

# **Introduction Christ infinite authority over the spiritual realm**

On TV we are sometimes confronted with people seemingly speak with the dead, but which are in fact demons. (One example is a TV program that focuses on houses that are haunted on reality TV and then the presented enters in and has conversations with the supposedly dead)

*<sup>5</sup> For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. <sup>6</sup> Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun. Ecclesiastes 9:5–6 (ESV)*

Some of you may have watched horror movies in which there seems to be this great battle going on between a priest and someone who is demonized and you walk away with fear in your heart, and the impression that there is this spiritual battle going on between God and Satan. (This sermon will highlight how wrong that idea is)

Some of you may have personally played with the occult and as a result have encountered demonic experiences that produced fear.

This sermon is for you.

The Bible teaches us that there are two kingdoms.

There is the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light.

In the many years of ministry, I have at different occasions come face to face with demonic encounters.

- I've encountered it in student ministries in BFN helping children and people turn their backs on Satanic covens, or having played with the occult.
- As Missionaries we have experienced the reality of demon possession at Jesus films with the Masai
- We've personally experienced demonic events in our home in Tanzania.

This has at times been scary, but as I reflected on these events it affirmed to me experientially:

- that God's word is indeed true,
- That there is a real Christ and a real Satan.
- But what has always stood out for me is Christ Authority over these beings, and the tremendous power there is in the gospel to deliver people from Satan's hold.

In our passage we will see what really happens when Christ encounters someone possessed by demons.

## Proposition

5 events that demonstrated Christ's authority over the spiritual realm that encourage faithful witnesses

- Desperate condition of the demoniac. 1-5
- Dominance over the demonic 6-13
- Dramatic transformation 14-15
- Dampening depravity 16-17
- Declaring God's works 18-20

### Reading Mark 5:1-20

#### 1. Desperate condition of the demoniac. 1-5

*<sup>1</sup> They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. <sup>2</sup> And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. <sup>3</sup> He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, <sup>4</sup> for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. <sup>5</sup> Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. Mark 5:1-5 (ESV)*

*<sup>1</sup> They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes*

The sentence begins with “and” in the GK, connecting this passage with the events in the previous passage.

- The disciples had faced a hurricane on the sea of Galilee
- They had panicked, doubted God's character, were cowardly and lacked faith.
- Jesus Christ displayed His authority (the right to command with the power to enforce the command) over creation (The wind and the sea)

- They were filled with terror and were still wondering who Jesus is.

Coming from that encounter they face another crisis, another trial. (They encounter a raving demon possessed man)

After a night at sea, having faced a hurricane, I would have preferred a tree, some quietness and somewhere where I can hide and rest.

But this was not Christ's plan for them.

They = Disciples and Christ come to the Gentile country of the Gerasenes

The country of the Gerasenes most likely refers to the small town of Gersa (or Khersa, Kursi)

Reasons:

- At Kersa on sea level there are no tombs.
- A mile south is a steep embankment
- There are the ruins of a Christian church built there
- (early church fathers) Origen and Eusebius located the place
- Two miles from it you find cavern tombs which were used as dwellings. (ON the hill)

*<sup>2</sup> And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit*

The disciples had hardly put their feet on shore when they were confronted by a raging demon possessed man.

*<sup>28</sup> And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. Matthew 8:28 (ESV)*

Matthew indicates that it was actually two men.

Though Mark and Luke choose to focus on the one man with whom Jesus spoke.

The accounts do not contradict each other, only differ in focus.

He is described as having an **unclean spirit**.

- These spirits were morally filthy and caused much harm to those whom they possessed.
- He was a man indwelt by tormenting evil, fallen angels.
- Generally demons work through error, lies and false religion (1 Tim 4:1-3).
- Demon possession is an extreme form of individual suppression in which they control the person's mind, body and voice.
- It also implies ownership and total control, meaning this person was an unbeliever

- Believers can experience demonizing,

From a Jewish perspective this story is full of elements of uncleanness:

- Its location was in Gentile Decapolis, under Roman rule it was filled with pagan Hellenistic cultures- unclean to Jews
- The later description of pigs was also unclean for the Jews.
- The fact that He came from the tombs rendered Him unclean according to Numb 19:11-14

*Num 19:11 "Whoever touches the dead body of any person shall be unclean seven days.*

Rabbinical teachings included not only contact with the dead, but anything associated with them.

Mark adds that he did not only come from the tombs but ...

<sup>3</sup> *He lived among the tombs*

The tombs were the common homes for the insane.

They were burial chambers carved out of rocks in hillsides

Living there highlighted the desperate condition of this man.

*And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, <sup>4</sup> for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him*

- He was supernaturally strong
- The Gk states that no one was powerful enough to bind him.
- The people would have diagnosed him as insane and as was the practice, tried to bind him with chains to protect them from the violence.  
Failure to do so, resulted in them most likely driving him(them) away to wander and live in the Tombs
- Luke 8:29 adds that the demon drove him into the desert.

