

能力大对决——马可福音 5:1-20 A Confrontation of Powers – Mark 5:1-20

Introduction, outline

- Scripture reading: Mark 5:1-20

1 They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes. **2** When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him, **3** and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; **4** because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. **5** Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones. **6** Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; **7** and shouting with a loud voice, he *said, “[a]What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!” **8** For He had been saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!” **9** And He was asking him, “What is your name?” And he *said to Him, “My name is Legion; for we are many.” **10** And he *began* to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country. **11** Now there was a large herd of swine feeding [b]nearby on the mountain. **12** *The demons* implored Him, saying, “Send us into the swine so that we may enter them.” **13** Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand *of them*; and they were drowned in the sea. **14** Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and in the country. And *the people* came to see what it was that had happened. **15** They *came to Jesus and *observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the “legion”; and they became frightened. **16** Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and *all* about the swine. **17** And they began to implore Him to leave their region. **18** As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was imploring Him that he might [c]accompany Him. **19** And He did not let him, but He *said to him, “Go home to your people and report to them [d]what great things the Lord has done for you, and *how* He had mercy on you.” **20** And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis [e]what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

- Today's miracle shows Jesus's power over the spiritual world. According to the Bible, the world is made of the natural world and the spiritual world. There is no material element in the spiritual world, so no scientific research can even reach this world.
- A scientist once argued against the existence of the human soul, and a Christian responded with a question, "Do you have love? If you do, tell me which organ of your body it is located. Can you dig out your love and show it to me?"
- The world is made of natural and spiritual realms, and each individual is also made of a body and a soul. Adam's sin affected every part of human nature, making us totally corrupt from the inside out. Jesus, as the Messiah, the Savior-King, must save us from the curse of sin both physically and spiritually

- Outline:
Title: A Confrontation of Powers
 1. The Torturing Power of Demons (vv 1-8)
 2. The Delivering Power of Jesus (vv 9-13)
 3. The Blinding Power of Sin (vv 14-17)
 4. The Transforming Power of Salvation (vv 18-20)

The Torturing Power of Demons (vv 1-8)

- "... other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes. ”: East of the sea of Galilee, where Gentiles lived. The large swine population suggests there was not much Jewish population in that area.
- "with an unclean spirit ": Demon possession can have various types and manifestations. Today, one of the demons' main activities is to spread false teaching to get people to fall away from the faith (1 Tim.4:1). In addition, we see many bizarre things that definitely have evil spirits involved. For example, serial killer Charles Manson with a cross-shaped tattoo on his forehead, and the founder of the cult Eastern Lightning, Weishan Zhao.

Anyone who does not have the Holy Spirit could be possessed by demons. It is only the grace of God that keeps an unbeliever from becoming as crazy as Charles Manson or the founder of Eastern Lightning. But there is no guarantee that he won't become like that in the future, unless he accepts the gospel and has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Only a believer with the Holy Spirit in him can be certain that he'll never be possessed by demons. (1 John 4:4)

- “he had his dwelling among the tombs” : he loves to hang out with corpses, not humans. This is the devil torturing him.
- "And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain": He has enormous strength and cannot control himself. The spiritual power of the evil spirit is used on physical objects through him. The purpose is to destroy, to hurt people. According to Matthew, the man with the unclean spirit was "so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way". So people tried to bind him again and again, but to no avail.

According to Luke, this person "has not put on any clothing for a long time", naked and unashamed. The characteristic of an unclean spirit is moral uncleanness. Since the fall, it's always been a shameful thing to be naked. The sense of shame serves as a reminder that we are sinners, for it is a sinner's natural instinct to cover up the mark of sin.

".... screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones": screaming and self-harming. Doesn't that look like many rock singers today?

- "Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him": Before the evil spirits fell, they'd been in heaven with God, so their ancient brains remember the holy and glorious image of Jesus. So, they recognize Jesus immediately; and, out of extreme panic, they drive this man's body to bow before Jesus. This is no joyous and willing worship, but bowing and kneeling out of panic and confusion.
- "Jesus, Son of the Most High God": This is a messianic title. The demons' theology is absolutely correct. They know Jesus is the Savior-King appointed by God, that God will destroy their plan

through Jesus, and they even know the approximate timeline, for Mathew says they said "Have You come here to torment us before the time? "

Demons have a perfect theology, more correct and precise than many Reformed theologians. A correct theology itself cannot bring salvation. I have seen many people who are well-versed in theology yet do not live out a regenerated life. For such people, knowledge of Jesus can only bring endless fear (James 2:19)

The Delivering Power of Jesus (vv 9-13)

