. So they come and they see him.

S, sitting clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. Now we'll come back to talk about their fear a little bit later. That'll be a big part of what we talk about today. But just continuing on from verse 16, and those who had seen it, described to them what had happened to the demon possessed man to the pigs.

So those who were there when it happened, the, the tenders of the pigs, so to speak, they, , in my mind, I pictured them. They're now telling now, now him, that guy right there, he was the one that did it. You see, you see the man that we always called Legion. You see him and that other guy, he's the one that did it.

And then the pigs, this happened to them. And next thing I know, they were running over there. That's where they jumped off. And maybe then, then maybe they all go and they look down and they see a few more pigs sort of floating around there. Now's, by the way, now's the time for all the, the jokes; bay of Pigs, deviled ham. This is the first deviled ham. There's, there's many jokes that we can make, but we'll pass, kind of pass over them because we've all heard them before, but maybe they look over into the water. Maybe there's still a few pigs floating around there. And they're explaining to them, this is what happened, this is where this took place, et cetera.

So those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon possessed man. So they saw what happened to him, clearly, visibly, he's now a different person. And they described what happened to the pigs, the verse 17. And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. So they're, as we said last week, there's a lot of begging that takes place, not in this, only in this story, but in the larger story.

All of these, all four of these miracles, as we said a couple of Sundays ago, that they really follow the same patterns. They are emphasizing the same things. And one of the same things that we see recur over and over, and all four of these present miracles is the earnest begging, the zealous plea. So the disciples make this earnest plea to Jesus teacher.

Do not see that we're about to die. And then of course, in this story, there's the earnest begging on the part of the demons to Jesus. There's the earnest begging of the towns folks that we see here. We'll see just a little bit later, another earnest begging. Same word every time. Another earnest begging on the part of the man to Jesus.

Then we're going to see an unspoken begging on the part of the woman with the flow of blood. And then we're going to see a spoken begging, same word again on the part of Jairus to Jesus that he would hurry up and get to his house. So the whole passage is a passage, like we said, a passage of desperation.

Everybody and all four of these stories is desperate for, for one reason or another. So they earnestly beg, they earnestly begged Jesus to depart from their region. And again, we'll come back and we'll talk about that in just a little bit. Verse 18, as he was getting into the boat. Now notice there.

There we just saw a juxtaposition that is quite stunning when you notice it. It's a juxtaposing together of two aspects of Jesus' character that are quite stunning to see right together like that. In the previous passage of the calming of the storm, we noticed one of the greatest juxtaposing of scripture, which is to say right there together in that story, was the deity of Jesus and the humanity of Jesus.

And they weren't far apart. They were right there together, and it wasn't just a little bit of each one, it was both of those in full view. Jesus is shown to be. How could you show them to be more human than being so exhausted that he falls into such a deep sleep that he sleeps through the storm? How can you be portrayed any more human than that?

But then they jostle him awake. We said as they, as they had to, Mark uses the word for resurrect. They had to resurrect him. And as soon as he's awake, he speaks, and the wind and the waves obey. How can you put together the deity of Jesus and the humanity of Jesus any more closely than that? So we saw that juxtaposing.

Here we see another juxtaposing of another two aspects of Jesus' character, and that is his power put right beside his meekness. Did you notice his power right beside his meekness? He just spoke to the demon that scripture would have us to see is the most powerful force of demons outside the Prince of demons himself.

Jesus just stood before this man known as Legion and Legion begged him for permission to not be cast into torment just yet. The power of Jesus. We said last week we, we drew this picture in our minds, imagining in our minds this great vast battlefield with all these armies of thousands and thousands forming up for battle with all their weapons and everything.

And then one man steps onto the field and that man is Jesus and everyone else drops their weapons and runs. That's the picture that we just saw of Jesus' power. Right beside that is the picture of extreme meekness. Notice how Mark narrates the story. They begged Jesus to leave and then the next thing Mark says, he doesn't even narrate deciding to leave.

The next thing Jesus is getting in the boat. They beg him to read their, leave their region, and as Jesus got in the boat, did you notice that Luke tells it the same way they begged Jesus. They asked Jesus to leave their region and he got in the boat and left. No discussion. Just the meekest, the my of characters.

You want me to leave? I'm going. Jesus came here for one sheep, he rescued his sheep. Now they want him to go, and in his meekness and his humbleness, he now leaves. This is probably the New Testament's greatest picture of the meekness of Jesus together with the power of Jesus. But

there's one other place in the Old Testament that also shows us the same thing or a similar thing about the first person of the Trinity God the Father.

Look with me at Isaiah chapter 40. Behold the Lord God comes with might and his arm rules for him. You see the power of God. Notice the next sentence. He will tend his flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs in his arms. He will carry them in his bosom and gently lead those who are with young and in the next sentence, who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains and scales and the hills, and a balance who has measured the spirit of the Lord or what man shows him his counsel.