*Vs 4 No one had the strength to subdue him. <sup>5</sup> Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones*

He could not be bound or subdued by any man.

He was be screamed night and day(continuously) and was physically gashing or cutting himself with stones.

Most likely an attempt to end his own tortured life.

Luke adds that he had not worn clothes for a long time.

*[ESVi] Luke 8:27 When Jesus' had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs.*

The nakedness would indicate sexual perversion.

So, we see:

- Uncleaness and dwelling among the dead.
- Supernatural power (stronger than any chain or any man)
- Screaming
- Self-mutilation
- Nudity
- Torture
- Total control by the demon.

This was a formidable foe confronting Christ.

A desperate picture of a desperate man, controlled and afflicted by Satanic control.

This was a man to be avoided, to be feared to stay away from.

## **Application**

Things you and I learn from this passage and should know

- There really are two kingdoms in this world.
- Satan is real and his demons are real.
- The Bible can be trusted as to its testimony of these beings
- The Bible basically describes some characteristics of demons:
  - They have a personhood, they have intellect.(1Tim 4:1)
  - They have emotions, we saw that this demon feared Christ
  - They exercised will. They begged Jesus to cast them not out of the country but into the pigs
  - They are described as unclean
  - They were created angels (Mt 25:41, Rev 12:9, Neh 9:6)

- They are spiritual beings (Jud 9:23, 1 Sam 16:14-16)
- They are called spirits (Mt 8:16)
- They are called evil spirits. (Luk 7:21)
- They can reside in human beings and animals (Mark 5)
- They can be expelled and can later return (Mt 12:43-45)
- They can have access in the heavenly places (Job 1:6, 2:1, Eph 6:12)
- They carry out Satan's will on earth (Mark 1:34)
- They will be held morally responsible for their deeds. They will be judged. (2 Pet 2:4)
- They will spend all eternity in hell being tortured. (Mt 25:41, Rev 20:10)

## 2. Dominance over the demonic 6-13

*<sup>6</sup> And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. <sup>7</sup> And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." <sup>8</sup> For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" <sup>9</sup> And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." <sup>10</sup> And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. <sup>11</sup> Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, <sup>12</sup> and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them." <sup>13</sup> So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea. Mark 5:6-13 (ESV)*

As you read vs 6 & 7 you almost expect would expect a spectacular battle.

There is no battle.

There is no power encounter.

There is simply total domination

Christ has total authority (He commands and they submit).

This is what you get when you bring the omnipotent Creator in the presence of a created demon.

Demons grovel and shudder in Christ's presence..

***<sup>6</sup> And when he saw Jesus from afar,***

The Demons would have sensed the presence of the Son of God and they panicked.

***he ran and fell down before him.***

The Gk term for fell down is a term which means to worship.

In Hebrews 1 we read that God's angels worship Him

We see the following description of angels

***<sup>6</sup> ... "Let all God's angels worship him." Hebrews 1:6 (ESV)***

Here we see Satan's angels doing the same.

Demons cannot repent,

Horrified with the awareness of the presence of the all-powerful Son of God they to prostrate before Him.

***[ESVi] James 2:19 ... Even the demons believe—and shudder!***

***<sup>7</sup> And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me."***

As fallen angels they exactly knew who Jesus was.

Gk reads "What!! I and you", Son of the, the most high

This title highlights God's absolute sovereignty over all powers.

Suddenly faced with the Son of God they cry out loudly.

***I adjure you by God, do not torment me***

"adjure" GK = a term meaning oath

The demons were attempting to bind Jesus by oath to not torment or torture them.

"Swear to God that you won't torture me"

This was total submission.

Mathew records

***<sup>29</sup> And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" Matthew 8:29 (ESV)***

- Every demon knows that someday they will face a reality of eternal torture in Hell
- These Demons thought their time had arrived

- They thought Christ may speed up the process or simply remove them from this world and cast them into the pit or the abyss.

***[ESVi] Luke 8:31 And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss.***

There is a place called Tartarus in which angels are imprisoned until they face their final judgment.

***[ESVi] Jude 6 And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—[ESVi***

Satan Himself would be bound and be thrown into the pit for a 1000 years during the millennial kingdom.

***<sup>1</sup> Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. <sup>2</sup> And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, <sup>3</sup> and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. Revelation 20:1–3 (ESV)***

An eternal fire and torture awaits Satan and his angels after judgment. In Hell

***<sup>41</sup> “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Matthew 25:41 (ESV)***

***<sup>10</sup> and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Revelation 20:10 (ESV)***

They knew their time was up for controlling this man.

