

February 19, 2023

Pastor Joe Hess

Study Guide



Love Lives Here

God's Call on Ordinary People to do Extraordinary Things

Mark 5:1-20 (vs. 14-20 not included here)

Jesus Restores a Demon-Possessed Man

¹ They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. ² When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. ⁴ 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. ⁵ Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones. ⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. ⁷ He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" ⁸ For Jesus had said to him, "**Come out of this man, you impure spirit!**" ⁹ Then Jesus asked him, "**What is your name?**" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." ¹⁰ And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. ¹¹ A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. ¹² The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." ¹³ He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

Ice Breaker Question:

What are your feelings toward cemeteries?

Thoughts & Questions to Fuss With:

1. The boat lands in the Gerasenes region- located in the southwest corner of the sea of Galilee. This is the first time Jesus leaves the Capernaum/Galilee area and heads into primarily Gentile (non-Jewish) territory. Jesus and his disciples are "outsiders." When was the last time you went somewhere and felt like an "outsider"?
2. What I love about this story – Jesus knows what he's heading into. He knows it's going to be tough and challenging when he meets the crazy, demon possessed man - yet he doesn't hesitate to get out of the boat. I share my thoughts on the disciples' hesitation – their participation in the story seems to stop at the shore. As they watched this story unfold from the safety of the shore – what are they thinking?
What would you have thought?
Would you have wanted to step in and help?

3. A cemetery back in ancient times included caves (or tombs) dug into the mountain side. Usually more than one body could be laid out in a tomb so often times there was additional space in a given tomb. Only a truly desperate person would live in these types of tombs. He was truly homeless....and in many ways helpless. Can you share a time in your life when you were desperate or helpless?
4. This crazy, demon-possessed man ran at Jesus and at the top of his lungs shouted at Jesus. When do most people shout at the top of their lungs? Have you ever shouted at the top of your lungs?
5. Have you ever had a stranger come at you spitting mad? How did you respond? How would you have responded if this man came at you?
6. How did folks try to “fix” this demon possessed-man?
7. If you buy in to Joe’s definition that all of us struggle with demons (“day to day” demons) – what could have caused his demons or brokenness?
8. The text says the man would cry out night and day and cut himself with stones. We know this still happens today. Why do people self-harm? Do you know anyone who has struggled with self-harm? Have you ever struggled with self-harm?
9. Where you grew up – did you ever have a person that just didn’t fit in or was a misfit of some kind? Did you know their back-story?
10. The text seems to indicate that Jesus had an initial attempt to free the man from his demons (verse 8). Was this just a swing and a miss? Or do you think maybe there was something else Jesus wanted to teach his disciples/us?
11. The immediate tension in the story seems to be lowered when Jesus asks the man his name - a de-escalation technique often used by hostage negotiators. Why would asking someone their name deescalate a given situation?
12. After the towns people see the man with Jesus in his right mind and fully dressed – why are they afraid? Why do they ask Jesus to leave?
13. As Jesus is leaving, the man asks Jesus if he can come with them. Why does Jesus tell this man he must stay? The text says the people were all amazed at his story. Why were they so amazed?
14. Our faith stories may not be as dramatic as this man’s story – but I believe we all have one. What’s your faith story?