

Jesus having calmed the violent storm, the boat reaches the other side, a Gentile side of the lake, landing in the region of the Gadarenes to the east of the Jordan. (They are called the Gergesenes in Matthew 8:28.) They were natives of the land of Canaan mentioned by Moses among the tribes to be exterminated by Israel when they entered the Promised Land. Now, 1400 years later, here is Jesus coming to release them from their bondage to Satan, as symbolized in this wretched man possessed with hundreds of demons. So many that when the Lord asked the man's name they answered their name was "Legion, for we are many." A Roman Legion was a troop numbering about 5000. The term may here simply mean a very large number. Many indeed. The man had supernatural strength although, like Samson, apparently of ordinary build and appearance. He terrorized the local populace and could not be restrained by ordinary or extraordinary means. When not wandering in the wilderness he inhabited the local cemetery, naked and suffering from self inflicted wounds. When Jesus arrived the man immediately ran to Him and worshiped Him. The unclean spirits immediately recognized Jesus as Lord and proclaimed Him to be the Son of the Most High God. The Jews had not the insight to see and acknowledge Who this Man Jesus was among them, but this man of a neighboring foreign country does, even though invaded by unclean spirits. Worshiped Him? Sooner or later, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess Jesus as Lord., Philippians 2:10. Upon meeting him Jesus commanded the unclean spirits to leave, but they resist, going so far as to adjure Him that He torment them not. "Adjure" is a strong word not used in the other gospels, in which they beg, beseech Him to not cast them into the deep. Here they actually presumed to press upon Him, in the name of God, a (rightful) claim that it was not yet the time when He could cast them into the Abyss. Tormented they will be, when He does have them cast into the Lake of Fire, together with Satan, their leader. The devils also believe, and tremble, James 2:19. They not only knew their fate they also knew it was not the time. Are we as aware of the times and seasons as they seem to be? Amazing to us that, while knowing the time was not yet, their fate is somehow fixed in their unrelenting animosity to Him. They all have unsundering pride like Lucifer their leader. They are not even offered the opportunity to repent. But their ultimate fate is postponed for a time, because their hostility is of use to God. He providentially permits, but limits, their malevolent acts, both in the discipline of His people and the plowing up of sinners' hard hearts to receive the sown seed of the gospel.

Apparently unattached spirits instinctively desire to be clothed with a warm, moist body. Human bodies are preferred but swine will do. But upon being given permission by the Lord of all Creation to enter the swine,

the swine will not have them. All two thousand react by stampeding over a cliff into the sea, drowning rather than harbor unclean spirits. (Ironically swine are themselves counted unclean by the Law of Moses.)

The swineherds are shocked at the sudden loss of their charges, and income, and run to report to the owners and countrymen. When they come to Jesus they find the man who once terrorized them calm, clothed, and in his right mind (with a sound mind, sober minded). Instead of rejoicing in the blessing bestowed upon him, and themselves, by their neighbor's release from the demons they begin asking Jesus to leave their country. So He did. They could never say they weren't given an opportunity. No one will be able to stand before the great White Throne and say that they weren't loved and that God's heart of love had not reached out to them in some way in their lifetime.

As Jesus leaves the one who had been possessed asked to go with Him. But Jesus tells him: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." And he did. "And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel." He became a faithful evangelist. Even though Jesus has departed to heaven we, His blessed, are sent to proclaim what great things Jesus has done for us.

Two more incidents are told next, the story of the second embedded in that of the third. Jesus readily goes with a ruler of the synagogue to heal a sick 12 year old daughter. (He deeply loved and valued her, not like some cultures which devalue female children and adults.) As Jesus went a woman, in faith, touches His garment in the press of the crowd. He immediately knows that some healing energy has gone out from Him. He lovingly exposes her presumptuous faith, reassuring her that she is indeed permanently healed and to be in peace.

Even though the daughter reportedly has died He goes on with Jairus, reassuring him "Be not afraid, only believe." And he does believe amidst the scorn and derision of the mourning crowd, and receives his daughter back from the dead. Their scorn was turned to astonishment. Jesus sees to it she is fed and charges her parents and the three disciples to silence. No curiosities were to be satisfied among this crowd. No news conferences, media events or interviews there. Apparently He didn't even use this occasion as an opening to preach. He customarily refrains from using attractions to lure people to hear Him preach. We should be careful to advertise our message for what it is, the Gospel, and avoid the temptation to get people "in the door" by offering something else too. Faith is the underlying theme of this chapter and power of our whole life for the Lord. No substitutions please.

NOTE: See other side for a list of comparisons and contrasts from this chapter which might be found to be instructive.

Observations on Mark 5, Comparisons and Contrasts

At His Feet

- 6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and **worshipped** him,
22 ... one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, **he fell at his feet**,
27 ... came in the press behind, and touched his garment. (“**the hem**” **therefore at his feet**, Matthew 9:20)
28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.
33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and **fell down before him**, and told him all the truth

Pleading (same word: 10,12,17,18, 23; but v. 7 is a stronger term)

- 7 **I adjure** thee by God, that thou torment me not
10 And he **besought** him much that he would not send them away out of the country.
12 ...all the devils **besought** him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them
17 And they began to **pray** him to depart out of their coasts
18 ...he that had been possessed with the devil **prayed** him that he might be with him ...
23 And **besought him greatly**, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

Marveling

- 20 ... all men did **marvel**
42 And they were astonished with a **great astonishment**

Unbelief

- 15 ... and **they were afraid**
31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, **and sayest thou, Who touched me?**
40 And they **laughed him to scorn** ...

Fear

- 15 ... and **they were afraid**
33 But the woman **fearing and trembling**, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him,

His command, or charge

- 8 For he said unto him, **Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit**
19 ... but saith unto him, **Go home to thy friends, and tell them** how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.
34 Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; **go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.**
41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, **Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.**
43 And he **charged them straitly that no man should know it;**

His compassion and comfort

- 8 **For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.**
24 And **Jesus went with him;**
34 **Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague**
36 ... he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, **Be not afraid, only believe.**
43 ... and **commanded that something should be given her to eat.**