

Meet Jesus: 2 As he vanquishes evil

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[0 : 0 0] If you'd like to open your Bibles to Mark chapter 5, it's on page 840. Mark chapter 5, page 840.

I seem to remember speaking on this passage about a year ago. I don't know if it was exactly a year ago. And I can remember speaking about all the pigs running into the sea and explaining a little bit about that in case it was close to your conscience, the animals going into the sea.

But today it's a completely new talk. And if you want to learn more about the pigs running into the sea and the loss of their life, well, you could see me afterwards if you want.

So, chapter 5, verse 1. They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. When Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.

He lived among the tombs. No one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. For he had often been bound with shackles and chains. But he wrenched the chains apart and he broke the shackles in pieces.

[1 : 1 0] No one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and bruising himself with stones. And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him and crying 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. For he was saying to him, Come out of the man, you unclean spirit. And Jesus asked him, What is your name?

He replied, My name is Legion, for we are many. And he begged him earnestly not to send him out of the country. Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside.

And they begged him, saying, Send us to the pigs, let us enter them. 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 were drowned in the sea.

The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened.

[2 : 2 0] 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. And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs.

And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. As he was getting into the boat, the man who had had been possessed with the demons begged him that he might be with him.

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. And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him.

And everyone marveled. Just imagine, friends, a world in which you don't need your keys. You know, there's no theft and there's not the greed that fuels it.

Have you ever had anything stolen? I've certainly had quite a lot of things stolen. I had a cycle stolen once from outside the church here. It was locked to the railings, but they cut through it. Imagine a world without broken relationships and the selfishness that can sometimes fuel the breakdown in relationships.

[3 : 37] Imagine a world of harmony, no violence or conflict. A world in which we all worship the one true God.

A world that almost purrs with peace. Just think of a place where you can walk with your creator and see all that is made for you and all that is done for you, radiating his glory as it should.

Genesis chapter 3 And this is the world that we left behind. The world that Satan invaded. Yet, chapter 3 and verse 15, there's an embryonic promise about a person who would come with the power to overthrow Satan.

And so, this Genesis chapter 3 saviour, we desperately need him, don't we? You and me, we need him. We need him to deal with Satan and his influence in the world and in our lives.

We need him. And the whole of the rest of the Bible, if you think about it, it's like it's been rolling out the red carpet for this saviour. And then, in the midst of the Roman Empire, he arrived, didn't he?

[5 : 04] He arrived and walked this earth. And we've just sung, haven't we? Lord of history. So, back in the Roman Empire, he invaded the earth. And this Wednesday, Mark's pointing us to him.

But what about the first century world? Think about that. Does the world yet know who's visiting her in the first century? You know the scrolls in the synagogues and in the temple?

It's almost as if they're crying out, saying, this is him, this is the Messiah. But do people recognise him? You know, chapter 1 and verse 11, and his father proclaims his identity, doesn't he?

Do you remember? This is my beloved son. With him I am well pleased. But, well, do people recognise him? Sadly, everyone seems a little bit slow on the uptake.

Do you remember the fishermen last week when they were in the boat on the Sea of Galilee and Jesus calmed the storms? They say, who is this? Who is he? Even the wind and waves obey him there in the middle of the Sea of Galilee as a raging storm.

[6 : 13] Do you remember? It collapsed into calm. The wind stopped as it met again the voice of its creator. And we arrive at our passage as he sort of steps out of the boat.

Do you remember verse 1? And like a seagull spotting a fish. It's swooping down. This demonic is rushing towards Jesus, closing in.

Prophecy and fulfilment sort of rushing towards each other. What does he say? Son of the Most High God. He recognises him, doesn't he? Straight away, verse 7. That's clarity.

Do you remember verse 7? The disciples were confused. Weren't they? Confused. But the verdict from the spiritual realm here in verse 7, it hits the bullseye.

Spot on. Not though through God the Father this time, but from the satanic realms, you see. So yes, the serpent crusher promised in Genesis chapter 3, verse 15, he's here with us.

[7 : 14] And there's a bell being rung in the battle for our souls. We've got three points. Our first point is living without Jesus.

Sometimes in life we need to look in the mirror, don't we? I know that's the case with myself, or somebody can speak to you, you know, a word in season. I've got a little, actually, I've got a little circular mirror at home.

It's got a concave surface, and so it magnifies everything. And I really don't like looking into my mouth. It's a legacy of past neglect, especially my back teeth.

And it can happen with our finances, can't it, you know? You hear a click of the letterbox, and the letters fall to the floor, and you walk, and there it is. Statement from the bank. It's a rude awakening about our financial situation.

