

16. Jesus Healed a Demon-Possessed Man

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why demons wanted to postpone their eternal judgment until the time of the final judgment. Jesus told a large number of demons to leave the man and one asked Jesus not to send them out of the country. That postponed the beginning of their eternal judgment. We will see that Jesus went on to heal the demon-possessed man.

Mark 5:11-13 says, “Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. So all the demons begged Him, saying, ‘Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.’ And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.” Swine (pigs) were considered unclean animals by Jews. As a result, the Jews did not eat them. However, some Jews were unconcerned about the law and may have been raising them to sell to the Gentiles. It is also possible that the men caring for these pigs were Gentiles. Either way, the large number of pigs there that day shows that many Gentiles also lived in this area.

The fact that the demons begged to go into such a large group of pigs would also show that a large number of demons had taken possession of this man. Today, many new Christians ask if it is possible for a Christian to become demon-possessed. 1 John 4:4 says, “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” This verse shows that the One dwelling in us is greater than any demonic spirit. Ephesians 1:13-14 says, “In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Here, we see that every Christian has the Holy Spirit living within him as the down payment and guarantee of our eternal inheritance. Galatians 2:20 also tells us that we have Christ living in us when that verse says, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

John 10:10 explains the goal of Satan, when that verse says, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.” The goal of Satan is always to steal, kill and destroy. This passage teaches that the demons have the same goal. When Jesus gave the demons permission to go into the pigs, the demons tormented the pigs so severely that the pigs destroyed themselves by running down a steep place into the Sea of Galilee, where they were drowned by the sea.

The fact that this large herd of pigs all committed suicide filled the pig herders with fear. Mark 5:14-17 says, “So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine. Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.”

The pig herders were so fearful, they ran to save their own lives (probably because of fear of what the demons might do to them). As the pig herders fled, they told everyone they saw, both in the city and in the country, what had happened to the pigs.

Then, many people came out to see what had happened. What the people found when they arrived was a changed man. Luke 8:27 describes the former condition of the man when that verse says, “And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs.” In addition to being very fierce, we see that this man had formerly worn no clothes as he lived in the caves used for tombs. In contrast to his past, the people saw that this man was now sitting and talking with Jesus. He was also clothed and in his right mind. This was a great change from his former condition, as Mark 5:5 says, “And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.” This man was enjoying the blessing of being set free from the control of the demons.

However, the people who came out of the city had a different reaction. We see that these people were afraid. For a long time, the people had been afraid to go near this man because he was so fierce. Suddenly, they saw that the man was in his right mind and acting normally. The pig herders had told the people what happened to their pigs. Now, the people saw that this man was normal, and they realized why their pigs had run down the steep place and drowned themselves in the Sea of Galilee. They realized that the demons had left the man and entered into the pigs causing the pigs to destroy themselves. As a result, these people began to plead with Jesus to leave their territory. To these people, the pigs were more important than the man who was healed.

The fact that this man was now in his right mind showed the people that Jesus had power to change and transform lives. In the time of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar had also been restored to his right mind by God. Daniel 4:36-37 says, “At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.” In the case of Nebuchadnezzar, it caused him to recognize and honor the King of heaven. His life was changed from that of being a proud king, to one who had become a humble man who recognized and honored the living God. In this same way, this man was now in his right mind and recognized Jesus as the Son of God.

Jesus chose to leave the area since the people wanted Him to leave their region. Mark 5:18-20 says, “And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, ‘Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.’ And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.” Here, we see the man who had the demons cast out of him did not feel the same way as the other people. Instead, he begged to go with Jesus.

However, Jesus did not permit the man to go with Him in the boat. Instead, Jesus had an immediate

ministry for the man. We see that Jesus told the man to go home to his family and friends and tell them. First, the man was told to tell his friends about the great things the Lord had done for him. This man had his physical life transformed. Look at the contrast between Luke 8:27 and Luke 8:35. Luke 8:27 says, “And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs.” In contrast, Luke 8:35 says, “Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.” This man was now able to live a normal life

Second, and more important, the man was told to tell his friends about the fact that Jesus had shown compassion to him. The word translated “compassion” is normally translated “to have mercy.” Romans 11:30-32 says, “For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.” 1 Peter 2:9-10 also uses this word when those verses say, “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once *were* not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” In both passages, we see that those who receive mercy, also receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life. This man now had spiritual life.

The people of that area had rejected Jesus because of their pigs, but Jesus still wanted them to hear how to have eternal life. That was why Jesus sent this man to tell his friends what Jesus had done for him. The word “Decapolis” means “*ten cities*.” This man did not limit the good news of what Jesus had done for him to his friends. Instead, we see that this man went throughout the ten cities of that region telling how Jesus had changed and transformed his life. The word translated “marveled” means to “*be filled with amazement or wonder*.” It is used in Acts 4:13, where we read, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” In this verse, we see that the religious leaders who had condemned Jesus to death were filled with amazement as they saw the boldness of Peter and John. This was the way the people in the area of Decapolis felt when they heard the man who had been demon-possessed.

In the same way, we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to share the message that Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost. Regardless of the present condition of any person in the world, the Lord is able to change and transform their lives. That is the message of hope that we want to equip our children to share. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to share this message.