Whom did he consult and who made him understand, who taught him the path of justice and taught him knowledge and showed him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket and are accounted as the dust on the scales. You see the power, the sovereignty of God, right beside the gentleness, the meekness of God.

He will tend his flock like a shepherd. The nations are a drop in a bucket who gives the Lord counsel, who gives him wisdom, he will care for his, especially those who are with young. You see the gentleness, the meekness right beside the power, so he, Jesus gets in the boat as he gets in the boat. Verse 18, as he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him.

So we'll pause right there and just notice once again that this is just a dramatic story of genuine conversion. The man is displaying all of the necessary aspects of true and genuine conversion, but at this time it, I think it'll be right for us to see and to recognize that most likely some time has passed here.

In my mind, I would picture it maybe being. An hour, maybe two hours. The, the city is, some, the town is some distance away. And of course they're, they didn't ride there. He ran there. So maybe an hour has passed. He had to get back to the city. He had to tell everybody they had to come all the way back. And, and the crowd certainly moves back slower than he ran to them.

And so some time has passed. And in that intervening time, Jesus has no doubt sat down and at least explained to him something of the fundamentals of who he is and the sinful condition that has plunged him into the pitiful state, which he was, and the rescue that Jesus has now rescued him from. He has necessarily explained something to him of this, because the man is pictured for us in every way as a genuine convert.

To the faith as a genuine convert and believer in Jesus Christ. And the scriptures tell us that conversion does not happen outside of hearing the words of Christ and believing upon them. Look with me at Romans chapter 10, beginning from verse 13. We're familiar with this section of Romans. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

But how then will they call on him whom they've not believed? And how are they to believe on him whom they've never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? So faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. So Jesus didn't bypass that step when he cast the demons out. Jesus didn't make some sort of exception for this man, and he has now received life in Jesus' name without ever hearing of this life-giving gospel.

So Jesus, at some point, it only makes sense to us that he's explained at least something to him. He's heard these words, he's believed upon these words, and he is now expressing for us what a genuine convert, a genuine regenerate person now looks like. So let's think about just the ways in which he shows us his true and genuine conversion.

We said earlier that there's this trifold picture of him sitting. No longer is he wandering. He's now resting at Jesus' feet. He's clothed. So his shame is now covered, but he's also in his right mind. So in his right mind tells us of how it is that Jesus brings about conversion, how it is the Holy Spirit brings conversion.

The right mind of the D of the demonized man is not speaking to us of some sort of mental condition that Jesus healed him from. The man was not insane. The man was demonized. He was possessed of demons. So when he's in his right mind, that's not saying to us that Jesus has now healed his insanity and he now thinks as a normal man.

That speaking not of the mind so much. What is what's between the ears? That's speaking of the heart, that's speaking of the soul, that's speaking of us, to us, of the conversion that scripture describes. For example, as Paul describes in Ephesians chapter one verses 18 and following, when he, when he speaks to the Ephesians, he says, you have had the eyes of your heart enlightened.

You have had this enlightenment come upon the eyes of your heart so that you may now see clearly and you may see plainly, and you may understand what you could never understand in your lost condition. You can understand as Paul says, what is the hope to which he's called you? What are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints and the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us?

To believe you have had your soul or your heart enlightened to the truth of God, so that you may see and understand plainly, the demonized man could not understand these things prior to the action of God upon his heart, upon the eyes of his heart. But this has happened, and now we are told that he's now in his right mind, but also notice further with me.

That we also see the, , desire for the man to be with Jesus. He begs Jesus that he might be with him, and that's a literal interpretation or literal translation there. Not that he may go with him, but he begs him. He asks him earnestly and zealously that he might be with him. So he, he's expressing this true and genuine desire to be with his master.

Jesus has freed him. Jesus is now everything to him. Jesus has now set the captive free, and he desires nothing more than to be with him. That's, by the way, the same word that Mark used to describe Jesus's action for the 12 apostles he called the 12 apostles that they might remember. Be with him. In the same way using the same word, the demonized man or the previously demonized man begs Jesus that he might be with him.

It's his heart's desire to be with his Savior, to be with his Lord, and that is indeed a true sign of those who have received life in His name. If there is not an earnest desire in our heart to be with the Lord, not to just experience his blessings, not to just escape hell in the next existence, but to be with Jesus, that is the, most fundamental, perhaps emotion that accompanies genuine salvation.

Remember Paul's words when Paul says that there is laid up a crown of righteousness for those who have loved his appearing. In other words, those who are earnestly and anxiously awaiting the

day in which we might be with the Lord in every way. So his earnest desire to be with his master, he, , confesses this earnest desire, but also we notice the clear and plain obedience that he offers to Jesus.