***<sup>8</sup> For he was saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”***

Vs 8 describes why the demon was crying out in a loud voice to Jesus not to torture Him. Jesus had spoken



“come out of the man you unclean spirit

***”<sup>9</sup> And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” He replied, “My name is Legion, for we are many.”***

Jesus asked His name: not as a pattern that you and I should follow.

Jesus knew what we was up against and knew the demons name

He does so to show you and I what he was delivering the man from.

The name Legion is given, contrasting this exorcisms with previous exorcisms.

Previously Jesus had delivered people from a single demon.

But Legion is a military term which designated a Roman army of +-5600 soldiers

This emphasises the militant facet, the many demons, the power and the intensions of the demons in this man.

Jesus was up against an army of militant demons.

... and they were grovelling and squirming under his word.

***<sup>10</sup> And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. <sup>11</sup> Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, <sup>12</sup> and they begged him, saying, “Send us to the pigs; let us enter them.”***

The demons had no option but to obey Christ command to come out.

There was no question that He will send them out, the only issue was where.

They appeal not to sent out of the country?

They appeal to be sent into the pigs.

Babylonian exorcistical practices, suggested incantations to offer the pig as an alternative host for expelled demons.

***<sup>13</sup> So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.***

None of the gospels discuss the moral question which arises regarding the killing at such large scale of these pigs.

- This represented a loss of great economic value and even the livelihood of these men
- The good done to the demoniac results in misfortune to the pigs, the pig owners and those who feed the pig.

We can deduce the following:

In the eyes of Christ, the rescue and restoration of one soul is of much greater value than the loss of all your income.

*<sup>12</sup> Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! Matthew 12:12 (ESV)*

Mark states

*<sup>36</sup> For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?*

*<sup>37</sup> For what can a man give in return for his soul? Mark 8:36–37 (ESV)*

Jesus gave them permission to enter the pigs.

Satan and his forces can not do anything outside of what God either commands or permits them to do.

The allowance for the demons to enter and kill the pigs display:

- The true nature of the demons= Murderous
- The number 2000 indicate the fact that many demons were involved
- The damaging power of demons on a massive scale
- It allowed for Christ power to be seen
- They could only do what Christ permitted.

The death of the pigs is not the main focus in this story.

- The infinite power of Christ over the demonic real was on display.
- The Lords focus was on saving the man, not the pigs
- The mans soul is of much greater value than the death of the pigs

## **Application**

You and I need to comprehend the omnipotence of Christ

Jesus can do anything consistently with His nature.

Nothing is too hard or impossible for Him

*<sup>14</sup> Is anything too hard for the LORD? ... Genesis 18:14 (ESV)*

*<sup>3</sup> Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. Psalm 115:3 (ESV)*

Gods creation reveal His omnipotence(His all powerfulness)

*<sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the*

***things that have been made. .... Romans 1:20 (ESV)***

All power belongs to Christ

***<sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” Revelation 5:12 (ESV)***

All authority has been given to Christ

***<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Matthew 28:18 (ESV)***

- Jesus has absolute authority over the demonic realm and all creation
- Jesus promised to be with us in the process of making disciples.

***<sup>20</sup> .... And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:20 (ESV)***

- You and I should say together with the multitude in heaven:

***Revelation 19:1 (ESV)***

***<sup>1</sup> .... “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,***

- You should find comfort in Christ, power, love and His word
- If you do not know Christ however, this is a warning to, just as the psalmist states in Ps 2

***<sup>10</sup> Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. <sup>11</sup> Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. <sup>12</sup> Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. Psalm 2:10–12 (ESV)***

To you children here this morning know this:

- Jesus is much more powerful than Satan or any demon.
- Jesus invites you to come to Him
- Its only in Jesus that you will find protection
- Find shelter in him.
- Trust in Jesus
- Trust in His death and resurrection.

### 3. Dramatic transformation 14-15

*<sup>14</sup> The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. <sup>15</sup> And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. Mark 5:14–15 (ESV)*

The Herds men= GK refers “Those feeding the pigs”

They fled and reported what happened in the nearby city and in the fields

People came to see for themselves what had taken place.

They came to see Jesus, and what they saw shocked them: the demon possessed man was a Christ obsessed man, from a child of Satan to a child of the King

1. He was sitting, not running around screaming and gashing himself
2. He was clothed, not naked
3. He was of sound mind, not behaving like a raving lunatic.

Like the Sea that transformed from a hurricane to a mirror, He was transformed from frantic ravings to a man at peace with God and fellow man.

Both the outer and the inner storms had been quelled by the authority of Christ.

Jesus must have explained the gospel to Him.

A picture of salvation , a man at the feet of His Saviour.

God had reached down, and ripped a man from the clutches of an army of militant demons, by a simple command of Jesus...what a saviour!!

