

## JESUS SETS US FREE

**TEXT:**        *Mark 5:9: And He asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, my name is Legion: for we are many.*

This text comes from an incident related by Mark, and it concerns the healing of the man who was possessed by devils. We do not know the man's real name. His only identification is that he was a Gadarene.

But we know about his need! He had been living among the tombs. An outcast, he was too strong to be bound by restraint, and he terrorized everyone. He was homicidal – “none could pass that way.” He was suicidal – ***crying and cutting himself with stones (Mark 5:5)***. He was beyond medical help. His mind was distorted so that his thoughts were wrong and evil.

***Mark 5:5: And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.***

We know that although others considered him helpless, he still knew victory was possible! He recognized that Jesus was the One who could help where all else had failed. He not only believed, but he acted on that belief and RAN to Jesus and worshipped Him.



The demonic powers that oppressed him were not to give up without a fight, and they caused him to utter words that actually asked Jesus to let him alone — after he had asked for help! Psychiatrists might call him schizophrenic!

Many of us have shared this Gadarene man's conflict about Jesus to some extent. We want to worship Him; want Him to bless us – yet we want Him to leave us alone in our sins and shortcomings. We want His love; we don't want Him to tell us what is wrong with us!

Now this Gadarene was in desperate need, and he faced a crucial time of decision. He must face these facts:

### **1. He could not help himself.**

2. Others could not change his “hopeless” condition.

3. He might never have an opportunity to meet the Savior again.

In this dilemma of frustration and crisis, Jesus brings things into focus with a sharp, important question: “*What is thy Name?*” The man answered, as recorded in **Mark 5:9**:

**Mark 5:9: “my name is Legion, for we are many.”**

This tell us that he was divided — “beside himself”. He was a battleground of conflicting emotions. He was exhausted from fighting with himself and lashing out at others. In saying “Legion”, we learn that he is full of evil spirits.

But Jesus does not see us as others see us, or even as we see ourselves. He sees deeper than anyone else can see. Just as the time when Peter tried to get Him to stay away from Jerusalem when His time of betrayal was at hand, He did not merely reprimand Peter for this, but He spoke to the satanic power that was temporarily influencing this discipline:

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**Mark 8:33: Get thee behind Me, satan.**

Even a child is not immune to evil influences. A wise grandmother taking care of a misbehaving granddaughter said, “Go away, naughty spirit, leave Anne alone!” This was a Christlike way to deal with the behavior problem. In this way, Anne knew she should be above this kind of action, and that she was being used by wrong influences. In **Acts 10:38**, Luke writes:

**Acts 10:38: How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.**

Jesus was about to bring deliverance to a captive!



The man’s admission of guilt is the starting point, but this does not bring complete deliverance. It is just a step in the right direction. He admitted being ruled by many devils, yet he was still in conflict. He cried out to be healed, yet identified with the tormenting forces. He looked to Jesus for help, but the demons which possessed him saw Him as their

tormentor!

Jesus took charge! The man was set free!

***Mark 5:13: And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand) and were choked in the sea.***



The Gadarene could now see the violence he had been harboring within himself, represented by what he witnessed happening to those hogs.

Dwight L. Moody once testified: *“The Gospel has done me so much good. No man can ever tell what it has done... but I think I can tell what it has undone. It has taken out of my path three bitter enemies – death, sin, and judgment”.*

If this man from the country of Gadarene could testify to us, what would he say? How many enemies had been taken out of him? A Legion! There were many.

A blessed, glorious victory! He was overjoyed, eager to tell about it to everyone he met. Did the people he met rejoice with him?

They saw his outward appearance had changed. He was clean and well dressed. His attitude had certainly changed as he was “sitting” very calmly in spite of his enthusiasm, in contrast to the running around he used to do, trying to kill anyone who came near! So, they knew the change was more than just an outer one; there had been a genuine inner change. He was not only in his right mind, he was filled with the Truth!

Did his friends praise the Lord? Did they welcome him back into society? They did not. No rejoicing. No encouragement. They were still afraid to trust him.

Sometimes, when Jesus has touched our life and made it all new and right, our friends just don't understand either. So what do we do about it? Just pray that the Lord who has changed our life will be revealed to them in all His power and beauty, and change their lives too!

This healed man was so grateful for the Lord's

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deliverance that he wanted to stay always near Him, to be a disciple and travel with Him; but Jesus had other plans:

***Mark 5:19: Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, 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.***

So often, the need we can best fill is right in our own homes and neighborhoods. This is a mighty work; an essential work; a precious work, and not small at all in the eyes of Him who loves to the uttermost! As Billy Sunday said, *“It is not necessary to be in a big place to do big things for God.”*

I can just imagine this man who had come into the town and to his home many times before in a rage. They see him coming again.



Friends run inside their homes, the streets are cleared. He reaches his own door and finds it locked. He calls to his wife, trying to testify to the change in him. She notices the difference in the tone of his voice. She looks out the window and sees the change in his appearance. She opens the door and asks what has happened. He begins to tell about Jesus.

This man has no other theme than Jesus — no church to brag about, no pet doctrine — only Jesus!

Do you have a need? Do you have an enemy within to be cast out? Are you in conflict, like the man in our text? Do you want Jesus as Savior, but still feel yourself held back by evil influences that you still identify with?

Jesus still has power to set people FREE! He can still make your life new, in Him.

What a wonderful ending to this story told of the Gadarene. He was a radiant witness — a lay preacher — with a message of certainty and joy. He just told the “great things Jesus had done for him”.

Mark adds:

***Mark 5:20: And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.***

Come to Jesus — let Him cast out the evil that is in you. Then, go your way — back to your home, to your work, to your neighborhood, and tell about it — that you know a mighty Savior who can set any captive free!



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