



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V22 N33 August 30, 2020

KING JESUS

“All or Nothing”

Mark 5:1-20

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Grace

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy, and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

Colossians 3:13



Q?

Having found mercy, what do I do?

The creeds that accompany each of the 30 Core Competencies are typically worded in the first person. For example, all of the Central *Belief* creeds begin, “I believe . . .” The creeds of the Central *Virtues* and the Central *Practices* likewise begin with “I.” For example, the creed for the Virtue Peace begins “I am free from anxiety . . .” and the one for the Practice Compassion begins “I seek to serve. . .” When pairing a text with a Competency, “I” am often not the subject of the creed. For example, in the story of the exorcism of the demon possessed man living among the tombs in Gerasa (Mk 5:1-20), *Jesus* is the one who shows the man mercy. Verse 19 reads: “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*.” In this case, the story is about the grace demonstrated by our Lord.

The magnitude of Jesus’ mercy to the demoniac is a multiple of the magnitude of the man’s wretched state. Here is a man who lives in a graveyard, namely, a *necropolis* (i.e., “city of the dead”) in the region of Gerasa, a man who for an exceedingly long time has suffered fits of mania so severe that no one has been able to restrain him, even though many have tried, each time to no avail; a man who roams around the necropolis and its environs screaming and shrieking out night and day; a man whose self-destructive behavior has left his clothes tattered and torn and his body slashed and scarred. To make matters worse, he is a Gentile man, who in Paul’s words is “excluded from citizenship in Israel and a foreigner to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world” (Eph 2:12). That Jesus would show *this man* mercy before the message of the gospel is carried beyond the borders of the Jewish community makes *this mercy* even more remarkable. The fact that the man “begged to go with him” once Jesus healed him is understandable. The fact that Jesus did not let him, not so much. Perhaps it is because, as one commentator suggests,

“the man was a Gentile and this was not (yet) the time for the integration of Gentiles into the messianic community” (Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 121).

Jesus’ mercy is God’s mercy, and God’s mercy is Jesus’ mercy. In Jesus “God takes the initiative in turning to human beings—even those across the lake in an unholy land filled with swine and demons. God searches out those who have never searched for or thought about turning to God. The psalmist says, ‘I call on the LORD in my distress, and he answers me’ (Ps. 120:1). The demoniac’s incoherent cries are directed into the air to no god in particular. Not surprisingly, they receive no answer. He is not seeking God or even seeking healing. Caught in the web of demonic powers, he even resists healing when it comes. The region where he resides also resists it. Yet we see the power of God’s mercy and love that captures and transforms those who do not even know that it exists and may initially resist it when it invades their lives” (David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark*, 208).

Left behind, the former raving maniac now in his right mind “began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed” (v. 20). Left behind, the man pays it forward, so to speak, telling others in the ten cities located east of the Sea of Galilee from northeast of Tiberias southward to Philadelphia about the grace and mercy the Lord has showed him. When Jesus later goes from the vicinity of Tyre to the region of the Decapolis (7:31-37), he finds people there who expect him to heal a deaf man, and after he does, the more he tells them not to tell anyone, the more they do, and “people are overwhelmed with amazement” (v. 36). In a nutshell, the missional activities of the obedient unnamed man, whom Jesus liberated from a legion of demons, laid the groundwork for the future preaching of the kingdom of God by Jesus and then later by Paul in the area south of Damascus.

1 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. 2 When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. 3 This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. 4 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. 5 Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. 7 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!" 8 For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!"

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

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." 10 And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

11 A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. 12 The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." 13 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.

