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Hold on, there I am. I've been singing real loud. Back of the back, I think in this position on the microphone. Did it sound pretty good? Oh, great, great, great.

Then, then no complaints. Kamau gets to keep his job. Alice the sound guy then. Look at that. Well, good morning.

We are glad you are here this morning. We are in a series, you might have noticed from the bumper there, called Lakes and Mountains. And we're just going through the life of Christ. This past week, some of the boys and I went up to see the movie F1 about F1 race. Anyone?

Anyone have seen the movie yet? It's really good. It's good. It's an enjoyable movie. But at one point in time I had to, I had to get out because I had to make a phone call, check on someone else.

And you come back in and you're like, okay. I know this movie is just basically one racetrack after another, but I still feel like I've lost some part of the storyline. And what I was looking for, maybe you do this at home too, is the remote where you can push pause and then push the rewind button. And anyone do that where you, you get distracted and then you're like, wow, what's going on? What's going on?

So this is, this is the position I was in. The movies do not offer that option, the rewind option. You don't get that. But today we do have that option. So I'm going to ask us to, to virtually pick up our remote and we're going to push rewind and we're going to go back about three weeks to the point where Jesus has just finished up the Sermon on the Mount?

Do I need to do a recap? Are we all sort of in the place where we can sort of remember that if you weren't here, sorry, you should have been. But for those of you who were here, do you know where that day where the Sermon of the Mount's finished up? It's, it's after church and Jesus is trying to get to the boat. He's told the people, we're gonna, we need to get the boats ready.

Told his disciples, he gets the boat ready. But then he's got, he has to heal the centurion servant. He has to. He stops and sees Peter's mother in law and he heals her. There's all kinds of demon possessed other kinds of people with ailments.

He has his conversations the whole time. He's just trying to get to the boat. Matthew 8:18 says the reason that he's Trying to get there is because he's given orders, meaning that he has a plan, he has something he needs to do. It's not just to suggest like boys, okay, here's the plan. You need to go ahead, get things ready because we're crossing to the other side of the lake.

Now along on that journey again, we're still, now we're fast forwarding on our little remote along the journey he has this horrible storm blows up. You know the one where the disciples feel like they're going to die and they don't want to wake Jesus up because he's exhausted, taking his Sunday afternoon nap. They don't want to wake him up. But in the meantime, the hurricane forces are blowing. Jesus calms the storm and they land then on the other side and this is where Mark picks up the story.

Now we're all up to date. We know what happened, we know where we're at in the story. We are now on the other side of the lake getting out of the boat. Mark five verses. One verse five says, they went across the lake to the region of the Jerusalem.

Now just pause right there. They went across the lake to the region of the Gerazims. What is this region? If you visit Israel, some of you have, if you're on the Lake of Galilee, you can look across and there's a mountain range, a high heel range there. Today we know this as the Golan Heights and it's in the news quite a bit.

But back in the day it was known as the region and the area of the Jerusalem, also known as the Decapolis. Now Deca in, Latin Latin means 10, Paulus means city. So Decapolis is 10 cities, give or take 10. There was a few more people say might have been there, but this is an interesting area. So here's a little geography on this.

On the other side of the lake is, is Jewish culture. You got the synagogues, you got the temple, you got all the Jewish people on this side of the lake. The area of the Jerusalem, it's all Greek culture, Greek architecture, Greek temples. They sacrifice to Greek gods. They have all kinds of Greek entertainment there, which usually involves some sexually explicit stuff.

They're making sacrifices to Greek gods. And so for the basic Jewish person, that area is sort of a no go zone. In fact, when Jesus tells the story of the prodigal son, the prodigal son leaves to seek like pleasure and entertainment with all his wealth. The average listener to this parable Jesus tells is probably picturing this region right here, the Decapolis area. So why did they go to that region?

