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THEME: VICTORY OVER DEMONS

# EQUANIMITY IN THE FACE OF STORMING WIND

MARK 5:1-20

ADEOYE, EMMANUEL (EVANG.)

When Jesus and the disciples landed on the other side, they encountered two demoniacs, one of whom was especially vocal (see Matt 8:28). This entire scene seems very unreal to us who live in so-called "modern civilization," but it would not be unreal on many mission fields. In fact, some Bible teachers believe that demon possession is becoming even more prevalent in today's "modern society." We see in this scene three different forces at work: **Satan, society, and the Saviour**. These same three forces are still at work in our world, trying to control the lives of people.

First we see what Satan can do to people. Satan is a thief whose ultimate purpose is to destroy (*John 10:10*; and see *Rev 9:11*). We are not told how the demons entered these men and took control, but possibly it was the result of their yielding to sin. Demons are "*unclean spirits*" and can easily get a foothold in the lives of people who cultivate sinful practices.

Because they yielded to Satan, the thief, these two men lost everything! They lost their homes and the fellowship of their families and friends. They lost their decency as they ran around in the tombs naked. They lost their self-control and lived like wild animals, screaming, cutting themselves, and frightening the citizens. They lost their peace and their purpose for living, and they would have

remained in that plight had Jesus not come through a storm to rescue them.

Never underestimate the destructive power of Satan. He is our enemy and would destroy all of us if he could. Like a roaring lion, he seeks to devour us (1 Peter 5:8-9). It is Satan who is at work in the lives of unbelievers, making them "children of disobedience" (*Eph. 2:1-3*). The two men in the Gerasene graveyard were no doubt extreme examples of what Satan can do to people, but what they reveal is enough to make us want to resist Satan and have nothing to do with him. The second force at work on these men was society, but society was not able to accomplish very much.

About all that society can do for problem people is to isolate them, put them under guard and, if necessary, bind them (*Luke 8:29*). Often these men had been chained, but the demons had given them strength to break the chains. Even the attempts to tame these men had failed. With all of its wonderful scientific achievements, society still cannot cope with the problems caused by Satan. While we thank God that society does offer a limited amount of restraint and protection, we must confess that society cannot permanently solve these problems and deliver Satan's terrorized victims. This brings us to the third force, that of *the Saviour*.

What did Jesus Christ do for these men? To begin with, He graciously came to them in love, and even went through a storm to do it. Some think that the storm itself may have been satanic in origin, since Jesus used the same words to calm the sea as He did to cast out demons (compare **Mark 1:25 and 4:39**). Perhaps Satan was trying to destroy Jesus, or at least prevent Him from coming to the men who needed Him. But nothing could stop the Lord from coming to that graveyard and bringing deliverance to those men. Not only did Jesus come to them, but He spoke to them and permitted them to speak to Him. The citizens of that area avoided the two demoniacs, but Jesus treated them with love and respect. He came to seek and to save that which was lost (**Luke 19:10**).

It is interesting to note that, as the demons spoke through the man, they confessed what they really believed. Demons have faith and even tremble because of what they believe (**James 2:19**); but neither their faith nor their fear can save them. Demons believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He has authority over them. They believe in the reality of judgment and that one day they will be cast into hell (see **Matt 8:29**). This is more than many religious people believe today!

Nowhere does the Bible explain either the psychology or the physiology of demon possession. The man who spoke to Jesus was under the control of a *legion* of demons,

and a Roman legion could consist of as many as 6,000 men! It is frightening to think of the horrors this man experienced day and night as thousands of unclean spirits tormented him. No doubt the other demonized man experienced his share of agony too.

Satan tried to destroy these men, but Jesus came to deliver them. By the power of His Word, He cast out the demons and set the men free. Demons even believe in prayer, for they begged Jesus not to send them into the abyss, the place of torment (**Mark 5:7; Luke 8:31**). It is encouraging to note that the demons did not know what Jesus planned to do. This suggests that Satan can know God's plans only if God reveals them.

In fact, there is no evidence in Scripture that Satan can read the mind of a believer, let alone the mind of God. Mark 5 tells of three requests: the demons requested that Jesus send them into the pigs (**Mark 5:12**); the citizens requested that Jesus leave the area (**Mark 5:17**); and one of the former demoniacs requested that Jesus allow him to follow Him (**Mark 5:1**). Our Lord granted the first two requests but not the third one.

Did Jesus have the right to destroy 2,000 pigs and possibly put their owners out of business? If these men were Jews, then they had no right to be raising and selling unclean pigs anyway.

However, this was Gentile territory, so the owners were probably Gentiles. Certainly, Jesus was free to send the demons wherever He desired - into the abyss, into the swine, or to any other place that He chose. Then why send them into the swine? For one thing, by doing it that way, Jesus gave proof to all the spectators that a miracle of deliverance had really taken place. The destruction of the pigs also gave assurance to the two men that the unclean spirits were actually gone. But more than anything else, the drowning of the 2,000 swine was a vivid object lesson to this Christ-rejecting crowd that, to Satan, a pig is as good as a man! In fact, Satan will make a man into a pig!

The Lord was warning the citizens against the powers of sin and Satan. It was a dramatic sermon before their very eyes: "The wages of sin is death!"

The swineherds did not want to be blamed for the loss of the pigs, so they immediately ran to tell the owners what had happened. When the owners arrived at the scene, they were afraid as they beheld the dramatic changes that had taken place in the two men. Instead of running around naked, the men were clothed, seated, and in their right minds. They were new creatures! (**2 Cor. 5:17**) Why would the owners ask Jesus to leave? Why not ask Him to stay and perform similar cures for others

who were also in need? The owners had one main interest - business - and they were afraid that if Jesus remained any longer, He would do even more "damage" to the local economy! Our Lord does not stay where He is not wanted, so He left. What an opportunity these people missed!

Why did Jesus not permit the healed demoniac to follow Him? The man's request was certainly motivated by love

for the Lord Jesus, and what a testimony he had! But Jesus knew that the man's place was in his own home, with his loved ones, where he could bear witness to the Saviour.

After all, effective Christian living must begin at home where people know us the best. If we honor God there, then we can consider offering ourselves for service elsewhere. This man became one of the earliest missionaries to the Gentiles. Jesus had to leave, but the man remained and bore faithful witness to the grace and power of Jesus Christ. We trust that many of those Gentiles believed on the Saviour through his witness.

#### **LESSONS TO TAKE HOME**

- 1. FAITH IS NEEDED – Heb. 11:6 Phil. 2:10.**
- 2. PAINS ARE INEVITABLE – Jer. 15:18**
- 3. SEEK TO FIND JESUS – Isaiah 55:6**
- 4. JESUS ONLY CAN CURE OUR PROBLEMS**
- 5. JESUS CAN BECAUSE OF YOU MAKE YOUR ENEMIES CRY VS 13**