

Jesus Heals the Man of the Tombs

Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20

PPT Title

Jesus Heals the Man of the Tombs

Main Point: Jesus brings peace.

Key Verse: *Let the peace that Christ gives rule in your hearts.* - Colossians 3:15a

Props: Realistic sword, butter knife; **Optional:** YouTube video, see bottom of page 4

BACKGROUND/REVIEW



Say: We have read the exciting story of Jesus calming a wild storm on the sea by just speaking to the wind and waves. His disciples, who were with Him, were amazed at what they saw. That day, Jesus taught the men that true faith in Him would take away their fear. These men were learning more about Jesus every day. In our next story, they will learn that Jesus had power over Satan and his demons, and Jesus brings peace.

Today's story starts out as a very sad story about a man who had evil spirits living inside of him. The man had a terrible life, ruled by evil spirits, but when he met with Jesus, Jesus turned everything around! Jesus turned the man's sadness into great joy! Jesus turned his crying into dancing! This happened because Jesus is **IMMEASURABLY** more powerful than the devil and his demons.

There are many scary movies about the devil, and at Halloween time, we can hardly escape scary images on television. To be sure, the devil is strong and wants to harm people. But we don't have to be afraid! Our God is a billion times stronger than the devil. There is **NO** comparison between God's strength and the devil's. It's sort of like this: We know that ants are strong creatures. They can lift 50 times their own body weight! That is very strong for an ant. But what if an ant was crossing the road, and along came an 18-wheeler semi truck that hit the ant? Would the strength of the ant cause the truck to swerve off the road, or would the truck squish the ant? Of course, the truck would crush the ant. In fact, there would not be any trace of the ant left behind. That's the way God is with the devil. The devil has some power, yes, but when God unleashes His power on the devil - squish! The devil does not stand a chance! And when we trust in and abide in Jesus, the devil is no match for us! So, when we read today's story that talks about evil spirits, we shouldn't focus on the power that they have and become scared. We should focus on the ***much greater*** power that Jesus has, and rejoice!

JESUS MEETS LEGION (Mark 5:1-10)

Say: This story is told in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Today we'll read it out of Mark 5 because Mark gives the most details. Jesus and the disciples had come across the Sea of Galilee, and were heading toward the area of Gerasenes. The people who lived there were not Jews. **Teacher:** Refer to map. Just as Jesus and the disciples got to the West side of the lake, they met a man with a **BIG** problem.



They went across the Sea of Galilee to the area of the Gerasenes. Jesus got out of the boat. A man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. The man lived in the tombs. No one could keep him tied up anymore. Not even a chain could hold him. His hands and feet had often been chained. But he tore the chains apart. And he broke the iron cuffs on his ankles. No one was strong enough to control him. Night and day he

screamed among the tombs and in the hills. He cut himself with stones. - Mark 5:1-5

This man was suffering terribly because evil spirits were controlling his mind and body. Nothing could keep him calm. He could no longer live near his family and friends. He was driven to live out of town, in a graveyard! He was so tormented that he screamed all day and night. It must have been a terrible sound, hearing his screams echo off of the rocky clefts in the middle of the night. These demons even caused the man to cut himself with stones.



Satan and his demons want to harm people, because Satan is a jealous enemy of God (Isaiah 14:13-14). Satan and his demons know they have no power to harm God, so they want to harm people because God created every person in His image, and God is crazy about each one of them.



When (the man) saw Jesus a long way off, he ran to Him. He fell on his knees in front of Him. He shouted at the top of his voice, "Jesus, Son of the Most High God, what do you want with me? Promise before God that you won't hurt me!" This was because Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!"

Then Jesus asked the demon, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied. "There are many of us." And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. - Mark 5:6-10

Remember, the evil spirits were controlling the man. When Jesus spoke to the man, the evil spirit answered. The evil spirit said that his name was Legion. Legion is a military word. In the Roman army, a legion was a group of up to 6,000 soldiers. We're not sure if there were actually 6,000 demons in the man, but we are sure there were many. No wonder this poor man was so miserable.