Why does Jesus say, I, I'm commanding you to get the boats ready. We're going to go to the other side. We're going to cross over to sort of the no go land. And, and I'm sure the disciples like, we'll do it. But if this gets back to my mom, it's on you, because she told me never to step foot on that side side.

But they do now. Why? Because there's a man on the other side of the lake that will have an incredible impact on the ministry of Jesus. And Jesus needs to meet with him. So here's.

Here's where we're at now. We're at verse two of Mark, chapter five. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, for they had tried that. He had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart, he broke the irons on his feet.

No one was strong enough to subdue him. And night and day among the tombs and in the hills, he would cry out and he would cut himself stones.

You and I probably know someone who is trapped in some sort of addiction, mental illness. Now, let's make no mistake. These things have demonic ties to them. I'm not saying everyone that's suffering from drug addiction is demon possessed, but there is some demonic activity that goes along with that. Can we can.

Is that too radical to say? So? Let's just get that clear.

It is a terrible thing. Either you've experienced yourself, and if you have, thank God that you're here, or which is just as bad, is to watch this play out in the life of someone that you love. And if you've been in this position where someone you love is. Is caught up in this, you know how this goes. You plead, you try to reason with them, you try to protect them, you try to shelter them, you try to keep them from the people that you don't think would be good for them.

You do everything you can. Maybe you try to get them into treatment, or maybe you try to get them into rehab. And if that works, praise God. But. But sometimes it doesn't.

And then they're just out there. And, and at this, at some point, maybe some of you have been there, you're praying. You're praying that they get arrested, you're praying they get put in jail, you're praying they get incarcerated, because at least you know where they are. And there's the slightest chance that there, there's a better chance that they're safer there than they would be out on the streets. And it sounds like this guy had run through the people who care about him.

They had tried to help him. Now we think about those chains, but, but, but, but I, I know how that goes. We're like, if we could just tie you someplace and keep you from doing harm to others and mostly harm to yourself, we'll do it. But it was all useless. Nothing seemed to help this man.

And so little by little, all the connections, all the family connections, all the friend connections he had, those who were helping him, they sort of like threw up their hands and, and their shoulders. We don't know what else to do. And, and we can't have him coming over

to the house with the kids. We, we can't. Sorry, buddy, we can't do this.

And even this guy, knowing the challenges and the demons that he's wrestling with, it sounds like he too just moved away so that he. He wouldn't. He wouldn't be a problem.

So all those connections drifted away, distanced themselves. Quit helping. Because at some point in time, it starts to feel pretty hopeless, doesn't it? Heather Flynn, who runs the men's warming shelter, I got a chance to talk to her this week, and she was talking about one of the gentlemen there several years back whose mother had died many, many years ago, and she was buried in a cemetery down in Louisville. And he had come and was receiving some great help and hope and change in his life.

And, and he wanted to go visit his mother's grave site. And so she drove him down to Louisville. And when they got there, he took her to what really was like a mausoleum, sort of. You've seen those where. It's.

Where it's sort of a sheltered, quasi, little temple thing. And, and she was buried in that sort of family area and, and it's got a little roof over it, got some walls partially on it. And he told her that for three years that's where he had lived. He had got his backpack, and he said, I sat here, I drank, I slept right here. I did drugs right here.

This was where I lived for three years. And he said that of all the Bible stories he knew, this is the one that he felt the most connected to because he said, only that man knows my kind of loneliness, man. So this guy. Let's go back to the scriptures. This guy, when he sees Jesus, verse 6 says this.

When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and Fell on his knees in front of him, and he shouted at the top of his voice, what do you want with me, Jesus, son of the most high God. And in God's name, don't torture me. For Jesus had said, come out of this man, you impure spirit. And Jesus asked him, what is your name? He says, my name is Legion, for we are many.

And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. Now can we leave? Can we go back to the other slide and let's just pop that up because we're going to unpack some of this stuff. There's a lot in this scripture right here. There is a lot.

