

Sermon Recap: As we fix our eyes on Jesus the healer, our passage will walk us down three paths: the path of evil, the path of Jesus, and the path of the healed. They all lead to different places. What path am I on?

The Path of evil:

The path of evil is paved with deception. Evil had gradually overtaken the man with the unclean spirit. The evil spirit(s) had a name, Legion. He was possessed with many demonic forces, which probably had come over time. This path of evil is paved with deception and leads to destruction. The fate of the pigs shows us the destruction of the path of evil.

The Path of Jesus:

The path of Jesus is paved with initiation. In verse 1 we see that Jesus and the disciples came to the other side of the sea to the unclean Gentile territory, in an unclean cemetery, near unclean pigs, to encounter a man with an unclean spirit. Jesus initiated the conversation with the demon-possessed man (verse 8). Jesus went to that land to initiate with this man.

The man who was enraged is now at rest. The man who was exposed is now clothed. He has been healed physically, relationally, mentally, and spiritually.

The Path of the healed

The path of the healed is paved with obedience. Even after the man had been healed, he didn't get what he wanted (to stay with Jesus.) The man was given a task by Jesus, and he obeyed. He didn't just go home to tell his family, he traveled to all 10 cities of the Decapolis proclaiming the gospel. Jesus asked the man to go share what he saw and what he experienced. The path of the healed is paved with obedience and leads to proclamation. Those whom Jesus has delivered from sin and evil have a story to tell.

What path are you on? Place your faith in him as you walk on the path of the healed. Proclaim the truth of how much God has done for you and how He has had mercy on you.

Interpretive Helps:

- The exact location on "the other side of the sea" is translated differently in various translations and even between Matthew's account, and Mark's and Luke's: "region of the Gerasenes," "region of the Gadarenes," and "town of Gerasa." The exact geography is uncertain. Readers can be certain that the place was predominantly inhabited by Gentiles and the demon-possessed man was almost certainly not Jewish. The inclusion of the herd of pigs—animals considered "unclean" by Jewish law—supports the predominance of Gentiles.
- In context, in the previous chapter, Mark showed that Jesus had power over nature to calm a storm. In this passage, Jesus demonstrates power over evil spirits and the kingdom of Satan. In the following passage, Jesus exercise power over sickness and death.
- The "Messianic Secret" in Mark's Gospel. Throughout Mark's gospel, he records numerous times when Jesus performed miracles and told the one who received the miracle to "tell no one." Scholars refer to these instances as "the Messianic Secret." Knowing about the Messianic Secret makes what we find in Mark 5:19–20 especially noteworthy.

- The Decapolis: “A term meaning “ten cities” that designates a group of Hellenistic cities predominately located on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River. The region of the Decapolis corresponds roughly with the Old Testament region of Gilead and includes what is today northwest Jordan and southern Syria.”¹

Group Gathering

Group Check-in — Care, Celebration, Encouragement (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. Informal conversation to allow individuals to catch up with one another.
2. Ask everyone how it went as they tried to obey what they sensed God saying to them through last weeks’ time together.

Allow the Word Speak — Be Hearers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

READ Mark 5:1–20

1. In these 20 verses, Mark repeatedly describes requests being made of Jesus. He uses a single Greek word translated “beg” or “implore” four times. Find the 5 uses of “beg” or “Implore” in Mark 5:1–20. Make a note of who is begging whom to do what?
2. Jesus ultimately cast the demons out of the man and into the pigs. But what do the instances of the demons imploring Jesus communicate to readers? Can you think of an Old Testament passage where we read of evil being making requests of God?
3. Considering the Messianic Secret in which Mark records Jesus often telling people not to tell others about a miracle He had performed, why do think Jesus tells the man whom He set free from demons to go and report what great things the LORD had done for him (Mark 5:19).
4. Spirit-indwelt born-again Christians have a special protection against evil spirits. Read 1 John 4:4. What does this promise communicate about your confrontations with evil?

Put the Word into Practice — Be Doers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. On which of the three paths mentioned in the sermon do you find yourself — the path to destruction ... the path of Jesus ... the path of the healed? What is one step you can take toward the path of obedience?
2. Do you find yourself denying a problem in your life that deep down you suspect is harming you and possibly others? Perhaps others have suggested that you have this problem, but you have not admitted it?
3. Jesus sent the once-demon-possessed man to tell others what Jesus had done for him. What has Jesus done for you that you need to tell others about? ... Whom can you tell in the coming week?

The Big Question: What do you sense God's Spirit saying to you and what concrete action will you take in response? Share your answer with the group.

Further Resources

- Illustrations and quotes from the sermon can be found on the “Sermon Slides” link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org
- Info on the Conquer Series group for men wanting to be freed from pornography. <https://wcchapel.org/grow/adult-ministry/>

¹ David M. May, “Decapolis,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).