So Jesus, as we're going to see, we'll, we'll talk about this a little bit later, but Jesus refuses his request for him to be with him. And Sid instead gives him these other instructions that we'll talk about in just a minute. But these other instructions, he receives these instructions, and then he immediately obeys these instructions and make note of the fact that what Jesus had him to do, and again, just sort of set that aside for now, we'll come back, we'll circle back around to that.

But what Jesus had him to do was not what he desired to do. The obedience that he rendered to Jesus in the passage tells us nothing of any wavering or discussion. He didn't ask Jesus twice, according to the passage, he received the instructions and the next thing he obeyed. So this obedience that he renders to Jesus.

We know that the scriptures teach us that is a Mark of true conversion, that if we love him, we will keep his commandments. But we should also understand once again that this is not a commandment that he desired to obey. This was contrary to his desires, which is a, again, teaching us something that we know to be true, which is to say that it's simply poppycock what we often hear, that conversion when God converts the center to the saint, that he also converts our desires.

And so if we're in Christ, we just simply do what we want to do because God has sanctified our desires. And so now we just follow our heart and do what we want to do. That's not the teaching of the scriptures. Instead, the scriptures teach us that yes, conversion is a necessary process of sanctifying and changing the desires.

But the scriptures also teach us that that's not an immediate process. That's not, that's not an immediate occurrence. And so the scriptures teach us of an ongoing battle with the flesh, an ongoing battle with the desires that will be opposed to the will of God. And so, in a real way, obedience to the commands of God is only true obedience if it obeys the desires of our master when they are contrary to our own desires.

So in this way, his heart's desire, his deepest wish. As he begs earnestly, I just want to be with you. Let me be with you. Yet the command of his master is contrary to that and he immediately obeys his master. So we see that as a stunning indication of his true conversion. We, we also see the previously demonized man's immediate desire to proclaim his Lord.

In the face of the majority who denies him. Did you notice that as all the towns folks are there and they say to Jesus, you need to just leave. We don't want you here. Now, as the towns folks say that to Jesus, we should understand that's not just one or two of them. That's not just the mayor with maybe a couple of the important people in the town.

It's not just maybe the three or four or five people that were the owners of the herd of pigs. Luke tells us in Luke eight, verse 37, all of the people, now we know that the Bible uses words just like we use words. And sometimes when the Bible uses the words all, it doesn't mean literally all the people, just like we use all sometimes.

All of Jerusalem was turned upside down at the Apostles teachings. That doesn't mean that every single person living in Jerusalem fell into that category, but the Bible sometimes uses that word to



literally mean all. But at the very least, the Bible always uses that word to mean at the very minimum, the majority.

And so at the very minimum, the majority of the town, and neither Luke nor Matthew, nor Mark makes any mention of, of a group of people, of a group of townspeople that didn't want Jesus to go. None of the, none of the three gospel writers make any mention of two or three or four or five people that thought, well, maybe we wish Jesus could stay, but everybody else is telling him to go.

So we're not going to speak up. Instead, we're given the picture of the town in uniformity saying, you gotta go. We don't want your kind here. And in the midst of that notice, This is when the demonized man makes his plea. Can I just be with you? Did you see what he just did? He made the confession of Jesus in the face of all the townspeople saying, you need to go.

We don't want your kind here. You're no good for us. The quicker you leave, the better in the midst of all that is when he says, this is my Lord and I will be with my Lord. Jesus says, those who confess him before men, he'll confess before his Father. Those who deny him before men, he'll deny before his Father.

In the face of the majority of people who are forcefully saying, Jesus, get off our shore. We don't want you here. You're no good for us. In the face of that is when he says, this is my Lord and this is my master, and I want nothing more than to be with him. This is a picture of radical and genuine.

Conversion to Christ and what a stark contrast this picture is. There's so many things about this story. We, as we said last Sunday, there's so many story things about this story that are the superlative example in scripture. This is the superlative example of human misery, of human wretchedness. This is the greatest example of radical transformation.

This is the Bible's greatest example of the length that God will go to to rescue one sheep. This is the greatest example of, of casting out demons in the scriptures. So many ways, this is the superlative, and in this way too, because this shows us a contrast like no other picture in your mind's eye, what's taken place on this beach.

It's a stunning picture of what's taken place on this beach. So on this beach, is the son of God, the perfect human, as we said. The one who perfectly trusts in his father so completely that he can sleep soundly in a storm with water splashing over him. The perfect human, the son of God, who has just demonstrated his power over the forces of the, of the demonic, but then also around him and be behind him.

There are the called-out ones. The called-out ones, the disciples of Jesus, who are no doubt still wrestling, trying to come to grips with what they're experiencing of what's unfolding right before their eyes. They just saw this man a matter of hours ago, speak to wind and waves. They have seen for weeks and months now crowds in the thousands and tens of thousands flocking to him, miracles with now without end.