We're not going to gloss over any, but we're going to unpack some of this stuff. Because when you read this, you see this very interesting mix of the demonic and the desperate, the demon's voice and the voice of desperation. Here, here in this, there's just this blend of. So you think about the demons. In his mind, they recognize Jesus.

His cognition, empowered by this demon or these demons, recognizes Jesus and calls Jesus by name. They call him by his true identity, son of the living God. But. But notice this. Rather than being repelled and being forced back by this, his body, physical body, in desperation, runs toward Jesus.

And can you just picture that where there's resistance in his body, but yet a force that's pulling him forward. And how horribly awkward and related is the only word I can think of this running towards Jesus is. And it pulls him to Jesus, and he falls at Jesus feet. Feet. You see, his mind may be controlled by the demons, but his body is desperate for whatever Jesus can offer.

And Jesus says, come out of this man. And the response is this from the demon, what do you want with me? But the desperation, the desperate voice says, for the sake of God's name, do not torture me. Now, this is interesting, and we'll get to this in just a moment. Jesus says, what's your name?

Name yourself. Is this a drug issue? Is this an alcohol issue? Is this a physical abuse issue? Is this a sexual abuse issue?

Where and what? How did the demon get possession of this part of your mind? Where did this start? And the demon responds, and this is again a mixture of the demonic, the desperate in this man. The demonic says, my name is.

Our name is Legion, for we are many. Legion is a Roman term. It's a military term. A Legion is 3,000 to 6,000 soldiers. Now, keep that in mind.

3,000 to 6,000 Soldiers. And when he says that, he says, listen, we're too big to mess with. Don't be messing with us. You know how bullies get the desperate. This man says, please do not send them away.

Why in the world would the man say that? Maybe it's because someone has tried to do this before and it just made it worse. Now there's a scripture from the Gospel of Matthew, Matthew chapter 12, where Jesus gives some instruction on this. Let me read this to you. So Matthew chapter 12 says this.

This is Jesus. He goes, when the evil spirit goes out of a man, it wanders through waterless places. Waterless places. You don't have to write that down, but remember that. Looking for rest and never finding it.

And then that evil spirit says, I will go back to my house from which I came. And when it arrives, it finds it unoccupied, but clean and all in order. And then what does it do? Jesus says it goes and collects

seven other spirits, more evil than itself to keep it company. And they all go in and make themselves at home.

And the last state of that man is worse than the first. And so this guy kneeling in front of Jesus says, please don't make this worse. Don't make it worse. Whatever you do, don't make it worse. The demons are coming to their senses too.

And they say, listen, we know you have the power to do whatever you want to do, but don't send us out. And they, depending on the translation of your Bible, the translation you may have, don't send us out of the area, which is the translation we used. Other translations say into the abyss. Other translations say into the wasteland. And Jesus called, if you remember, in Matthew chapter eight, he says, he called it a waterless, waterless place.

Matthew chapter 12 called it a waterless place. Regardless, abyss, wasteland, waterless place. It's a place that demons do not want to be. Instead, the demons look around and say, cast us into those pigs, that herd of pigs over there. And so Jesus does.

There's a sort of. We don't know how he does it. We don't know if he says any special words, but the demons are removed from this man and cast into the pigs. And it would be funny, except that the pigs throw themselves down the hill and over a cliff and into the lake and they are drowned. Now, if that were a cinematic moment, again, this could be hilariously funny.

Yeah, I don't know. It just depends on what your sense of humor is. When people fall, I laugh. So just be aware of that. And in this moment, I think there's some humor here.

But here's here's what's interesting. The number of evil spirits embedded and enfolded into this man that were inhabiting and controlling this poor man were enough to possess and drive to their death. Mark says, 2000 pigs. Now, I don't know where your compassion lies. I don't know if you have any compassion for this man in our Bible story.

But the people in your lives that are going through trauma, physical, mental, spiritual people in your lives that are dealing with addiction and abuse, these are not weak people. They're not weak people. They are just being controlled by something a thousand times stronger than they are.