As His heart was transformed by Christ,

His thinking had been transformed

His appearance had been transformed

He was now a child of the King..

*<sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13–14 (ESV)*

The people see this and respond in fear.

Gk = Phobia referring to extreme fear.

Just as the disciples responded in terror confronted by God’s power

These people responded in terror.

## **Application**

If you came this morning thinking that you are too sinful,

That you have messed up so badly

IF you think that you are so tied up in the clutches of the evil one

This story should give you hope.

If God could save and deliver a man so deeply in the clutches of over 5000 militant demons with simply an instruction of His word.

- He can save you
- Turn away from your sin
- Turn to Jesus
- Trust in His saving Grace

But more than that

- This story pictures for us the dramatic change that Christ salvation brings about a believer's life.
- Have your hearts desires been changed?
- Have your practices changed?
- Do people notice the difference in your life because of Christ?
- If not, the believer is commanded to test to see whether they are in the faith 2 Cor 13:5

## **4. Damming depravity 16-17**

*Mark 5:16–17 (ESV)*

*<sup>16</sup> And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. <sup>17</sup> And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region.*

This story highlights the depravity of the human heart.

Jesus had demonstrated His authority to save a demoniac, yet, they beg Him to leave.

Here was the saviour for their souls, and all they can think of is how to get Him away from them.

This was in part an act of fear but I think there was more to it than that.

- They cared more for their pigs than for this mans soul
- They cared more for money, than the salvation of a man possessed by demons
- They cared more for their business and God's business.
- They would prefer the company of a demoniac rather than the company of a Saviour.
- This amazing picture of God's salvation did not lead them to faith, in Christ as Saviour.
- In the face of undeniable evidence, their hearts remained impenetrable ice bergs.

## **Application**

- Do you care more for pigs than people?
- Do you care more for gold than souls?
- Do you love the world more than God?

*<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 John 2:15 (ESV)*

## **5. Declaring God's works 18-20**

*<sup>18</sup> As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. <sup>19</sup> And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." <sup>20</sup> And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled. Mark 5:18-20 (ESV)*

In contrast to the people that begged Jesus to leave, this man begged Jesus to follow him.

How many of you would beg Jesus to follow him?

But Jesus had other plans for Him.

*<sup>19</sup> And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy*

*on you.”*

Instead of taking Him to Capernaum, Jesus commanded Him to be a witness to his people.

Jesus sends out a gentile to be an evangelist to Gentiles

He had no theological training, he had not walked with Christ and seen his miracles or heard his teachings.

All he had was Christ having delivered Him and saved Him.

And with that experience, that little bit of time with Jesus, Jesus sends Him.

Go and tell them how much Jesus has done for you

You and I can learn from this,

If you are a believer, you have sufficient information to testify to God's goodness in your life

You too have a testimony

And you too can share the gospel.

***20 And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.***

The man obeyed Jesus

He went out and proclaimed what Jesus had done.

Jesus by simply speaking transformed a man possessed by an army of militant demons into a faithful witness for Jesus.

+5600 demons were cast out, and 2000 pigs drowned, for one man to be transformed into a witness for Christ.

In Mark 7 :31-8:10 we see the results of His proclamation ministry.

***31 Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. Mark 7:31 (ESV)***

***1 In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, Mark 8:1 (ESV)***

***9 And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away. Mark 8:9 (ESV)***

His witnessing ministry resulted in more than +- 4000 people from that area to crowd around Jesus for healing, teaching and even swallow ship around a meal with Christ.

## **Application**

- You too can tell your story
- You too can tell others how much Christ has done for you.
- You too have a personal testimony which is a powerful witnessing tool you can use with the gospel.
- You too can follow the mans example to obey Christ simple instruction- Go Home, and tell them how much teh Lord has done for you and how much Mercy he has shown you.
- To you children, may I encourage you to tell you friends, about Jesus, and talk to mummy and daddy about the gospel and where you are in your spiritual journey with Jesus. 1.

## **Conclusion**

5 events that demonstrated Christ's authority over the spiritual realm that encourage faithful witnesses

- Desperate condition of the demoniac. 1-5 reminds us that Satan and demons are real and how devastating their impact upon a person's life can be.
- Dominance over the demonic 6-13 reminds us of Christ having total authority over demons. There is no spiritual battle between God and Satan. Jesus commands and they obey in terror. The battle may be between people and Satan, but not between God and Satan.
- Dramatic transformation 14-15 displays Christ power to change wicked hearts, wicked thinking, wicked actions into Christlikeness in mind, will and actions
- Damming depravity 16-17 reminds us of how desperately wicked the human heart is in that at its core, its more concerned about the world than Christ
- Declaring God's works 18-20 Jesus demonstrates His authority over the demonic realm, saves and transforms a man possessed by an army of militant demons into a faithful witness for Christ, He can do that for you.