Now they see him go to the unclean, asst place possible. Cast out this hideous force of demons, and yet, what's the question that they were asking? Do you remember their question? Who is this man that even the wind and the waves obey him? But then notice who answered their question? Did you pick up on that?

Did you pick up on the question? The disciples asked, who is this man that even the wind and the waves obey him? The question was answered a few sentences later, by the demons, you or the son of the most high God, who is this man? He's more than just a man. Who is this man? This man is the son of the most high God.

That is the theme of Mark's gospel, by the way. So here's the demons who have now fled and they have now been cast into the abyss that they didn't want to be cast into. But they were the ones who confessed the identity of Jesus. The demons never struggled with who Jesus was. They never struggled with his identity.

They were always ready to admit who he was, but in admitting who he was, they admitted it with hatred. They didn't know he's the son of God and love him. They didn't recognize him as the Son of God and worship him. They recognized him as the Son of God and they hated him. And so they have this knowledge, this insight into who Jesus is.

Yet that insight did not produce in them faith. And so this is the theme of chapter four and chapter five. Remember since the beginning of the gospel, we have seen these two radically diverging reactions to Jesus. Some react to him so positively and some react to him so negatively. And in the middle of all that, Jesus gives the teaching on the unforgivable sin, the unpardonable sin, which is to say the sin of enlightened blasphemy in the face of knowledge and understanding.

In the face of being shown who this man is, you still refuse to yield. You still refuse to obey. You still refuse to submit. That is the demons. The disciples are grappling just now, really, I think, on the verge of coming to an understanding of who this man really is. But they are yielding and submitting to what they understand, the demons they understand fully and they won't yield.

And then there's the man, the previously demonized man who understands so little but yields fully and completely. Can I just be with you? You are my rescuer. Can I just be with you? I will confess you before men. I will proclaim you before those who hate you. Before all those people who have known me for decades, my whole life, I will proclaim before them.

You are my Lord and my master. And then there's the townspeople. The townspeople who themselves now have been given some revelation of who Jesus is. Some understanding of his identity because he has just demonstrated himself to have power over the forces of the, of the demonic. And yet in the, the minuscule amount of understanding that they have, they reject even that get away from here.

We don't want your kind here. Can you just see this? It's the full scope, the full breadth of the reactions to this man, Jesus, right here on the beach all at one time. So now this vastly contrasting reaction. There's the man who sees Jesus. Jesus frees him from his demons. He hears the message of salvation, and he falls at Jesus' feet wanting to be with Jesus.

And then the vastly contrasting reaction of the townspeople who want nothing but to get themselves shed of Jesus. So the reaction of faith and the reaction of unfaith, right beside one another. I know of no other story in the Bible that contrast these two reactions so sharply, verse 18, and he was getting into the boat.

The man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. He did not permit them, but said to them, go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done

for you and how the Lord has had mercy on you. So he gives these reactions, he gives this instructions. Meanwhile, the townspeople want him to leave.

Now this reaction on the part of the townspeople can. Can we understand why they would react as they did? Isn't this such a startling, puzzling reaction on the part of the townspeople, even not really knowing much about Jesus to put ourself in the position of the townspeople, even not knowing much about him.

Why would we imagine that they would, , they would react in this way? Why would they not react in some sort of way that would say, you know, he did this to, you know, we've known this guy for decades, and look at what he's done for, you know, what, maybe he could do something for so-and-so. Now he's not nearly as bad off as this demonized legion guy was, but maybe you'd think that he would come and look at so and so, or, or maybe my mother's sick.

Do you think he could come look at my mother or, or my wife, my husband? Do you think he would come and look. Do you think he could do something for so and so? Or do you think he could do something for the, why would it not be a reaction of Jesus? Who are you? Will you come to our town and will you stay?

And will you do this? And, and will you come and talk to us and tell us who you are? Why the reaction that they give to Jesus? It is an absolutely stunning and in one sense, puzzling reaction. So let's look at this reaction of the townspeople. First of all, as we said just a moment ago, this was a unanimous reaction.

All the town people, Luke, verse eight, chapter eight, verse 37, all the people of the surrounding country of the garrisons asked him to depart from them. Now, the reason that they would ask him to depart, many would say more than a few people would say, well, That most likely is coming from the fact that Jesus just cost them a whole lot of money.

This herd of 2000 pigs, even by modern standards, that was a tremendous financial loss and most likely it has cast the town in into financial ruin. What ancient town could survive the loss of 2000 pigs. And so more than a few people have said that they want Jesus to lead because they're not happy that Jesus has just brought upon them such tremendous financial loss, and they're quite unhappy about all that.

And there's something to that because you know what the scriptures teach us That when the gospel comes face to face with the checkbook of lost, people then lost. People don't like that. The scriptures show that numerous times in numerous ways when the gospel comes in conflict with how you make money.