This man said, they're legion. There are armies inside this guy's head that are pulling him in every different direction. And the fact that this guy is even able to function at all, even if it means removing himself from everyone that he loves in order to avoid hurting them more, is a testament, I believe, to the preserving presence of God in

this man's life. Do you know what I'm saying here?

Jesus knows this man. Jesus has never abandoned this man. Even in the tombs, he has not forgotten him. He's not abandoned him. And so that's why way back at the end of his sermon, he says, boys, get the boat ready because we need to go to the other side.

I need to talk with this guy. I got a plan for him.

The place where Jesus took those disciples is not the place that they felt super comfortable. It's not the place their mama or daddy would have said, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, here's what I want you to do. These are the people I want you to go minister to. These are the people that I want you to bring into your circle. These are the people that those parents would have said, I need you to stay away from them.

You do not go to their house. You do not hang out with them after school. These are not our kind of people. But Jesus says, I need you to get in the boat, and I need you to go over there to them, even if you got to fight through a storm to get there. Do not forget these people.

Jesus can heal them. We seem to read here, but we've got to show up for them. Now, we got a little blank here where the scene sort of skips and our attention is taken over to these guys, these little sheep, pig herders who are watching the whole thing. And they run into the villages and into the towns and tell everyone what's going on and let the farmers know, hey, your pigs are gone, by the way. And a whole crowd of people return to this Scene.

And when we return now to the scene with them, what we see is this guy dressed and in his right mind, and he's sitting there talking to Jesus. Now, what would your response be? This terrifies these people, terrifies them. And they're like, you got to get out. You need to leave.

Just go away. Go away. Get out of here. And I don't know, I don't know why I, I, I know that there have been times when the power of God is, has sort of freaked me out too, when I've seen God move. And I'm like, I, this is not a controllable moment here.

I don't know what to do in this. It's a little unnerving. And maybe that's what's going here. But regardless, they send Jesus away. You got to leave.

And so Jesus says, okay, we'll do that, because I'm gonna leave one of my followers, one of my disciples here to continue the ministry that has been started today in the tombs. I'm going to leave someone here to do it. Now, who is it going to be? It could be Matthew. Matthew tells us this story.

Could be Mark. That's the, that's the writer we're reading here. Maybe it's Peter, because Peter, Peter's not afraid of anybody or anything. He can take on these guys. No.

Who is it that he leaves behind? Well, let's keep reading. In Mark, chapter 5, verse 18, as Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. What would you do? Say, yeah, come on, be part of us.

Do it. Get in the boat. We'll teach you how to. We'll teach you a new career. You can fish for fish and you can fish for men.

Man, this is great. We're going to be 13 disciples instead of 12. And Jesus says, no, no, no, no. He says, I want you to go home. I want you to go home to your own people, and I want you to tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you.

If you have a Bible in front of you and you can underline something in that passage, can you underline, go home. Go home. Jesus says, go back to the people who have been worried sick about you. Tell your new story to those who tried everything they knew to help you, who only know your old story. Go back there, but also go back to the place that abandoned you and pushed you out.

Share your story, your new story, with the very people who might have been responsible for messing up your old story.

I don't know. There's just a lot of grace in this moment, isn't there? There's a lot of potential redemption that's hanging by a thread on this man's response. Will he do it or will he say no? He said, no, I can't.

I can't. I need to stay with you, Jesus. That's the only way I'm going to stay clean. That's the only way I'm going to stay in my right mind. I got to stay really, really close to you.

I got to stay right here. Jesus says, I am with you always. Go home.

And then there's so much forgiveness embedded in this challenge. But Mark 5, verse 20 says, he did it. He said, okay, I'm going to do it. The man went away and he began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

So he goes back and he knocks on the door of the. The people that slammed it on him last time. He goes back to the friends who messed up his life in the first place. And he goes back and says, look what the Lord has done. Look what the Lord has done.

