

# Jesus and the Outcast

*Mark 5:1-20*

- Who are the weird people in your life?
- Let's be honest: who are the people you cannot stand to be around?
- The people who look at life so differently that you just can't handle it.
- Maybe they are socially awkward or hold a different belief system that conflicts with what we believe. Perhaps they struggle with an obvious sin or come from a different race or economic background than you are comfortable with.
- Who was the guy that no one liked in high school or the girl who always ate by herself?
- What about that one co-worker you have who just seems a little bit off? That relative that is the black sheep and no one talks about anymore, or if they do, it'd be better if they didn't?
- Do you have someone in mind yet?
- Here's what I want you to hear this morning, loud and clear: Jesus came to save that person.
- In fact, if you want to write down one main idea for this message, it would be this: Jesus loves the outcasts.
- That's good news, by the way, because I believe most of us at some point feel like an outcast.
- We'll get to that later, though.
  
- Go ahead and open up to **Mark 5**. I am so grateful for Mike Montgomery sharing God's word with you last week as we looked at the incredible story of Jesus calming the storm.
- Mike did a great job describing the Sea of Galilee, which was a lake that formed part of the division between the Jewish

controlled land of Israel and the more Gentile, or non-Jew towns on the eastern side of the lake.

- We saw that Jesus had the power to calm the physical storm on the sea that came up, and we were reminded that following Jesus doesn't keep us from going through storms, but that we have his presence with us as we face them.
- They have now successfully made it across the sea, but they are headed right back into another storm.
- This one isn't physical, but it is one of the most incredible stories of how Jesus displayed God during his earthly ministry.
- In fact, that is what we are seeing in this whole section of Mark: God's power in our pain.
- He demonstrated his power in the midst of a storm that filled professional fishermen with fear, and this morning, we are going to see God bring his power to work in the life of a man who most would consider to be an outcast.
- If you aren't very familiar with this story, let me go ahead and warn you in advance that it is pretty weird. However, we'll go through and explain it as best we can.
- Let's read through the text this morning, and I'll make a few observations as we go through.
- Then, we'll come back and draw out three lessons that help us know that Jesus really does love the outcasts.
- Start in **verse 1-5**.
- How would you like him for a neighbor?
- The word there that is translated in **verse 4** as "*subue*" is the word we get the English word "tame" from.
- Imagine you are a realtor, showing properties.

- “Oh, I really think you guys are going to love this house. It is on the outskirts of town but still centrally located, but look at those mountain views.”
  - Suddenly, this scarred, bloody, insane man comes screaming across the mountains...kinda ruins the moment, doesn't it?
  - Yet this man mad a direct line to Jesus, and Jesus didn't hold back at all.
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- Look at **verses 6-9...**
  - Well, this just keeps getting weirder, doesn't it?
  - This man is possessed by not one but a legion of demons.
  - There appears to have been one demon who spoke for the group, which is why it switches from “my” to “we” and “us”.
  - A Roman legion consisted of 6,000 troops, but that doesn't mean this man had to be possessed by 6,000 demons...it could simply mean a large, powerful group, as we will see in a minute.
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- Regardless, this is not a normal situation at all.
  - The demons are begging Jesus not to send them to their final judgment yet, and so they suggest that Jesus send them into a nearby herd of pigs.
  - When Jesus does, they immediately run the entire herd of 2000 pigs off into the sea and they drown.
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- Check out the aftermath. Keep reading **verses 14-20**.
  - The herdsmen were completely upset because their entire livelihood was floating dead in the water.
  - They went into town and told everyone what happened, and people started coming out and found out that it was true.
  - Scared they were going to lose more money, they beg Jesus to leave.

- As he is leaving, the healed man, now in his right mind, begs Jesus to take him with him, but Jesus refuses.
- In fact, for the first time in Mark, Jesus tells the man to go back and tell everyone what had happened to him.
- He does that, and word of Jesus spreads throughout the region, while Jesus himself gets back in the boat and heads back towards Capernaum.
- How's that for a bedtime story?
- There are so many observations we could make about this passage, but I want to draw it back to three main observations about Jesus and this man.
- Jesus loved the outcast then, and he loves the outcasts now.
- So, whether you would consider yourself an outcast or are thinking of a specific person from earlier in the message, here's what we see:

## 1) Jesus cares when others don't.

- Go back to **verse 2-5**.
- Can you begin to imagine what life was like for this man?
- We don't know his background, and we don't know how he got to this point.
- What we do know is that by now, he was scary, weird, and a complete and total outcast.
- People had tried to restrain and tame him, but they had eventually given up.
- We don't know anything about what was going on here, but what about this man's family? Where were they?
- It's possible that he had been involved heavily in sin that pushed his family away and opened the door for Satan's demons to grab him like they did.