Then the loss don't like that. Think of, for example, the story of Paul in Ephesus. When the revival breaks out in Ephesus and people stop buying the little idols made to Diana and the, it's cutting into the business of the people that make and sell the idols. Well then there comes the riot because, you know what?

We don't like it when the gospel cuts into our money. Or think of another example, Paul and Philippi, the demon possessed slave girl who's telling fortunes and Paul cast the demons out and the owners of the slave girl lose their income by way of her, and they weren't happy. So they had Paul beat up and thrown in prison too.

So when the gospel comes in conflict with your checkbook, with lost people's checkbooks, then that produces a more, a greater conflict, right? And the scriptures show us that. So there's, there's something to the fact that the loss, the financial loss that they incurred was significant and probably played a part in this.

However, that was not the reason they asked Jesus to leave. And we know that because Luke tells us the reason that they asked Jesus to leave once again from verse 37 of Luke, chapter eight, all the people of the surrounding country asked him to depart from them for, or in other words, here's the reason for they were seized with great fear, and that's a wonderful translation because Luke says more than they were just afraid.

Luke uses a phrase there that translated very well. They were gripped. They were seized. A fear came upon them, and it seized them. They asked Jesus to leave because they were afraid. Why were they afraid? Luke doesn't tell us. Mark doesn't tell us. Matthew doesn't tell us, but the scriptures do give us reason to see at least two reasons.

That the townspeople were afraid of Jesus after having seen what he did to the demon possessed man and to the herd of pigs. At least two reasons that the scriptures tell us that the townspeople would've been afraid of Jesus. The first reason is this, whenever ever humanity that doesn't know God by way of Christ, whenever those who are not in Christ perceives the power of God, the only reaction that they can have is abject fear.

That's the only possible reaction. Those who do not know Christ in a relationship way, when they see the power of what God can do, the only reaction possible is a reaction of fear. And by fear I don't mean a godly, biblical fear of the Lord. I mean a fear of being afraid, of, of being terrified, of, of running from.

That's what we see in many examples in scripture. And one of the places I think that opens this up for us is First John chapter four, verses 17 through 19. A very important passage of scripture that we return to often for it teaches us so much, it teaches us in this case of the nature of love and how love dispels fear.

So remember, one of the themes of the passage is faith and fear. The people, the townspeople, are fearful right now and they have no faith. And so First John, chapter four, verse 17 through 19 is going to explore this for us, verse 17, for by this is love perfected with us so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment.

John is writing about those who are in Christ and the nature of their love towards God and how the nature of their love for God that love is...the character of that love is one that displaces. This ungodly fear of God. So that's what he's talking about. He says, because as, because as he is also, are we in this world?

Verse 18, there is no fear in love, but perfect love. Here it is, casts out. Fear for fear has to do with punishment. And whoever fears has not been perfected and love, we love because he first loved us. So in that context, Paul or John is saying to us, those who are in Christ, your love for the Father displaces a fearfulness of the Father because a fearfulness of the father is rooted in an expectation of punishment.

Now, to flip this around and to look at this the other way, it works the other way as well. When we think of those who are unconverted, those who are not in Christ, who have no knowledge of God, who have no knowledge of his character, they only experience the fearfulness, the fearfulness that comes from this dreadful expectation of judgment.

So when those who are outside of Christ, the unconverted see the power of God, the only reaction they can have is great fear because they don't know him again. Ephesians one, 18 and 19, they have not been enlightened to the character of God. They do not know God as compassionate, full of grace, full of mercy, forgiving, kind, patient long suffering.

They don't know his character to be of that, but they nevertheless see his power and the white light of his power blinds them to the goodness of his character. And all they see then is something to be dreadfully afraid of. And that's these village people. Now, I, I don't mean that in the Y M C a way, but that's the, the villagers now is all they see is this power of the man, and they know nothing of his goodness.

And his grace and his, even though he has been loving and kind and so gentle and graceful, graceful with this demon, demonized man, nonetheless, they don't know him. And so all they can do is be afraid of him, and that is lost humanity, those outside of Christ, they can hate God, they can distrust God, they can malign God, they can speak lies of God, but they can only fear him in a sinful way, in a sinful fearful way, in a way that brings the dread and the terror that is the rightful dread and terror of one who stands before the power of God without the covering of Christ covering their sin.

So that's the first thing that we see is that they are. They're, they're terrified. They're tremendously terrified and they can only be terrified because they don't have a relationship with Jesus and they see his power. But then in addition to that, the scripture also teaches us the, that when God sets free the captive, then that also produces a very unpleasant confrontation with our own slavery to sin.

Now, this is true for the converted and the converted and the unconverted, so everybody in the room, this is true for all of us, whether converted or not converted. When we see the power of God set the captive free. And that's what Jesus came to do look for. He came to set the captive free and he has set the captive free.