And this man here is a shocking picture of a life without Jesus. And actually, if you're anything like me, you'd rather turn away. I don't know about you, but I don't want to see this, quite a lot of it.

[8 : 19] What, sadly, people outside of Christ are like. Most of my family. Well, I want it covered over. I don't actually want to see what it's like.

And did you notice where he lives? Let's have a look where he lives. Look there at verse 2. And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit.

Verse 3, he lived among the tombs. Verse 5, night and day among the tombs. It's the realm of the dead, isn't it? It's the realm of the dead. Without Jesus, we can cobble life together.

We think we're okay. But Paul says that such a life has a lot in common with this poor man. Let me just read from Ephesians 2, verse 1.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is at work in the sons of disobedience, says Paul.

[9 : 28] So Paul's saying that without Christ, friends, we're dead. Do you see? And that was me for most of my life. I didn't have anything grand or eternal to look forward to.

And so consequently, think about this. I used to live for the now. And we can put life together, can't we? Our image. But like Adam, covering himself, there's a lot of covering up that can go on without Christ.

So this man is close to home. He's showing it like it is. Snatching away the camouflage. Picture this in your mind's eye. The person outside of a relationship with Jesus, we put him onto a spiritual scanner and we all look up to the screen and we see this demonic here.

Picture this man. Not going from shop to shop, but from tomb to tomb. Not attired in smart clothing, but naked.

Not chatting to people on his mobile phone, but away and isolated from society. And we ask, well, has the world got an answer? Verse 3.

[10 : 43] He lived among the tombs and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. 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. And our world, it can't control this realm, can it? Am I right? Are you with me? The 180 yesterday who lost their lives on the way home to see their loved ones.

Friday's evening times, here in Glasgow, the Victoria Hospital has police stationed in accident and emergency because people are attacking doctors, stabbing patients, waiting for treatment, here in Glasgow.

Think about this. Like the government, like the demonic ear, the government can't control it, can they? Think about it.

No one, verse 4, had the strength. You know, we can make up our own morals in relationships, can't we? And it's so easy to wreck people's lives.

[11 : 52] Jesus says, out of our hearts it all erupts, Mark chapter 7. And we tell a lie and where does it end? And Mark's saying, he's showing us this man so that we might ponder our plight without Christ.

So that we might see the destructive power of Satan in God's image bearers. You know, he's even harming himself, isn't he?

In verse 5. Did you notice that? And who amongst us has never done something that's been harmful? Something, you know, for immediate gain or satisfaction that had a price tag attached to it?

So here he is, this man, Mumbai, their wake-up calls to a sleeping world. And Jesus, he climbs out of the boat, doesn't he?

He climbs out of the boat and wades to the shore. And for this demonic, it's like he's arrived from the book of Genesis and we rush from the tombs toward Jesus and it's our second point, meeting Jesus.

[13 : 04] Just look with me there at verse 9. And Jesus asked him, what is your name? He replied, my name is Legion, for we are many. Seems a strange exchange, doesn't it, that?

As kingdoms meet. Seems almost like duelling suitors, you know, an exchange that belies the gravity. Polite words before they stride away, turn and face each other.

But the analogy, friends, is ended there. We can so easily imagine, can't we, equal partners. What I mean is, you know, we can think, think about this, we can think that the opposite of the devil is Jesus.

Can't we? But as far as I can see, the opposite of the devil is the angel Gabriel. Do you see? The devil's of the created order. And Jesus has arrived, hasn't he?

What? To crush him. So the writing's on the wall as they speak. Do you remember the images of the Berlin Wall falling? Can you remember that?

[14 : 06] Was it about 1990, wasn't it, I think? Something like that. Do you remember the pictures? They symbolised, didn't they, the fragmentation of the Soviet Empire.

And Jesus utters a few words. And these pigs, I guess it must have looked like a plague of rats, suddenly turning and running towards the sea. And now we look around, don't we?

We look around and we see this man, think about this man, not any more naked, but clothed. Verse 15. He's not isolated, but sitting with Jesus.

Not possessed, but in his right mind. And the visual, listen, is a spectacular demonstration of the spiritual. It's showing us what Jesus has come to do.

Verse 14. And they came from all over the place to see for themselves, well, wouldn't you? I would if I was back then. Verse 15. They saw and they knew that something supernatural had happened.

[15 : 11] You know, think about this. It's just like when Jesus was with the fishermen and he calmed the storm. Do you remember? Look at the end of verse 15. Just look at the end of verse 15 there.

And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there clothed, in his right mind. And what? They were afraid. Just like, isn't it, when Jesus calmed the storm.

