

**SERIES: GETTING TO KNOW JESUS**

**SUBJECT: THE DEVIL AND THE GREAT COMMISSION**

**SCRIPTURE: MARK 5:1-20**

**SERMON NO. 10**

**Introduction**

This account from Jesus' early ministry opens up the reality of the occult, and demonic influence on human beings.

This is a very graphic description of a man demonized. This guy lived in a graveyard, unshaven and ragged. He was scarred from chains and shackles that were unable to bind him. His face had a dark haunted look. His body had open, bleeding wounds from cuts he made on it with sharp stones. Every night and every day, he prowled the hills around the graveyard howling and screeching in a crazed torment, all because the demons in him would not let him rest. He was a dangerous and frightening man.

Are there people in our day who are demonized? Yes!

**Illustrate:** Rodney Snead, the younger brother of one of our son-in-laws, Barry Snead, has always lived with his parents in Danville Virginia. From a young man he has always walked in a blank daze through every room of the house, hour after hour without stopping. Even at night in the darkness he could be heard walking. One night he tried to burn the house down with his parents in bed, by setting a fire inside the house. The following are words from my son-in-law two weeks ago concerning his encounter with his brother.

“This has been one of the hardest things I have ever experienced. First, I find my brother so very ill, simply completely out of his mind and out of control. Screaming with raging anger one minute, crying the next minute, and talking at a racing speed the next minute, then starting over again. He would go from one to the other every three minutes or so. The bathroom had not been used since we placed mother into an assisted living home. He was using one of the bedrooms and every now and then he would raise the window and through human waste out in the yard. He was not safe to be around. Then I had to call the cops on him to take him to the hospital and see his eyes raging with anger toward me.

Then have him attack me in the hospital, hitting at my face as fast as he could go. He then would sit in a chair and calm down. Each time I tried to pray for him, he would make awful faces and scream like an animal. My parents lived with A LOT ! Daddy used to think he would kill the two of them one day.”

## **I. SEVEN SIGNS THAT DEMONS ARE AT WORK IN THE LIFE OF AN INDIVIDUAL.**

**1. The Sign of Uncleaness. (2).** **When Jesus came out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.** Wherever demons are involved, there is always physical and moral filth that is evident.

**a. There was physical filth.** This demonized man lived among the tombs of the area, he lived among the dead bodies in the limestone caves which lined the cliffs along this part of the Sea of Galilee. It was in these caves that the people of Jesus' time would put the dead bodies of their friends and loved ones. So amongst the dead and decaying filth of human remains, this man lived.

**b. There was also be moral filth.** I don't think it's any accident that the rise of Satanism and occult activities in north America have coincided with the spread of pornography and obscenity... ..in the media, ...in our movies, ...in our literature ...and over the internet. Friends, these things are related. Demons love to be present in filth and obscenity and pollution in all areas of the human existence.

**2. The Next Sign of Demon Activity is Isolation. (3).** This man had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not even with chains. He had a home, and he had friends, but he chose to live away from other humans, completely cut off. In every case of demonic influence there is some form ...of withdrawal ...or secretiveness ...or emotional or physical separation from people.

**3. The Third Demon Activity in a Person is Supernatural Strength. (4).** He had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces; neither could any man tame him. That requires strength far beyond what a normal human being is capable of demonstrating. But this isn't unusual in cases of people who are demonized.

**4. A Fourth Mark of the Demonized is a Sense of Torment. (5)** Night and day he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. This man demonstrated a deep feeling of restlessness. He wandered up and down the mountains, crying out in pain and anguish at the torment he felt within himself. He was so tormented that he bruised and cut himself with jagged rocks, trying to drive out this feeling of inner torment. This is very characteristic of demonic influence.

**This man in our story was very tormented.** The Bible calls Satan, "The Father of Lies." One of Satan's biggest lies is that occult activity is attractive and fascinating. So it becomes very alluring and seductive to someone looking from the outside in. But Satan uses that lie to lure people in, and once a person is involved in occult or Satanic activity torment sets in.

**Illustration:** Dr. Kurt Koch, who before his death was considered one of the leading Christian authorities on occult phenomenon. In one of his books he wrote of a young man who came to him for counseling. He showed this man the way of salvation, and the young man wanted to ask Jesus to be the forgiver of his sins and the leader of his life, so Dr. Koch led him in a prayer to ask Jesus into his life. "Suddenly he jumped up and started running and banging his head against the wall time and time again. After I stopped praying, he asked me to forgive his behavior with the words, "I didn't want to do that. It just came over me." On talking to him further, I discovered that he had worked at the office of an astrologer. Calling in two other believing Christian men, we together commanded the evil powers to leave the young man. And he was delivered from the inner torment." (Occult Bondage and Deliverance, by Dr. Kurt Koch. Evangelization Publishers, Germany 1970. p. 65).

