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## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS | THE DAY JESUS MET A DEMON (24)

March 8, 2026

Mark 5:1-20

### PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst  
To cultivate mutually encouraging relationships  
To participate in God's mission to the world

### GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

#### Discussion Question

- What is one area of your life where you have experienced the most dramatic change?

### WORSHIP 10 MIN

#### PLEASE OPEN IN PRAYER

#### RESPONSIVE PRAYER — Psalm 139

Where shall I go from your Spirit?

**Or where shall I flee from your presence?**

If I ascend to heaven, you are there!

**If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!**

If I take the wings of the morning

**And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,**

Even there your hand shall lead me,

**And your right hand shall hold me.**

If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,

**And the light about me be night,"**

Even the darkness is not dark to you;

**The night is bright as the day,**

**for darkness is as light with you.**

### SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 5:1-20

*<sup>1</sup>They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. <sup>2</sup>And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. <sup>3</sup>He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, <sup>4</sup>for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. <sup>5</sup>Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. <sup>6</sup>And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. <sup>7</sup>And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." <sup>8</sup>For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" <sup>9</sup>And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." <sup>10</sup>And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. <sup>11</sup>Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, <sup>12</sup>and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them." <sup>13</sup>So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.*

<sup>14</sup>The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. <sup>15</sup>And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. <sup>16</sup>And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. <sup>17</sup>And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. <sup>18</sup>As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. <sup>19</sup>And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." <sup>20</sup>And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled."

**BIBLE STUDY**  
**40 MIN**

**Summary**

This week we continue our Lenten series entitled *A Day in the Life of Jesus* during which we are exploring brief vignettes from the Gospels, seeking a realistic glimpse into a typical day in Jesus' earthly ministry. Our passage this week picks up where we left off, in the middle of a Christological triad. Having already shown Jesus as Lord over nature (Mark 4:35-41), and before revealing him as Lord over death (5:21-43), Mark now displays him as Lord over demons and the spiritual realm. This passage also provides an answer to the question Mark left hanging in the last chapter — "Who then is this?" — by pressing it even further: Who is this that even the demons obey? This is something that has already been percolating through Mark's Gospel to this point. He has already introduced Jesus' authority over unclean spirits (Mark 1:23-28), and we have seen Jesus teaching that one must bind the strong man in order to plunder his house (Mark 3:22-27). Nowhere else, however, does the evangelist spend as much time and effort to demonstrate to his readers Jesus' lordship over the demons. The prolonged descriptions of the demoniac's strength (verses 3-4) and the number of demons (verses 9, 13) serve to demonstrate to his readers that, although demons are incredibly strong — so strong that no human can control them — Jesus is stronger still. The One who rebuked the sea (Mark 4:39) now rebukes a host of demons, demonstrating that he is stronger than the strong man and sovereign even over the prince of demons (cf. Colossians 2:15).

The setting of this showdown was the region of the Gerasenes, a largely Gentile area marked by, as Mark describes, tombs and swine. Both of these are emblems of uncleanness under the Mosaic law (Leviticus 11:7; Numbers 19:11-16). The man Jesus meets is repeatedly described as having an "unclean spirit," and his dwelling among the tombs is a visual representation of his spiritual condition: alienated, defiled, and constantly driven toward self-destruction (verse 5). Scripture consistently portrays demonic activity as attempts to distort and destroy the image of God in man, seeking ruin and chaos (cf. John 10:10). As one commentator once put it, demon "powers seek to ruin the man and sometimes drive him to self-destruction." Though the forces that ravage this man are evil, they are not self-deceived. In a turn of irony, the demons recognize what the disciples have not yet, up to this point, fully grasped on their own. They address Jesus by name and confess him as "Son of the Most High God" (verse 7). The word used for "Most High" here is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament mainly by non-Israelites to denote the God of Israel (e.g. Genesis 14:18-22; Daniel 4:34). Thus the question of Mark 4:41 is answered, albeit from unclean lips. Even the powers of darkness know that they stand before the incarnate Son.

Upon recognizing who they are dealing with, the demons beg to be allowed to enter a herd of swine — a request Jesus permits. This permission should not be understood as part of a negotiation, but instead as a divine decree. The demons' destructive plunge into the sea (the

“abyss of the sea” as Luke puts it in his account) reveals their nature. Bent on ruin, they destroy what they inhabit. And yet this also points to something provisional. The final judgment of the demonic realm awaits “the time” or “the hour” (cf. Matthew 8:29; Revelation 20:10). This act may have not yet put an end to Satan’s power, but it is the guarantee and the symbol of the definitive victory. As Dutch theologian Herman Ridderbos once put it, “The victory is a fact, but it only manifests itself as a sign [here].” The kingdom has broken in, Satan’s house is being plundered, but nevertheless, the consummation still lies ahead.

Our narrative is framed by contrasting descriptions of the man’s former condition and his restored state. The one who terrified others as he ran naked among the tombs was now clothed; the one who had shrieked wildly and behaved violently was now fully recovered. So radical was the transformation that the townspeople were stunned and frightened (verse 17). Confronted with holy power, and perhaps mindful of the economic loss of an entire herd of pigs being destroyed, they prefer their former order to the presence of the Lord. The healed man, by contrast, becomes a herald in the Gentile lands, proclaiming what Jesus had done for him (verse 20). In the Decapolis, then, the God of Israel is glorified through the work of his Son. Whereas the last passage closed with a hanging question, this passage ends with contrasting reactions: One can either cling to the tombs and swine of this world, or sit at the feet of the Son of the Most High God, restored and sent forth.

### **1. Looking at the Bible**

- Share with the group some key phrases or ideas that stood out to you from the passage.

### **2. Looking at Jesus**

At Central we believe that all of Scripture points to Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the theological center of the Bible. Every passage not only points to Jesus, but the grand narrative of the Bible also finds its fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus.

- In verses 3-5, Mark emphasizes that no human “had the strength to subdue” this demon-possessed man, and no chain could bind him. When Jesus arrives, he doesn’t use physical force to overcome him. What might this suggest about the nature of Jesus’ power and authority?
- Scripture often conveys encounters with Jesus as transformative in nature. Does the idea of Jesus changing your life so radically scare you or excite you? Why might it be scary for someone?

### **3. Looking at our Hearts**

- Jesus also allows 2,000 pigs to be lost in order to save one unclean man. What might this choice reveal about the value Jesus places on a single human soul? Does your own perceived self-worth align with Jesus’ evaluation of you?
- What part of your life do you think Jesus would most like to see transformed?

#### 4. Looking at our World

- The Decapolis was the place of past shame for the demon-possessed man, the place where the townspeople chained him up. In spite of this, Jesus sends him back there. In a culture that often urges us to bury difficult experiences from our past, what does it suggest that Jesus sends this restored man back to the community that once rejected and restrained him?
- How might Christ's authority to restore and commission reshape the way we think about painful chapters of our past? How might the redeeming power of Christ be displayed in and through your past pain?

**PRAYER**  
**15 MIN**

**Pray for each other:** Share any prayer requests you have.

Pray for any areas of your group members' lives that are in need of transformation.