When we see God set the captive free from their bondage to sin. That necessarily produces in us a conviction of the sin that we need to be set free from. Follow what I'm saying here. So let's think back to the man's history chains, cutting himself, wander around, shrieking, naked, all this, this picture of lostness, this picture of separation from Christ.

Notice the two things that his lost unregenerate condition produced in him. They produced, as Luke says, he didn't wear clothes. He life was a life of shame, and that's what sin does. Sin heaps shame upon us just as this man lived in the shame of his nakedness. So also our sin heaps Shame upon us now.

Those who are unconverted aren't, as we said last week, not necessarily PO possessed of demons as this man is, but whether we're possessed of the demonic or not is really irrelevant because all people outside of Christ are slaves to Satan. There's no third option. We either serve the kingdom of goodness or the kingdom of God, or we serve the kingdom of darkness.

Those are the only two options. You, you do not have a third option to serve yourself or to be your own God. Many people think that they are, but you're really just serving the kingdom of darkness. You either serve the kingdom of Satan or you serve the kingdom of God. And so those who are possessed of demons or not outside of Christ, we are slaves to Satan and our slavery to Satan.

Heaps shame upon us, our bondage to sin heaps shame upon us, just like the demonized man. But the second thing that we see is his. Immersion in self-harm day and night, he would cut himself with stones. That is what sin does to everyone. Sin is the tool of its master, and its master wants to kill and destroy everyone.

And so sin is always a process of self-harm. There is no sin that is not also self-harming to the one who is enslaved to it and, and everyone who commits sin. John's gospel, Jesus says, EV, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. So sin always has this aspect of self-harm. Now, you may not cut your arm with rocks like this man, but every sin in which you engage.

It is harmful to you, is destroying you, is killing you.

Those images on the computer screen are destroying you.

That sinful attitude that you refuse to do battle against,

that forgiveness that you refuse to extend is doing the same thing to you that the rocks were doing to the demonized man's arms and chests and legs, it's killing you. And so whether we are in Christ or not in Christ, remaining sin within us is doing the same thing. The picture is the picture of heaping shame and harming ourself.

And so as Jesus frees this man from his bondage to his demons, the townspeople can't help but see that and in their heart, no, I need to be set free from mine too. And that's the conviction that always comes when we see God set people free from sin. Now, God doesn't normally often set people free from a, a bondage to sin in such a dramatic, instantaneous fashion as this.

Most of the time, the process is a long process of battling against sin. But regardless, it doesn't matter. When we see God have victory over sin and other people, it necessarily brings to us the conviction that we still have sin, that we need victory over. And for those who do not have the covering of Christ, that's a very convicting reality.

And these townspeople, they don't want to deal with that. They want him to leave. Do you know that the world will never celebrate Christ setting anyone free from any sin? It doesn't matter how heinous that sin is, it doesn't matter if that's the sin of being a serial murderer. The world will never celebrate God's setting anyone free from any sin.

Think of the examples that we see in scripture of those who have been set free in dramatic ways, those who have been set free and metaphorical ways. Think of all the times we see in scripture, the man with the withered hand. Jesus heals his hands. The Pharisees hate him. The man born blind. In John nine, the Pharisees hate him, the demonized girl in Philippi.

The city hates him. Those set free from idol worship in Ephesus. The city hates him. The world will never celebrate or never approve of God setting anyone free of any sin because this world is ruled

by the God of this age, and the God of this age wants to kill and destroy all that he can. And so we see this so clear, clearly and plainly, don't we?

In the townspeople instead of celebrating here, it was a Jew came from across the sea to set free one of their own and instead of a thank you, no. Get out of here and don't ever come back. What a dramatic picture that we are shown. But now let's look at not only that was the first surprise of the passage, the surprising reaction of the townspeople.

Even more surprising, let's look at Jesus' answer to the man's request. This is, I think, the most stunning aspect of the passage. Verse 19. And he, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, go home to your friends. Now there's, that's something remarkable right there, that the man still has friends. I mean after all of this, he still has friends.

I mean that's, that would be saying quite a lot actually. Mark literally writes there, go home to your own kind or to those who are of your own kind, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you. What a tremendous testimony he has. Now, verse 20, and he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him.

And everyone marveled. So what is stunning, and we touched on this last week, and this was by far the, the biggest aspect of questioning and wondering after the service last week was this. I mean, Jesus told him no. All he wanted to do was be with Jesus, to go with Jesus, and Jesus told him no. So what's stunning here is that there are three earnest requests made of Jesus in the passage three times.

Jesus is begged, the demons beg him. Don't torment us. Don't send us to the waterless places. Instead, let us go to the pigs. The townspeople beg him, leave us. And the man who has been delivered from death to life and now has an earnest and genuine love for Jesus and wants nothing but to be with him, praise to Jesus.

