



The Mission of God in a Secular Age

Mark 5:1-20

April 10, 2022

Eric Hesse

The Text:

Mark 5:1-20

¹They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes.^[a] ²And when Jesus^[b] had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. ³He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, ⁴for 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. ⁵Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. ⁶And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. ⁷And 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." ⁸For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" ⁹And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." ¹⁰And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. ¹¹Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, ¹²and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them." ¹³So 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.

¹⁴The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. ¹⁵And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed^[c] man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. ¹⁶And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. ¹⁷And they began to beg Jesus^[d] to depart from their region. ¹⁸As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. ¹⁹And 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." ²⁰And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled."

Big Idea-Secular people desperately need to see Christ's superiority over every power, especially the supernatural unseen powers.

1. Our response to Christ's superiority over unseen powers reveals the degree of our secularity (5:1-13).

2. Christ's superiority over unseen powers yields fruitful mission because it produces a faith that rests on the power of God (5:14-20).

Sunday Text Questions for Mark 5:1-20
Guest Message: “The Mission of God in a Secular Age”

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- 1) Starter Question: How is the mission of the Christian/church facing different challenges today than it did fifty years ago?

- 2) Read Mark 5:1-20 aloud and discuss together any significant observations or issues needing clarification.

- 3) What do vv. 2-5 reveal about the man who confronted Jesus?

- 4) What is an “unclean spirit” (vv. 2, 8) and what role do such “spirits” (demons) play in the world today?

- 5) What does the encounter between Jesus and Legion (vv. 9-13) teach us about demonic possession/oppression and the authority of Jesus?

- 6) What does the Bible teach us about demonic possession/oppression?

- 7) What were the responses by the towns people (v. 17) and the man who had been possessed (v. 18), and what do we learn from them?

- 8) Why is it significant that Jesus sent the man to be a witness to God’s mercy in his community (vv. 19-20)?

- 9) What does God want us to believe or do in response to this text?

- 10) How does this text give us insights into the mission of God in a secular age?

Further study this week: Passages on demonic possession/oppression: Ephesians 6:10-20 (Mon); 2 Thessalonians 3:3 (Tues); 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (Wed); 1 Peter 5:8-9 (Thurs); James 4:7 (Fri).