

Encountering Jesus: The Demoniac

Pastor Mark Colwell

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Text: Mark 5:1-20

NOTES:

A. Introduction:

1. Pastor Mark told of his insecure youth—a time of fear and darkness where the best he could do was negotiate with the darkness—and the incident at a retreat where he heard God say: “I want you to serve Me.”
2. Though he resisted the thought (in his context then it meant becoming a priest), it let a little light into his dark world. **Pastor Mark:** “*That experience brought the beginning of reimagining who I was meant to be. God makes us for more than negotiating with the darkness.*”

B. Jesus comes to the tomb-dweller – Mark 5:1-20

1. **Jesus made the boat trip to the Gentile Decapolis region for this one man** (and everyone who would interact with him). He didn't stay in the region - Mark 5:20.
2. To the disciples, the tomb-dweller was a **scary** sight - Mark 5:1-5.
3. **The man lived in the tombs** and reacted to Jesus from the comfort of that place.
 - a. Jesus interrupted the tomb-dweller's comfort with death by bringing light.
 - b. We all struggle with our sin nature but we must continue to work against darkness, not negotiate with it.
 - c. **Pastor Mark:** “*What crypt do you crawl into—are you bitter, self-absorbed, insisting on being served versus serving? There's a cure for it in the truth of God's word. The people around you—your kids, grandkids, friends—are interested in your transformation. Just let Jesus do what He wants to do.*”
4. His life was **full of confusion**—a legion of demonic voices.
 - a. **Pastor Mark:** “*There were so many competing voices in his life, he was a conference centre for hell. Then into his life walks the Saviour of the world.*”
 - b. **The tomb-dweller asked Jesus: “What do you want of me?”** We ask that too. **Jesus' answer: “Imagine your life as it's meant to be: give with generosity, stop negotiating with the culture, stop being fed by the lies that have sustained you.”**
5. Total **transformation:**
 - a. The tomb-dweller's transformation was total. He put on clothes, was filled with peace and calmness – Mark 5:15.
 - b. The world tells us to celebrate the labels of our brokenness. But we don't want to live there and don't have to because Jesus can shine light into our darkness.
6. The **townspeople beg Jesus to leave:**
 - a. They are frightened by what they see – pigs floating in the sea (MC: “bacon soup”) and the crazy man clothed. **Pastor Mark:** “*The light of Jesus is so staggering they ask Him to leave.*”
 - b. We can become tired of becoming all God wants us to become; it's hard work. Then we're tempted to negotiate: “Jesus, what do you want with me anyway? Leave me alone.”
 - c. We settle for a dim light because we don't want to reimagine our lives—we love our lives the way they are. **Pastor Mark:** “*The great curse of the Canadian church is that we're comfortable with dim light.*”
7. **Jesus refuses the man's request** to join Him as a disciple.
 - a. **But gives him another assignment:** to spread the news of what had happened to him in the Decapolis. **Pastor Mark:** “*The first evangelist wasn't even a Jew but a Gentile.*”
 - b. **Pastor Mark:** “*When we come to Jesus, it's not about us but about everybody else.*”

C. Jesus on our shore:

Pastor Mark: “*Are you negotiating with darkness, finding comfort and survival there? You can't imagine a better way forward? Jesus is on the shore of your sea right now. He's asking you to surrender and you don't make deals when you surrender.*”

DISCUSSION:

1. Pastor Mark talked of feeling bound by insecurity, fear, and living in a dark place. Have you ever lived there? Share your stories. Does this tomb-dweller resemble anyone you know or have met? What does this story teach us about such people?
2. What does the man's choice of a home say about him? How would you describe his state of mind? Why does Jesus threaten his status quo (Mark 5:7)? When might we feel similarly threatened by Jesus and the light He brings?
3. What do you think Pastor Mark meant when he talked of “reimagining your life”? What may Jesus' light shining into our hearts be asking us to do? What would you say are the characteristics of a dim light person or organization?
4. What did the transformed man want to do? What assignment did Jesus give him? Discuss: “When we come to Jesus, it's not about us but about everybody else.” What do you think your assignment is?

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, thank You that no person or situation is beyond Your transforming power. Help us to expose our lives to Your truth as we reimagine them in the light of Your word. May our lights, as individuals and a church, not be dimmed by negotiating with darkness but shine brightly as we surrender ourselves totally to You. Amen.