14 Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. 15 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. 16 Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man – and told about the pigs as well. 17 Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

18 As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. 19 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." 20 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.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "Gerasenes" in v. 1.
- Circle "tombs" in v. 2.
- Highlight v. 5.
- Bracket "What do you want with me" in v. 7.
- Underline "Jesus, Son of the Most High God" in v. 7.
- Circle "Legion" in v. 9.
- Circle "begged" in vv. 10, 12.
- Circle "leave" in v. 17.
- Circle "Decapolis" in v. 20.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What makes you think the territory on the east side of the Sea of Galilee is inhabited by Gentiles?
 2. What does Mark accomplish by means of his description of the demoniac in verses 3-4?
 3. Why would Mark emphasize his hulk-like strength?
 4. Compare what the demon called Jesus in 1:24 with what the demon called Jesus in 5:7.
 5. Explain the strange *irony* in verse 7.
 6. The demon/demons “begged” Jesus twice (vv. 10, 12). What does that indicate to you?
 7. Why would the demons not want to leave the area? (Cf., Lk 8:31)
 8. Why would Jesus grant the demons’ request? (Cf., v. 13b)
 9. The people who come to Jesus see the demoniac “sitting there, dressed and in his right mind” (v. 15). Do they have a right to be afraid?
 10. **Discussion:** The passage closes on a note of *discipleship* (vv. 18-20). Talk about it.
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Commentary On The Text

Two miracles of physical healing follow a prior miracle of nature, namely, the calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee (4:35-41). Mark 5:1-20 describes the first one, the exorcism of demons in Gerasa; Mark 5:21-34 describes the second one, the healing of the woman with a chronic hemorrhage.

Jesus has exorcised demons before. Mark tells of one exorcism in Capernaum (1:23-26) and alludes to others in the same locality (v. 34). Jesus would later give the same authority over impure spirits to the Twelve (see 3:14; cf., 6:7). But this exorcism is different. It occurs on the other side of the lake in Gentile territory, and it involves the exorcism of not one, but “many” demons as indicated by the impure spirit’s answer to Jesus’ question, “What is your name?” To which he replies, “My name is Legion for we are many” (5:9). Of course, the significance of these exorcisms cannot be overstated. They are evidence of the presence of the kingdom in the person of Jesus. After being accused of casting out demons by “Beelzebul, the prince of demons” (Lk 11:15; cf., Mt 12:24; Mk 3:22), Jesus responds, “If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebul . . . But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Lk 11:18, 20). This particular exorcism is worthy of mention by Mark simply because of its gravity. One commentator observes: “Note that the Bible clearly differentiates between various degrees of demonization. Unusually the account only mentions ‘a demon’; ‘seven demons’ is a stage worse, seen in Mary Magdalene’s case history (16:9). But this man is, by contrast, filled by a veritable army of militant demons” (R. Alan Cole, *Mark*, TNTC, 158). Jesus’ exorcisms are no fluke. He has full authority over the world of impure spirits, and they know it. They even beg him for permission before they act (v. 12).

The episode begins in verse 5 with a brief description of the setting. Following the squall, Jesus and his disciples find themselves on the other side of the lake in an area inhabited predominately by Gentiles, which suggests that the demon-possessed man was likely himself a Gentile. When Jesus gets out of the boat, presumably early the following morning, a man with an impure spirit comes to meet him.

Verses 3-13 are devoted to a description of the man (vv. 2-5) and his exorcism (vv. 6-13). The pathetic demoniac’s situation is desperate. He lives among the dead, an exile from community. He regularly suffers fits of mania, which leave him frantic and out of control. All attempts to physically restrain him fail. On every occasion, he snaps the chains that cuff his hands and breaks the iron shackles that bind his feet. His situation is utterly hopeless. Tormented night and day, his screams and shrieks echo through the tombs and the hillside as he wanders aimlessly in search of relief. He cuts himself with stones, perhaps with a view to

ending his life, but to no avail. He simply adds excruciating physical pain to the horrific emotional pain he suffers. The description of the man in verses 2-5 forms a *contrast* with the description of the man later “sitting there, dressed and in his right mind” in verse 15.

As the story goes, Jesus approaches in the distance. According to one commentator, “The man’s response to Jesus’ presence is described with four verbs: he *saw* Jesus, and was irresistibly attracted to approach him, for reasons not mentioned; he *ran* towards him, which is unexpected and surprising in view of his antisocial behavior described earlier; he *fell on his knees* in front of Jesus, acknowledging this stranger’s superior power; he *shouted at the top of his voice* (lit. with a great voice’, *phōnē megalē*, repeating the adjective used in the previous episode), evidently the voice of the demon trying to frighten Jesus with the roar of the man’s voice” (Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 117). But Jesus is not afraid.