Jesus, please just let me be with you. And of the three requests, Jesus grants two and denies one. Jesus grants the request of demons,

those who rebelled against him before the creation of time in the world, and Jesus had to cast them out of heaven. Jesus grants their request and he grants the request of the townspeople who want nothing to do with him. The, they just want to, to see him leave. He grants their request. And the prayer of the one who loves Jesus, the one who Jesus crossed the sea for, I just want to be with you.

He denies. And there's no indication in the passage that this request was based on, on a desire to, to get away from the, the ugliness of that situation, to leave his life behind and make a fresh start somewhere else. And all the people who knew him there, he just wanted to start over somewhere else.

There's no indication Luke's or Mark says literally that, I may just be with you. I just want to be with you. So the focus is not on what he's leaving, but who he wants to be with. So this is quite a shocking denial. Is it not that Jesus would grant the request of demons and townspeople who hate him and deny the request of the one who loves him?

How do we make sense of this? Well, a number of ways. Number one, this is once again an important and helpful reminder for us. Never presume that you fully understand the mind of God. Never presume that you understand God so fully and so well that you can predict his next move. God, his ways Isaiah 58 tells us his ways are higher than our ways.

His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. God wants to be known. We've said this repeatedly in this section, is that God is a God who desires to reveal himself. He wants his people to know him. He wants his people to understand him. Nevertheless, that is not to say that we can understand an infinite God.

We cannot, and this is once again a helpful reminder for us, though we can know our God. Never presume that you know him so fully that you can predict His every move. So that's the first helpful reminder. But let's go a little bit deeper than this, and I think that let's begin with this place. Let's begin by recognizing.

That all of us in our fallen condition, all of us share the same many traits, but all of us share the same trait of thinking. And, and tell me if you agree with this, of thinking that you know what's best for you. Does every, do you all agree that all people think that we know what's best for us? And so therefore, because we think that we know what's best for us, how do we always think that God's blessings for us will look?

They'll always look like yeses, right? Because we know what's best for us. And so what we ask for must be what's best for us because that's what we ask for. And so therefore, God's blessings must always look like a yes. Now, we know that to be untrue because the Bible says it, but nevertheless, in the depths of our heart, isn't that a hard thing to put aside, that you really don't know what's best for you, that you really don't have a clue actually what's best for you, which is why the scriptures will say to us, That even our prayers, we have to have this mediator in our prayers, that takes our prayers and sort of modifies them and changes them to make them appropriate prayers.

We read about this in Romans chapter eight, verse 26 and 27. Likewise, the spirit helps us in our weakness for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words, and he who searches the hearts knows the mind of the spirit because the spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

So what Paul just said, there was oftentimes we pray for things we had no business praying for. We ask God for things we had no business asking God for, but the Spirit intercedes and takes those prayers and. I guess modifies them or corrects them so that they comply with the will of God. That's what, what Paul said in Romans eight versus , 27 or 26 and 27.

So here we got these three requests, one request on the part of the man, but then these two other requests on the part of the demons and the part of the townspeople. Nowhere in scripture are we taught that when those who are not the children of God make requests of God, that God's answer for them is going to be for their benefit, and that's where we should absolutely be.

Or we should begin to understand here, when Jesus grants the two requests, don't think for one minute that his granting of that request was for their benefit. Look at what happened in both requests. The first request was on the part of the demons. Jesus, don't send us into the abyss. Don't torment us. Let us go to those pigs instead.



All right, go. Well, what happened to them? They ended up in the abyss anyway. Jesus's granting of their request was not for their benefit, it was for their demise. Likewise, and this is the hard one, the townspeople also, their request was, Jesus, leave us. Was that to their benefit? No. Granting of their request was not a blessing.

It was a curse. Here's their only hope. Their only hope. Their only hope is on their shore, and they ask him to leave and he leaves. But the third request, once again, we must leave behind this notion that what we request of God is always for our benefit. The scriptures teach us emphatically. We don't know what to ask for.

And as the man makes this request of Jesus, I know that this, this request is just to be with him, but we must trust and we must believe as a newly redeemed child of God. Jesus's answering of that request is for this man's eternal benefit, because never once does God do anything for his children. That is not for their maximum eternal benefit.

So Romans eight and verse 28 tells us that all things work together for the good of those who fit the category of loving God and called according to his purpose. This man is a child of God and he loves Jesus, and he makes a request of Jesus. And Jesus is no is the blessing of denial. The blessing of the denial.

Who can. Recall a time in your life in which you have asked something of God earnestly, God, just grant this. Just do this. If you will just do this, and then sometime later you look back and God blesses you with just the understanding of knowing God. If you'd done that, I would not be here. Things would not have turned out as they did in the same way He makes this request of Jesus, and Jesus gives him the blessing of blessed denial.

Listen, as I read the words of JC Ryle, he wrote these words two or 300 years ago, speaking here of Jesus's denial of the request of the man. He says this, there are lessons of profound wisdom in these words. The place that Christians wish to be in is not always the place that is best for their souls. The position that they would choose if they could have their own way is not always that which Jesus would have them occupied.