- "My name is Legion": Legion is a military term in the Roman army. There are 6 thousand soldiers in a legion. This number may not be precise but at least 2 thousand unclean spirits are in this man (v.13). When a man calls himself "legion", you know he is seriously confused about his identity.
- "And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country": Luke says "They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss". The abyss is a temporary place where God keeps some evil spirits before sending them to hell in the end (ref. Jude 6). During the Millennium, God will lock Satan up in the abyss so that he cannot deceive the nations. At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be released and deceive the nations for one last time, and then be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev.20:1-3; 7-10). These unclean spirits do not want to go to the abyss, for they want to remain in the world to deceive people.
- "Send us into the swine so that we may enter them": Maybe the unclean spirits know Jesus came to save sinners, not animals. Maybe the unclean spirits have made plans to drown the swine as soon as they enter them so they can be released to hurt other people.
- "Jesus gave them permission": Jesus' plan is to use these swine to show us how great His saving power is. Everything the demons do is under the sovereignty of God, so that in the end, God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God. Even the works of demons are designed to show us how great God's power is!

The Blinding Power of Sin (vv 14-17)

- "the people came to see what it was that had happened": They cannot believe what they heard, so they must come to see it for themselves.
- "observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind": The man has now become a totally normal person
- "they became frightened. And they began to implore Him to leave their region": Their reaction is fear. They are not sad over the loss of 2 thousand swine. The reason they ask Jesus to leave is because of fear. What do they fear? That God is among them.

【Compare】 In the previous miracle of Jesus calming the storm, the disciples had a similar fear (Mark 4:41). But the fear of the disciples did not make them leave Jesus, while these people's fear made them never want to see Jesus again. Here's the difference. The disciples are fundamentally seekers of God, for the Holy Spirit has regenerated them. But the villagers here are fundamentally seekers of sinful and selfish pleasures.

【Insight】 The corrupt sin nature will make people reject God with all their might, for they want none of God's intervention in their lives. When they saw all of this, instead of thanking Jesus for

helping them rid of a demonic monster, instead of asking Jesus to deliver themselves from all demonic powers, they said "Go away! We don't need you!" They'd rather live with an immoral monster than to be with Jesus who can rescue them from all demonic powers. Do you see how bad the corrupt sin nature is?

The Transforming Power of Salvation (vv 18-20)

- "implored Him that he might accompany Him": All characters in this story were begging Jesus (v7, v10, v12, v17, v18), acknowledging Jesus' authority. Even the unclean spirits had to beg Jesus, and only with Jesus' permission can they continue to do damage. But only this man's begging is a sincere and willing confession that Jesus is the Lord. That's because he sees how precious Jesus is, and he's ready to give up everything to follow Him. He wants nothing except to be with Jesus, for Jesus is all he has.
- "He did not let him": This is because He has a greater mission for him. Jesus wants him to be the first preacher to the Gentiles. This is not an easy mission, not only because he has a dirty past, but the whole village has already rejected Jesus. He has never received any formal training, but is already sent to preach. This is the transforming power of salvation. Only God's wisdom and power can transform such a thug into the first Gentile preacher."
- "what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you." The message is, first, the Lord's power, and second, His mercy. Both are his personal experience. He only needs to tell the true story. Doesn't need any eloquence, no need to add anything, just tell the truth. "You know what I was before and what I am now. This is the Lord's power and His mercy to me."

【Principle】 First, a testimony of life transformation makes evangelism all so natural. The best evangelist is not someone who can answer all the questions and win every debate, but someone who has had a real life transformation. Second, if you know enough of the gospel to transform your life, you know enough to tell it to others. Don't use lack of knowledge or lack of training as an excuse to avoid the Christian responsibility to share the good news.

- "And he went away...": Submission here entails the giving up of his own will. His will is to stay with Jesus, which is wonderful. But Jesus' will is for him to stay in his own village and evangelize. Therefore, he gives up his own plan, and follows the will of Jesus.

【Insight】 This kind of submission is also manifested in Jesus's own life. In the Prayer at Gethsemane, Jesus said "yet not what I will, but what You will" (14:36). This kind of submission is the life of Jesus, and it is lived out by this man. What does it tell us? It tells us that Jesus is already with him. By the Holy Spirit, Jesus has put His own life inside of this man. He's got what he asked for. Jesus is with him already, and will be with him for eternity.

Summary:

Here's the result of this power confrontation: Great is the torturing power of demons that no one can conquer; Greater is the delivering power of Jesus that can rescue the most hopeless prisoner. Great is the blinding power of sin that makes people reject God even in the face of undeniable miracles; Greater is the transforming power of salvation that can make the worst thug into a joyful preacher for the Lord. Which power are you currently under?