Teacher Note: It is very logical that the demon would use a military term. After all, the devil is at war with believers over the kingdom (Ephesians 6:12).



Ask: Does it surprise anyone that the demon called Jesus the "Son of the Most High God"? *Listen for answers.* **Say:** Did you know that every time Jesus meets with a demon, it knows who Jesus is? James 2:19 says, "You believe there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that. And they tremble!"

The demons know who Jesus is, and exactly how powerful He is, yet they are still His enemy. This tells us something very important: **Believing the facts about Jesus is not enough to make you right with God.** You must put your trust in Him to be saved from your sin and to enter God's kingdom.

It's like this: Many years ago, two armies were about to go to war. One army was HUGE and one was tiny. The huge army was more advanced in every way. This army had better weapons, better missiles, better everything. **Teacher: Show realistic sword.** The small army had pitiful weapons. **Show butter knife.** There was no question in anyone's mind - the huge army would win the war.

Just before the battle began, two soldiers in the **lesser** army talked about the battle ahead. They were both positive that the other side was greater. They believed the fact: the other side was going to win. After thinking about it for a few minutes, the first soldier boldly said that he would stay and fight 'til his death. But the second soldier threw down his pitiful weapon and ran as fast as he could to join the other side!

Just moments later, the battle began and it wasn't long before the bigger army destroyed the lesser army. Not one soldier in the lesser army survived. Now, we know that both of the soldiers had **believed the facts** about which army was greater, but only one survived the day. The second soldier not only believed the truth, but he **put his trust** in the greater army.

Application: You might know a lot about Jesus. This is wonderful, and all faith begins with some knowledge. But unless you put your trust in Jesus by accepting His forgiveness and new life, you are still separated from God. You are on the losing side.

Say: The demons that were speaking to Jesus decided long ago that they would not put their trust in God. They chose to follow the devil instead (Revelation 12:4, 9). However, the demons were afraid of Jesus because He had complete power over them. They knew that He could do whatever He wanted with them, so they begged Him for mercy.

INTO THE PIGS (Mark 5:11-20)



Say: *A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs. Let us go into them." **Jesus allowed it.** The evil spirits came out of the man and went into the pigs. There were about 2,000 pigs in the herd. The whole herd rushed down the steep bank. They ran into the lake and drowned. - Mark 5:11-13*

Teacher Note: Jesus did not command the pigs to run headlong into the sea. That was the fault of the demons that possessed them. Either the demons caused them to drown themselves, or the instant discomfort brought on by the demon possession caused the pigs to run into the water. As we might expect, demons are depicted elsewhere as causing great harm to the ones they inhabit (Mark 9:17-18, 26; Matthew 9:32-33, 12:22, 15:22).

Students may wonder what happened to the demons after the pigs drowned. Evil spirits are just that - spirits - so they are eternal, and are not "killed." Even when they are thrown into the lake of fire, it will be *eternal* torment (Rev. 20:10). In Matthew 8:29, Legion asked if Jesus had come to torture them before the "appointed time." All demons know that there is a time when they will be judged (and the result will be eternal torment), but these demons knew the time had not yet come.

2 Peter 2:4 says, "...God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;" The word hell, here, is *Tartaros*, the deepest Abyss of hell (Thayer's Lexicon). In Luke 8:31, Legion begged Jesus not to send them into the Abyss (*abyssos*, the pit - a very deep gulf or chasm in the lowest parts of the earth used as the common receptacle of the dead and especially as the abode of demons - Thayer's Lexicon). We are not sure if Jesus granted their request not to send them into the Abyss. We only know that Jesus allowed them to go into the pigs. Therefore, it is not clear whether the demons were free to inhabit another living being, or if they were, at that point, forced to go into the abyss until their final judgment.

Say: By Jesus' word, the demons fled out of the man. Because Jesus allowed it, the demons entered into the pigs that were nearby. These pigs are a clue for us. Jewish people did not eat pork (or pigs). Pigs were considered unclean for the Jews, so they did not raise them as livestock. This proves that the people who were taking care of the pigs were not Jewish. When the pig-herders saw their 2,000 pigs stampede into the lake and drown, they got out of there quickly! They ran to town and told everyone what had happened. This was unbelievable! So all the people came out to see for themselves.

