

Behind Enemy Lines

Pastor Nathan Carroll

Mark 5:1-13 NIV

They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!"

Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

Where Are We?

The region of Gerasenes was part of a greater network of 10 Major _____ Cities called the _____.

Thus, arriving at the other shore of the lake was, to a Jew, arrival into "_____". *This is critical to our understanding of this passage.*

Looking at this story through Jewish eyes, we see significant signposts of _____ in this story:

- _____ (Numbers 19:16)
- _____ (Deuteronomy 14:8) - which points to...
- _____ people and practices (Deuteronomy 11:28/20:18) - which points to...
- Invited _____ presence and influence (Deuteronomy 7:25)

THE KINGDOM IN ACTION

March
17
2013

Crucial Side Note:

Demonic possession and influence is _____ - both then as well as today.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:12 NIV

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

1 Peter 5:8

It is important that we acknowledge such evil forces at work in the world, yet never consider them outside of their context - under God's _____ (Matthew 28:18; Colossians 1:16; Luke 9:1; Ephesians 1:19-21).

Thus, demonic forces are *only* given influence and control in our lives when we choose to live in _____ to _____. This is what the Bible refers to as "giving the devil a foothold" (Ephesians 4:27).

What Happens?

Our story centers around a man who, having _____ given himself over to evil pagan practices, finds himself in _____ to the evil powers that he has _____ opened up to.

Thus, we get a glimpse of that which the enemy of our souls desires for humanity - that we be _____ to _____:

- His inability to be _____ (vs. 3 & 4)
- His _____ (vs. 15)
- His _____ (vs. 5)

Jesus' arrival on the scene immediately brings this invisible struggle to the _____ (vs. 2, 6 & 7).

Jesus deals with this "legion" of demonic forces with _____ and _____ - just like when he calmed the storm *just hours previous*.

Who is this Jesus?

This is a man who, within a 12-hour (or less) period of time, was dramatically proving himself to have authority over the seemingly _____ as well as over the seemingly _____ in the invisible realm.

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world.

On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4

The long and the short of it: this man *must* be _____.

What's with the pigs and the mass swine suicide?

Fundamentally, though Jesus grants the demons their request, the very presence of the _____ can't help but drive back the powers of darkness until they are left without any option but _____ (1 John 2:8 / 2 Timothy 1:10).

Mark 5:14-20 NIV

Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

The Bottom Line

This story, though centered around the incredible restoration of this demonized man, is not a story simply about _____ (though it certainly plays an important part). This story is about the _____ and, specifically, the _____ to the Gentile world.

In the same way, we are all rescued (Colossians 1:13) for a purpose – to _____ in the _____.

**This is the difference between a gospel of _____ and the gospel of _____.

What is the gospel? What is the Good News of the Kingdom?

- It starts with our _____ against sin and the evil that seeks to destroy us (Romans 5:12; 3:23).
- It is transacted by God's _____ to find us and raise us to _____ by His divine power (Romans 5:8).
- Our only fitting response is then to _____ to the _____ and _____ of the _____ Kingdom of God (1 John 1:1-2; Romans 12:1).

*...this we **proclaim** concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we **proclaim** to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.*

1 John 1:1-2 NIV

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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- 1) What from Sunday's teaching stood out to you?
- 2) How do you react to the reality of demonic activity in our world? In discussing such things, we can tend to fall somewhere on a spectrum between two unhealthy extremes: the perspective of "a demon behind every tree" and "nope – no such thing." Which side of the spectrum do you think that you tend to lean to? Why do you think you lean that way?
- 3) Read the following passages that speak to the authority of Jesus and discuss how and why these truths are important to our thoughts and interactions with demonic and evil forces:
 - a) Colossians 1:16
 - b) Matthew 28:18
 - c) Luke 9:1
 - d) Ephesians 1:19-21
 - e) 2 Corinthians 10:3-4
- 4) The region that Jesus and His disciples arrived at was, from a Jewish standpoint, riddled with uncleanness, filled with objects and practices that were offensive to God. If Jesus was to arrive in person, to our city / region, what would He identify as signposts of uncleanness from a Kingdom standpoint? How might He engage the people in these places?
- 5) The demonized man was in the condition he was in due to willfully and persistently giving the enemy a foothold in his life. What ways do we 'flirt with darkness' and, in so doing, run the risk of giving the enemy a foothold in our lives?
- 6) Pastor Nathan made a distinction between a gospel of personal salvation and the gospel of the Kingdom. The evangelical church in the west has tended to emphasize a "gospel of personal salvation" as an ends in-and-of-itself. How is this different from the gospel of the Kingdom and how does personal salvation fit into it?
- 7) Pray for one another and for our church family out of Colossians 1:9-14. Pray that we might live in the reality of God's Kingdom, constantly mindful of and strengthened by God that we might participate fully in His Kingdom activity.