Apparently, Jesus has told the impure spirit to come out of the man (v. 8), but while the demon cannot refuse, he does try to bargain with the Lord. Recognizing the deity of Jesus, “Son of the Most High God,” he *ironically* begs Jesus “in God’s name” saying, “Don’t torture me!” Perhaps knowing his ultimate fate, he desires to escape judgment before the destined time. Asking the spirit’s name reveals that the man is possessed by countless demons – at least 2,000, judged by the reaction of the herd of pigs. For some unstated reason, Jesus grants Legion’s request to “go into the pigs” (v. 13). Unlike the man, the irrational pigs are unable to cope with being possessed and rush headlong down a steep bank into the lake where they drown.

Verses 14-20 are devoted to a description of the reaction to Jesus’ exorcism on the part of the townspeople (vv. 14-17) and the man himself (vv. 18-20). In the face of the undeniable evidence of the man’s healing, rather than acknowledge the miracle and believe in Jesus, the people who come out to see what has been reported to them, “begin to plead with Jesus to leave their region” (v. 17). Mark does not attempt to explain their incongruent response to what has happened. That said, their reaction stands in stark contrast to the man’s.

The townspeople beg Jesus to leave; the man, now in his right mind, begs to go with Jesus. He begs to follow him as one of his disciples. But while Jesus refuses to grant his request, he tells the man to “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” (v. 19) – which, in fact, the man does in obedience to Jesus. So while he is not assigned a position with the Twelve, he is given an assignment, which he carries out as a model disciple. Verse 7 alludes to the *upper story* – Jesus is “Son of the Most High God.” Verse 20 alludes to the *lower story* – the man begins “to proclaim the great things Jesus had done for him” as his disciple.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *Gerasenes*

Greek manuscripts are divided as to the exact location; some read “Gerasenes,” some “Gadarenes” (cf., Mt 8:28), and others “Gergesenes” (see discussion in Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 250, who writes: “Gergesa (El Kursi), identified as the site by Origen (*Commentary on John*, chap. 27), fits the geographical description best, for it is located near a steep bank on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, but it has the least textual support”). “Mark and Luke called this area ‘the country of the Gerasenes,’ but Matthew called it the country of the Gadarenes. Gergesa (also referred to as Gersa and Kersa) was a small village about midway on the eastern shore of the lake. Gadara was a larger town six miles southeast of the lake’s southern end. This incident apparently happened somewhere near both towns on the southeast coast of the lake. Another town with a similar name, Gerasa (Jarash), stood 37 miles southeast of the lake, too far southeast to qualify as the site of this miracle” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Mark,” 2020 ed., 112, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf).

v. 2 *tombs*

“These were probably cavelike rooms cut into the rocks of nearby hills which served as tombs and sometimes as haunts for demonized people. Matthew mentioned demoniacs, whereas Mark and Luke focused attention on one, probably the worst case” (John D. Grassmick, “Mark,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 122). “He is banished as an outcast from society and must dwell with those whose sleep will not be disturbed by his shrieks echoing through the night as he lacerates his body with stones” (David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark*, 203).

v. 5 *day and night*

This is an example of a figure of speech called *merism*, which involves the use of contrasting terms, e.g., “day” and “night,” to express totality, i.e., “around the clock,” “constantly.”

v. 7 *what do you want . . .*

A Greek idiom (cf., 1:24); lit., “What to me and to you?” “BDAG suggests the following as glosses for this expression: *What have I to do with you? What have we in common? Leave me alone! Never mind!* Hostility between Jesus and the demons is certainly to be understood in this context, hence the translation: ‘Leave me alone . . .’” (*The Net Bible*, 9^{tn} on Mk 5:7).