- Regardless, at this point, everyone has given up on him.
- Do you ever feel like that?
- Maybe you are married and you and your spouse have been fighting, and you feel completely alone.
- Perhaps you are growing up and you are in those tumultuous years of finding out who you are, and you just don't fit.
- Maybe the kids are gone or you have retired and you just don't feel like you fit.
- Whatever stage you find yourself in this morning, let me remind you: Jesus cares for you, even if you feel like an outcast.
- Who was the first person to meet Jesus when he got off the boat? An outcast.
- Who was the only person Mark records Jesus ministering to on that entire side of the sea? An outcast.
- Listen to me: I don't know what you have done, and I don't care. Here's what I do know: Jesus cares for you.
- You may have had no clue why you were coming to church this morning, and it may have just been because you needed to hear that Jesus cares about you, even if no one in the entire world loves you at all.
- In the same kind of way, realize too that Jesus cares about the people you think are outcasts.
- His concern reaches to the lowest, hardest, most difficult sinners, so there is no one who is so far gone that Jesus doesn't care or can't rescue.
- Who have you given up hope on? Who have you said is too far gone for Jesus to save?
- If he can save a man who may have been possessed with thousands of demons, then he can save the people you don't

think deserve it or are too far gone.

- **Not only because he cares, but also because...**

## **2) Jesus does what others can't.**

- Maybe we are being too harsh on the people in this town.
- Perhaps they were motivated by a genuine love and concern for this man and they wanted to help him.
- However, the point still stands: they couldn't do it.
- They were completely unable to help.
- He was so consumed by sin and Satan that no human power, no chain, and no effort could subdue him.
  
- Perhaps in our day, this isn't as blatant, but we still see it all the time.
- A person gets so caught up in a sin, whether some illicit relationship, substance abuse, or possibly a more socially-acceptable destructive pattern like workaholism or, on the other end, laziness.
- Their friends and family try to intervene, buy them books, send them to conferences.
- Maybe mom and dad bring them to church and try to show them the right way to live.
- However, they just seem too far gone.
  
- If Jesus could save an outcast with thousands of demons, he can save and deliver your loved one.
- You can't do it. You aren't strong enough or powerful enough; you have to cry out to the one who can.
- You need to beg Jesus to save and heal and wake that person up to see the damage they are doing to themselves and to God's name.

- Trust them into the care of the only one who can really work and change the heart.
- You may be here today, and that describes you. You are the one who has run away from God, and maybe you think you are in so deep God must hate you and couldn't save you if you wanted him to.
- That is a complete and total lie, and I am praying you see that this morning.
- Jesus brought you here today so you could hear that he cares and that he loves and that he can break the power of addiction and sin and shame in your life.
- If he could deliver a man from his thousands of demons, he can deliver you.
- It likely won't be instant, and I can promise it won't be easy, but I can tell you on the authority of God's Word today that whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.
- If you are willing to surrender, like this man did, and allow Jesus to do the hard work of removing these things and replacing them with a life that is honoring to him, then today, you can be saved.
- You can find the same freedom this man found if you will simply trust him today.
- Here's what's amazing: If you will trust him today, then you will find yourself on a journey towards a purpose greater than you could ever imagine.
- **You see, the third point is...**

### 3) Jesus sends whom others wouldn't.

- The people in the village were scared by the power Jesus yielded, so they forced Jesus to leave.
- The man who had been delivered, though, wanted to follow Jesus fully, just like the disciples.
- However, what did Jesus tell him to do?
- Look back at **verse 19**.
  
- Even though he hadn't been saved for more than a few hours, Jesus immediately sent this man out to tell the world what had happened to him.
- I hope you are getting sick of hearing me say this, but listen: Jesus has called you to do the exact same thing.
- "Sean, I know, but I still don't know how to share my faith."
- Jesus gives a great two-step process here: tell people what great things God has done for you and how he has had mercy on you.
- Simple as that.
  
- That whole region was impacted by this one man's story. Look back at **verse 20**.
- The Decapolis was a cluster of 10 Gentile cities, and word about Jesus spread throughout all of them.
- This man may actually be the first Gentile (or non-Jew) missionary.
- Let that sink in: days before, he was a raving madman, and now he is a traveling evangelist.
  
- One other word of caution: When Jesus starts showing his love to outcasts and drawing them to himself, it can be quite costly.

- Here is the simple, painful way one commentator summed up this section:
  - *Apparently they feared further losses if He stayed. There is no record that He ever returned to that area.<sup>1</sup>*
- The Gentile pig-farmers put a greater value on the life of the pigs than they did on the life of a person, and as a result, Jesus turned around and never came back to that region.
- Let that be a stern warning to us.
- If God starts using us to reach those around us who our society would count as outcasts, it may be quite costly in a lot of ways. Our church will change; it will look different and require us to think and act differently as we come alongside those who are new to Jesus.
- Are we willing to pay the price so that others may know who Jesus is?
- God forbid that we would put anything in a higher place than glorifying Christ by making him known to more people so they can honor him with their lives as well.
- You see, Jesus loves the outcasts, including us.
- He loved us so much that he wouldn't just come to deliver us from demons, he would come to deliver us from sin.
- Delivering us from sin wasn't as simple as casting out demons into a herd of pigs. No, it was much more costly: it would cost Jesus his own life.

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<sup>1</sup> Grassmick, John D. ["Mark."](#) *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck. Vol. 2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985. 123. Print.