**5. A Fifth Sign Always Present in Demonized People is the Immediate Recognition of the Authority of Jesus. (6-7).** When he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him. When he saw Jesus, he knew immediately who He was. He came running to Him and called Him by name, using the phrase that demons always use, "Son of the Most High God." This phrase "... the Most High God" is the highest name a non-believer can know or use to refer to God. It is used all through the Old Testament, but only by members of Gentile or pagan nations.

Israel know God as "Jehovah" or "Yahweh", which is translated in our Bibles by the word, LORD (with all capital letters). But everyone else knew God as "El Elyon"-or God Most High. So the demons in this man used the highest name they personally knew to use for Jesus, God's Son... "Son of the Most High God." That is as intimate as they knew Him. It recognized Jesus' authority, but showed a lack of intimacy.

**6. The Sixth Sign is Multiple Personalities. (9-10).** Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" My name is Legion, for we are many. He besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. By that statement, we know that this man was aware of more than one personality residing within him.

Now, we know that there is a medical condition known as schizophrenia. And most times this condition can be treated with medication. But in our story, no amount of drugs or combination of drugs could ever heal or bring under control what this man was going through. That's because, just like some storms, as we discovered last week, can be from demons..., so can some forms of this mental illness.

In every person who experiences demonization, there will at least be two persons plus the demon within them.

### **7. The Last Mark of a Demonized Person is Suicidal**

**Tendencies.** Now, don't get me wrong, not all suicidal tendencies come from demonic influence. But all demonized people will have suicidal tendencies.

The demons begged Jesus not to send them "out of the area", as the NIV translation puts it. Now, they weren't asking Jesus to keep them from moving to another state or province. That phrase literally was asking Jesus not to send them to the abyss, to the place of eternal destruction.

But the demons defeated their own purpose to keep on living, by their natural suicidal nature. Because look... what's the first thing they do when they get in the pigs? They go and drown themselves.

**II. THE STRANGE REACTION (MARK 5:14-17) .** They that fed the swine fled, and told in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. 15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. 16 And they that saw it told them how it befell to him

that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. 17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coast.

**1. Shortly after the man was cured the townspeople came to see what had happened out by the graveyard. (14-15).** But by the time they arrive on the scene, the man had already gone home, put on clean clothes, and had come back to Jesus, and was sitting at Jesus' feet, quietly learning from Him. But even though Jesus had cured this man the people of the town asked Jesus to leave.

What a strange reaction! Jesus had just rescued a very scary man from a horrible life, restored him to his family and friends, and he was now prepared to enter society again as a useful participant. He was no longer scary. He was no longer withdrawn. He was in his right mind. He was at peace with himself. There were no dual personalities raging in his head. He was completely delivered. He was set free. ...*But the townspeople asked Jesus to leave! Why?*

**Illustrate:** John Oxenham, the man who wrote the words to the beloved missionary hymn, "In Christ There Is No East or West" wrote a poem in the 1900's, based on these 4 verses:

“Rabbi, Be Gone Rabbi, be gone! And take this fool of thine. His soul? What care we for his soul? Since we have lost our swine. Then Christ went sadly: For he had given them a sign of love and tenderness. But they only wanted swine! Christ stands without your door and gently knocks, But if your gold or swine the entrance blocks, He forces no man's hold, he will depart And leave you to the treasures of your heart” .

**2. What is the treasure of your heart?** Is it your comfort? Your music? Your money? Your status? Your pride? Regardless of whatever it is, Jesus won't wrestle it from you. He'll let you keep the treasures of your heart, and He'll leave, just like he did from the people on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

These four verses are a good reminder to us to make sure our hearts are tuned to what's most important to Jesus, people! If that isn't our heart, Jesus will turn and walk away, and leave us to our swine, just like he did with the people of this area.

**III. THE ASSIGNED TASK JESUS GAVE THE MAN. (Mark 5:18-20).** And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. 19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, God home to they friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. 20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

Decapolis refers to the ten Greek cities on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, including the town of Damascus. It was to this Gentile community that Jesus commanded this man to go and tell his story.

**1. This is a clear example of what the Great Commission is about.** Jesus didn't tell this man to go and preach on the street corner, or go door to door with pamphlets and literature. He simply told him to go home and tell his friends what happened to him. We call that "being a witness". Everyone is expected to be a witness.

When this man became a witness in the Decapolis region, he simply told people how he had lived in anguish and torment; how he had been withdrawn from humanity; how he used to be a really scary person; how he used to be angry and hostile and rebellious. But then he met Jesus. And Jesus freed him from all that, and gave him peace and joy! No wonder all the people of those 10 Greek cities, were amazed at what he told them!"