v. 7 *Son of the Most High God*

“The demon is fully aware of Jesus’ divine origin and dignity. ‘Son of the Most High God’ is not a messianic designation but a divine one” (William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT, 183). “Mark has already told his readers that the demons know who Jesus is (1:34c-d), so that this demonic confession along with 1:24 (‘the Holy One of God’) and 3:11 (‘the Son of God’) come from relia-

ble ‘spokesmen.’ What Mark has said in his opening verse (that Jesus Christ is the Son of God) is once again corroborated by the demons through their supernatural knowledge” (Stein, 253).

v. 9 *Legion*

“Highlights the extent of the demonic oppression that had taken control of the man and helps with understanding the subsequent episode involving two thousand pigs. *Legion* (*legiōn*) is the term used for a unit of Roman military troops. At the time of Augustus a legion consisted of about 5,000 men together with 120 cavalry serving as bodyguards and messengers, commanded by a senator of praetorian rank. The man is possessed by many demons” (Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 118).

vv. 10, 12 *begged*

“The demon’s subservience to Jesus is seen in his ‘begging him earnestly,’” but “why they do not want to be sent out of the territory of the Gerasenes is not explained” and “the reason for the demons’ request to enter the swine is unclear” (Stein, 256). Perhaps they were fearful of being sent to eternal punishment before the appointed time (see v. 7; cf., Mt 8:29; Lk 8:31) or perhaps “in a final desperate attempt to avoid being consigned to a disembodied state until final judgment, they made this appeal” (Grassmick, 123).

v. 17 *leave*

“The people *were afraid*: they sensed the majesty of divine power which was far superior to the power of the legion of demons. This made them afraid of what Jesus might do next. The people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region: the loss of the pigs that they had been informed about (v. 16) suggests that their request was motivated by a sense that Jesus’ presence might cause further harm; or they were convinced that they would not be able to handle the extraordinary power of Jesus demonstrated in the liberation of the man from the demons and in the destruction of the two thousand pigs” (Schnabel, 120-21).

v. 20 *Decapolis*

“The ‘Decapolis’ was a league of 10 Greek cities, all but one of which stood on the east side of the lake. One of these towns was Gergesa. The others were Damascus, Kanatha, Scythopolis, Hippos, Raphana, Pella, Dion, Philadelphia, and Gadara” (Constable, 117).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

After being shown great mercy by Jesus, Son of the Most High God, the only thing to do is be with and follow him as his disciple.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

I love comparing pictures of the first and last day of a school year. Out of all the years, kindergarten is the one that amazes me the most. Kindergarten. That's when I watched a piece of my heart walk away wearing a gigantic backpack, grinning ear-to-ear and waving like crazy. All four times it felt like a Band-Aid, or rather Gorilla Tape, being ripped off, leaving my heart exposed for the world to see. For over five years I had been the "go to" person for learning, listening and filling up the love cup for my child. Now some extraordinarily lucky teacher got to fill that spot for eight hours a day. What an amazing change! In kindergarten, my kids learned how to combine letters into words and read. They played fun games that helped them develop simple math and science skills. Most importantly, they discovered how to navigate social situations like sharing, standing in line or getting to the bathroom on time. They walked in the building virtual babies and by the end of the year morphed into big kids. In our passage this week we see a remarkable before and after transformation. An encounter with Jesus leaves a man completely changed and the crowds amazed. Kindergarten is a year marked with transformation, but nothing changes your child like an encounter with Jesus. Do your kids know Jesus as their Savior? How is He changing and developing your child's character this school year? What is your vision for developing godly attributes in your child? We are praying they grow in Christ in an amazing way this year!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Mark 5:1-20.

1. Describe the man in the tombs before his encounter with Jesus.
2. How did Jesus handle this situation?
3. Describe the man after his encounter with Jesus.

What Do You Think?

Why did the people in the town want Jesus to leave?

What Do You Do?

Draw before and after pictures of something that goes through an amazing transformation. Email the picture to kidpix@wearecentral.org for 3 bonus tokens!

CORE COMPETENCY: Grace

I forgive others, even when they have offended me.

MEMORY VERSE: John 8:36

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME _____

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE _____

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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