But they're not now afraid, think of this, of the demonic, are they? No. But the expulsive power of Christ in their very midst.

The man is clean-shaven, he's smartly dressed, he's sat chatting, just like this calm seas, isn't it? The still winds of chapter 4. And then, verse 16, their fear and shock, it suddenly turned into terror.

As the herdsmen described to them what happened with the pigs, this great herd of pigs literally running into the sea. And look at verse 17. They just can't face this power any longer.

[16 : 15] And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. And verse 18, Jesus, he quietly gets into a boat, no drama, and he's on his way, isn't he?

And what a warning, friends, that is, isn't it? What a warning if you're rejecting Jesus. He might grant your prayer. Our third point is living for Jesus.

Yes, well, all these people, they want shut of him, don't they? But there's one person, one person wants Jesus to stay, or rather, he wants to go with him. Just look there at verse 18.

As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with the demons begged him that he might go with him. You know, the man, I guess he's like a child, isn't he?

He doesn't want his dad to go, or something like that. He's grabbing onto his shirt cuffs as the dad's trying to get into the car. Stay with me. You know, he feels that his calling is with Jesus.

[17 : 21] Can there be, you know, can there be a danger with felt callings? What do we expect Jesus to say here? We expect Jesus to say, come on, in the boat, jump in the boat with me.

And there's a nice cushion over here, you know, if you want to nap when we're on the Sea of Galilee. You relax, you come with me. We expect him to say that, don't we? Because Jesus, this day, has been answering prayer.

It's been a good day for answered prayer. Verse 12, the demon said to him, send us into the pigs. So he sent them into the pigs. Verse 17, they begged him to leave, so he gets into the boat to leave.

And verse 18, this man's begging him, he's saying, can I go with you? Seems such a natural request, isn't it? Am I right? And so verse 19 is a shock. 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.

Do you see? And suddenly this man, think about it, he's under Jesus' authority, isn't he? Isn't that nice? Isn't that amazing? He's doing things that, listen, wouldn't be his first choice.

[18 : 33] Am I right? Is that you, friend? Is that your life? I'll say this slowly. Anyway, he knows to make his own aspirations subject to the one who's given him life.

Do you see? That's how he's living now. And sometimes for us, we can desire good things, can't we? And they're not always the best thing.

Do you see? We can rush off overseas, but neglect our own family. We can go to Christian conferences, but not speak to our neighbours.

William Hendrickson says this, listen, does this not also imply that a true church member is at least as concerned about providing thorough Christian education for his own children as he is about sending missionaries to the heathen?

The latter task is indeed very important and necessary, but the former should have the priority. And so, he strolls back to his own people, doesn't he?

[19 : 42] This man, he's got a spring in his toes, the aroma of aftershave, he looks very smart, and there's a radiance of a new life in Christ. And I'll read to you verse 20, and notice the last two words.

He wanted to get into the boat, didn't he? But look what Jesus has done through him. Verse 20, and he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis, that's ten cities, deck ten, polished city, how much Jesus had done for him and what, and everyone marvelled.

So, here's Jesus, the son of the most high God. He's wielding his power over the satanic realm and on such a day as this, friends.

Don't we need to know that we're on the winning side? Am I right? Doesn't it warm your hearts to know that? Let's allow Paul to say a few words as we finish.

Just listen to this. It's from Romans chapter 16. And it picks up, it picks up on what we were thinking earlier from Genesis chapter 3 and verse 15.

[20 : 59] Listen to this. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Yes, Satan is crushed. And ultimately, Jesus did that on the cross, didn't he?

And through his resurrection from the dead. And suddenly, we can lift our heads and see what Jesus has prepared for us. Imagine, just imagine that there's a place where the streets shine with the glory of the Lamb.

there's a way we can go there, we can live there beyond time. Because of you, because of you, because of your love, because of your blood. No more pain, no more sadness, no more suffering, no more tears, no more sin, no more sickness, no injustice, no more death.

It's a picture, isn't it, of the new creation that Jesus came to bring in. It's the serpent crusher visiting planet Earth. Shall we pray? Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for this passage.

We thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, into this confused, torn, ruptured, and awfully sinful world.

[22 : 18] A world where the influences of Satan is ever before us. But we thank you, Father, that we have victory in your Son. We thank you that we can have confidence in what he's done for us through his death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead.

And we pray, Father, that you'd help us as we live out our lives. We pray that we'd set our sights upon you and that we wouldn't be overwhelmed by the evil forces in this world.

We pray that we'd radiate your Son into all the situations in which you send us. and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us now and forevermore.

Amen.