There are none who need this lesson more than new converts, which this man is such people are often very poor judges of what is really good or really for their good, full of the new views. They've been graciously taught, excited with a novelty of their present position, seeing everything around them in a new light, yet knowing little of the depths of Satan and the weaknesses of their own hearts.

Knowing only that a little time ago they were blind, and now through mercy they see of all people, they are the in the greatest danger of making mistakes with the best intentions. They're apt to fall into mistakes about their plans in life, their choices, their moves, their professions. They forget that what we like best is not always best for our souls, and that the seed of grace needs winter as well as summer.

Cold as well as heat to ripen it for glory. Let me read that sentence one more time. They forget that what we like best is not always best for our souls, and that the seed of grace needs winter as well as summer cold, as well as heat to ripen it for glory. So this is an illustration of a man lifting up a request to God.

Think with me of Proverbs 14 and verse 12. There is a way that seems right to a man, but that way, the end of that way is death. This is a man lifting a request to God and Jesus in his love and in his mercy, giving him the gracious blessing of saying, there's something better. There's something greater. We don't know exactly what that is, but there's something far greater that Jesus had for him rather than getting in the boat with the other disciples because you know, even though Jesus would not allow him in the boat, all the spiritual promises were already his.

Even though Jesus wouldn't allow him in the boat, Jesus was still with him. When Jesus says, I'll never leave you nor forsake you, Jesus meant that for him too. When Jesus speaks those words, we know of as the Great Commission, Matthew 28, 19 and 20, when he speaks to the disciples, go into all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit teaching to observe everything I've commanded and behold I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Jesus didn't just mean it for the people that he was speaking to. He meant it for this one too. And so even though he's not in the boat, Jesus is still with him and Jesus had far greater blessings for him. So lastly, and very quickly, let's just look for just a moment at the effect of this man's conversion, because another question we had from last week was, what happened to the man?

Where did he go? What happened to him? Well, first of all, we recognize that the man's leg, anyone's legitimate testimony, is always most difficult with those who know you best. Those who know us best are always the most difficult. That's always the most difficult testimony to give. This man is now sent to those who have held him down as he fought against the chains, as they have seen the wild look of rage and murder in his eyes.

He now has to look into those same eyes and say, Jesus has changed me. I'm a new man. You knew me as the one that screamed in the tombs. You knew me as the one who was a murderer and would beat people up. You knew me as the one who lived naked. Now let me show you the new me, and that is the hardest witness that he can do.

So Jesus has called him to a hard path. But the grace of God will be with him. The harder the path, the more grace and this grace will be with him. But very, very quickly, let's just, , end this by saying, what sort of effect would he have had? Now, we don't know. We don't know, but Jesus told him to go into the area of the capitalists, the capitalists, the this area of 10 cities, these 10 cities, and tell what the Lord has done for you and tell of the mercy that God is headed upon you.

Now, of these 10 cities, one of the cities goes by the name, and you've heard this name, Philadelphia. That was one of the 10 cities. Now in Revelation chapter three, Jesus addresses the church in Philadelphia. Nowhere in the New Testament does an apostle ever go to Philadelphia. Nowhere in the New Testament does Jesus ever go to Philadelphia.

Nowhere in the epistles is Philadelphia ever mentioned yet there's a church there. And it's one of the 10 cities that he was told to go to. Is it possible that he goes to the city of Philadelphia and he tells people, you heard of me, you heard of me, but I am a new man. And let me tell you of the one who has made me new.

But then secondly, we have another hint of evidence coming up in just a couple of chapters. In Mark chapter seven. In Mark chapter seven, we're told that Jesus returns to the same region. Verse 31, he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Syre to the Sea of Galilee in the

region of the Decapolis, and they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay hands on him.

In other words, Jesus returns to the Decapolis two chapters later, and they have heard of Jesus. They've heard of his miracle working power, and they bring to him people to be healed. I think if nothing else, that gives us at least some evidence that this man's life was fruitful, that the fruit of his life was bountiful.

That once again, Isaiah 55 is confirmed for us that the words of the Lord will never go out from his mouth void, that they will always return with the effect for which he intended them. Jesus never wastes any time. He did not waste a trip across the sea. Jesus never wasted a long walk. There was never a meaningless meeting.

There was never a pointless time in Jesus's life. His words always returned for the purpose that he intended. There was always the right woman at the well drawing water. There was always the short man in the tree who had come to the realization that his life though full was empty. There was always the blind beggar by the right side of the road at just the right time, and there was always the demonized man in the tombs at just the right moment.

Jesus' time was never wasted. His words never returned void. This is once again, a reminder for us are the parable of the seeds that we are to be prolific scatterers of the seed, to scatter the seed far and wide, because the seed will always serve the purpose of the one who gives the, the word.