Remember, before the demon-possessed man met Jesus, he was totally wild. He had super-human strength, and iron chains could not hold him. He had ripped off his clothes, and cut his own skin with rocks. He was completely out of control. Listen to what the townspeople found when they got to the seashore:

Then they came to Jesus. They saw the man who had been controlled by many demons. He was sitting there. He was now dressed and thinking clearly. All this made the people₃ afraid. - Mark 5:15



The man was sitting, fully dressed, and thinking clearly. What a transformation! The people who knew him could not believe their eyes. This wild man was now controlled - not by chains or armed guards - but he was self-controlled. The Bible says that one of the fruits of God's Spirit is self-control! (Galatians 5:22-23) This man was living proof that "Anyone who believes in Christ is a new creation. The old is gone! The new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The change in this man reminds me of the story we read last week (Mark 4:35-41). In a way, **this man was very much like the raging storm on the Sea of Galilee.** Both were destructive and dangerous. Both were completely out of control. No person could contain either one. But then **both met with Jesus, and Jesus brought peace.** One name for Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). Jesus told those who followed Him, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you." (John 14:27)

Application: Jesus is peace. He came to earth to bring peace between God and man by paying for our sin. The Bible says that when we put our trust in Jesus, "we have **peace with God** because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us." (Romans 5:1 NLT) And, even after we have peace with God, we still live in a world that has many problems. So when things seem out of control in your life, take them to Jesus. He can give you peace in any situation. (Teacher: Share a personal story of when Jesus gave you peace in a difficult time.)

REACTIONS (Mark 5:11-20)

Say: Mark tells us that the townspeople saw the man dressed and sitting down calmly. Perhaps they also saw 2,000 dead pigs floating in the lake. They became very afraid.

All this made the people afraid. Those who had seen it told them what had happened to the man. They told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to beg Jesus to leave their area.



Jesus was getting into the boat. The man who had been controlled by demons begged to go with Him. Jesus did not let him. He said, "Go home to your family. Tell them how much the Lord has done for you. Tell them how kind He has been to you."

So the man went away. In the area known as the Ten Cities, he began to tell how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed. - Mark 5:15c-20

Teacher Note: Some commentators suggest that the people begged Jesus to leave because they were angry over the loss of their valuable livestock. However, Mark and Luke both attribute the peoples' reaction to fear, not greed (Mark 5:15; Luke 8:37).

The townspeople begged Jesus to leave! They could clearly see that Jesus was more powerful than the demons, and it scared them. They were not Jews; they were not expecting a Savior; they did not understand that Jesus came to save them. So they begged Him to leave. Jesus does not stay where He is not welcomed, so He and the disciples climbed back into their boat.



But the man who had been saved from demons ran after Jesus. He wanted to go with Him. But Jesus had an even better plan for this man. Jesus told him to go back to his family and friends and tell them what had happened to him. The very people who knew him when he was completely out of control would be amazed at his new life. This plan brought glory to God!

Application: I don't want you to leave here today focusing on demons and being afraid of them. People who have put their trust in Jesus - those who have accepted Jesus' free gift of forgiveness and new life - have God's Holy Spirit living inside of them (John 7:39, Ephesians 1:13). And an evil spirit CANNOT live where the Holy Spirit lives! So this story cannot happen in the life of a believer. Remember, it was the moment when

this man came to Jesus that the evil spirits were forced to leave him. This story teaches us two important things. First, Jesus is FAR more powerful than the devil and His demons, and secondly, Jesus brings peace where there once was chaos.

You have a choice to make. Will you be like the townspeople, who sent Jesus away because they were so afraid that Jesus would change things in their lives? Or will you be like the man, who was overjoyed with the change in his life, wanted to be near Jesus, and spent the rest of his days proclaiming how good God had been to him?

PPT Verse

Key Verse: *Let the peace that Christ gives rule in your hearts.* - Colossians 3:15a

PPT Main Point

Main Point: Jesus brings peace.