



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

Read Mark 5:1-20

1. Satan Isolates — Jesus Brings Community

The demon possessed man lived among the tombs isolated from people. Many of us are in danger because we have allowed ourselves to become isolated from community and are moving further and further away from God's people and the protection of the collective. Isolation leads to temptation, discouragement, shame and secrecy. Satan is our enemy and it is foolish to think we can avoid him on our own.

- ❖ Q: Why is isolation from community so dangerous for Christians?
- ❖ Q: Why do you think isolation leads to temptation, discouragement, shame and secrecy?
- ❖ Q: What do you think someone in our church should do if they realise that they have become isolated from the community?
- ❖ Q: What could we as Gospel Community do to help someone who has become more and more isolated from community? What do you think our role should be, if any?
- ❖ Q: Has there ever been a time where you have isolated yourself from the community? What was the reason for this and what effect did it have on your life and faith?

2. Satan Removes Restraint — Jesus Brings Joyful Restraint

The demon possessed man had no discernment or restraint. When Jesus restored him he was suddenly able to think clearly and rationally. Jesus cares for us so much that he also teaches us to think differently. He changes our desires and renews our minds through the word and by the power of the Spirit and places restraints on us that bring us freedom. Satan on the other hand tempts us, luring us towards things that look good but are not godly and pure, and ultimately enslave us. As soon as he manages to isolate us, he tempts us with something that he cannot even give us.

- ❖ Q: How do we know that the demon possessed man had no discernment or restraint?
- ❖ Q: What does it mean for Jesus to renew our minds? (Romans 12:2) Is this something we sit back and wait for him to do or are we active participants in the process?
- ❖ Q: What restraints has God put into your lives that have been life-giving for you?
- ❖ Q: How do you guard from being tempted by Satan in the other direction? (E.G Being faithful and committed to your spouse)

3. Satan Brings Shame — Jesus Covers Shame

While the man was possessed he ran around with no clothes on, full of shame. When Jesus restored him, he was fully clothed and his shame was covered. Jesus then told him to stay in the same area so that his testimony would be powerful. Many of us isolate ourselves because we are full of shame for various reasons and we don't want to feel even more exposed than we already are. When Satan lures us into isolation, he tempts and shames us when we listen to him. Jesus, on the other hand, forgives us of all our sin and shame and also cleanses us (1John 1:9).

- ❖ Q: Why do you think Jesus sent the man back to his own environment now that he was forgiven and cleansed?
- ❖ Q: Why do you think Satan wants us to isolate ourselves when we feel ashamed?
- ❖ Q: Do we truly believe that Jesus is able to completely cover our shame?
- ❖ Q: Have you ever experienced forgiveness from sin and the freedom from shame? What was the impact of that on those around you?

4. Satan Causes Self Hatred — Jesus Commissions Purpose

The demon possessed man was in a desperate situation, alone and tormented with no one to help him or lead him to freedom. Satan is the one who wants to steal, kill and destroy everything that we are (John 10:10). He is the one who tempts us to hurt, harm or punish ourselves, and he is the one who then shames us for doing so. Jesus does not sit with the newly restored man for hours trying to help him feel better but instead turns this man's dismal existence into a life of purpose and value for the kingdom.

- ❖ Q: Have you ever been in a situation where you have personally wanted to punish yourself, or hurt or harm yourself? In hindsight, do you see who was tempting you to do so?
- ❖ Q: What can we learn from the way in which Jesus dealt with the newly restored man?





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5. Satan Bows - Jesus Wins

This story reveals the spiritual hierarchy. The demons were subject to Jesus and knew that he was the only one who could determine their fate that day. This should encourage us to remember that Satan and his demons are still subject to Jesus and that we need not be terrified, regardless of how loud their “roars” may be. They are defeated and Jesus is on the throne.

- ❖ Q: Have there been any situations in your life where you became afraid of the spiritual forces around you? How did you handle it?
- ❖ Q: What impact should it make on us to know that Jesus is Lord above Satan and his demons?

Our Response:

1. We must see every day as a fight.
2. We must adopt a posture of humility but certain victory.
3. We must do all we can to stay close to the victor-Jesus.

