

The Bondage Breaker

Opening Text: Mark 5:1-20

V.1 – *‘then they came to the other side’*

The other side that Jesus travelled to, was a place of dense spiritual darkness and demonic activity. This passage shows us the reality of these invisible agents called demons and how destructively they interact both with the natural world and with humans. We need to consider that there is often ‘another side’ to the things we face.

- a) In the Mark 4 we read that the journey to get to the other side (Gadara) was treacherous and unusually dangerous. That storm definitely wasn’t just another storm. Could it be that there was demonic, behind the scenes activity to prevent Jesus to reach Gadara?
- b) In this passage and others, we see how these invisible agents of darkness not only interact with the natural world but also with the lives of human beings:
 - The man in this story was not just mad: he was completely taken over by demons
 - In Luke 13:11 a woman suffering from severe scoliosis was healed. Jesus said in verse 16 that she had been ‘*bound by satan*’ for 18 years.
 - In Matthew 9:32-33 a mute person spoke when Jesus cast the spirit out
 - In Matthew 12:22 someone was blind and mute because of an evil spirit

Acts 10:38 - *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.*

“Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes”

The eastern side of Galilee was a no-go area for a Jewish person. It was made up of 10 gentile cities (Decapolis), full of Greek and Roman temples. It was a dark place of pagan worship, sexual perversion, idolatry, and demonic activity. Jesus went there. He proved to be Lord even there. Like a Moses, who crossed over the Red Sea for the deliverance of Israel, Jesus also crossed over the Sea of Galilee for the deliverance of this one man.

- c) Interestingly ‘Gerasene’ comes from a Hebrew root-word which means “*to drive out or to cast out*”. Indeed, Jesus went there to cast out ... demons.

1 John 3:8b - *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*

Jesus crossed the sea, faced a storm, didn’t sleep that night to come to this place. He went out of His way to bring His power to this community. These were devil-worshipping pagans, but He came to them. He was always moved with compassion.

V.19 - ... *“Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had **compassion** on you.”*

Having said all these things, I would like to share a few thoughts about...

1. The man,
2. The legion
3. The Gadarenes
4. The pigs

1. The man

Matthew 8:28b - ... *“exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way”*

Mark 5:3 – *He had often been bound with shackles and chains – but to no avail.*

This man must have been a real problem to this community. He roamed around that region, naked, behaving like a wild animal and displaying supernatural strength. Nothing and no one could tame him. He himself must have suffered tremendously, both mentally and physically.

V.5 – *“And always, night and day he was... crying out and cutting himself with stones”*

Someone like that was a real problem to the people of that region. Therefore, he lived rejected, abandoned, exiled among the tombs of the city. The beauty of this story is how Jesus came and radically changed his life, how he changed his exile into an exodus. Jesus is the bondage breaker!

2. The Legion

V. 9 - *Then He asked him, “What is your name?” And he answered, saying, “My name is Legion; for we are many.”*

They held this man hostage and exerted total control over him – spirit, soul and body. They possessed his whole personality.

These were ‘unclean spirits’ – that is why they begged to go into the pigs. They had something in common: pigs were unclean. Uncleaness is the environment that they are familiar with and the environment that attracts them.

Also, I want you to notice how the Legion exerted their influence beyond that man’s body. That is why those demons asked not to leave that country:

V.10 - *Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.*

They were territorial spirits. They were the legion for the region. This man’s body was like their physical headquarters. They were a legion (the strength of a Roman legion was about 6000). However, ONE (Jesus) was stronger than them all. They feared Jesus, they knew Who He was and begged not to be tormented by Him.

Luke 8:31 - *And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. [the bottomless pit, or the underworld]*

3. The Gadarenes

The Gadarenes had 3 basic problems:

Problem number **1**: The man,

Problem number **2**: the Legion

Problem number **3**: **Their rejection of Jesus!**

This is a unique story in the New Testament because this was one of the few places where a city did not embrace Jesus. They did not say ‘thank you’ for taking care of our problems, nor did they give Him the keys of the city. No. They asked Jesus to leave.

Matthew 12:28 - *But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

By not accepting Jesus and His kingdom, the demons were going to come back. Only the pigs had drowned. These demons could come back, find the place swept and clean and bring 7 other legions worse than them.

4. The pigs

The Gadarenes didn’t mind Jesus taking care of their problems as long as He didn’t touch their pigs!

Pigs were a big deal to them: pigs were most likely the source of their wealth. Maybe pig farming was their way of life for generations or even part of their culture. Pigs were also an important part of their religious ceremonies in the temple of Zeus.

Probably they thought that touching their pigs was too high of a price to pay for freedom, miracles, Jesus.

Like them, sometimes we are happy for Jesus takes care of our problems, but we don’t want him to touch our “pigs” – those things we deem too precious.

- a) We need to completely surrender our lives to His Lordship!

Luke 14:33 - *So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.*

The ‘rich young ruler’ had a ‘money pig’ and failed to be counted as a disciple (Mark 10:17–31)

- b) Here’s good advice from the Bible: do not invest in your pigs!

Matthew 7:6b - *“ Do not ... cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.”*

Conclusion

- Jesus crossed over to the other side to show us that sometimes there is another side to the problems we face: there are spiritual entities working behind the scenes against us. However, the One for us is greater than 6000 against!
- Jesus crossed over to reach people who didn't even want Him. He is such a compassionate Jesus! He ended up only reaching one man. However, this one man became a living testimony of the power and compassion of Jesus. He went to his friends and then to 10 cities sharing his testimony!
- Surrender your life to Jesus – completely. No 'pig' is worth the tremendous salvation and all that Jesus brings into our lives!