He healed my body. He touched my mind. He saved me just in time. I'll

let you guys finish that song in your head, but I'm gonna. And I've gotta praise his name.

And the people respond. So much so that two chapters later, in Mark, chapter seven, Jesus gets in the boat and goes back over. And what he finds there is a completely different response than the one he got in the first place. When he gets there, he find crowds of people who know his name and who knows what he can do. And they say, jesus, we need you.

And we've got people who need you. Please. All because of the power and the testimony of this man who once was lost, but now is found. The commission that Jesus gave the disciples is to go into all the world. Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth, onward and outward.

But sometimes when Jesus says, go into all the world, it. It means you. You need to go back to your own world.

But this time, go back different. This time go back with me. Testifying to the mercy of God. The beautiful.

The beautiful part of the story that Heather told me is this, that. That. That man who lived there at his mother's grave, in that tomb for three years, he's doing good. He's doing great. And you know where he is right now?

In Cincinnati, living with his family. He's back with the people who love him. And can support him and come alongside of him and care for him. And I love that. I love this story.

I love this story. I love the fact that Jesus went through a storm to get to this guy. I love that. I love that he entrusted this ministry opportunity to him where it would be the most impactful. He didn't say, oh, here's where I want to take you.

A sinner saved by grace, a former demon possessed guy. What I really, what I'm going to send you is to, I don't know, Jerusalem, where you get to hang out with super religious Pharisees. No. He says, no, no. Here's where your story is going to have the most impact.

It's going to be with the people who know you best and they're going to see the change in you and it's going to transform their lives too. I love that fact that he entrusted that ministry responsibility to him. But I tell you, the part that Drew just, just breaks my heart wide open is this, is this fact that Jesus sends him back to his people and he sends him to a home. Home where you belong somewhere and you belong to someone and when you have a home, it is life changing. I don't, I don't know what your picture of God is.

We all come from different places and we all have this idea of God and what he's about. But I love David's description of God in Psalm 68. Here's what David writes. He goes, this is the Lord. I don't know what your experience of God is, but David says, this is the Lord.

He is. Let's read it together. A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows is God in his holy dwelling. This is God at his essence, where he is in his element. This is who God is.

And he sets the lonely in families and he leads out the prisoners with singing.

I'm going to ask those who are going to help with communion to just go back to the back and start getting ready. And I'm going to invite Mark Thomas, who led us in some worship this morning, to come back to the platform. There's a ministry as Mark's coming forward. There's a ministry that we support here and there that Mark's part of called Kairos. And Kairos is a ministry to men who incarcerated in high security prisons.

They are in some of Indiana's most locked down places. The men who have been placed there have, have experienced and done themselves some pretty rough stuff. Their story is one of addiction. Their story is one of abuse. And I tell you, 99.9% of those men have stories of abandonment, as you can imagine.

But Christian men from all over the state of Indiana and in the Tri State area, I'm assuming, show up for these weekends. You've done that? Oh, yeah. Been doing this quite a while. Kairos is actually international.

It's in all 14 prisons in Indiana. There's Kairos inside, Kairos outside for the ladies that are serving their own sentence while the man in their life is inside. And there's kairos torch. There's two prisons that have youth. So we go in there.

13 countries and 37 states in the United States. So it's over. Over 600 prisons total. You hear some amazing transformation stories there. Yeah, yeah.

You. He warned me when he was going to do this. He's like one. You get to tell one story and. But the story that you told me was like the perfect story.

I said, that's the one. That's the first one you told me and that is the one. Tell me this story. It's been a couple of years ago. Kairos goes in weekly for Bible study.

They go in monthly for reunions. But twice a year, there's an whole weekend. It's a. It's an evangelistic weekend that's similar to Emmaus

or Great Banquet, if you're familiar with those. And on Friday night and Saturday night, they have something they call open mic.

And as you can imagine on the inside, some of these guys, hey, it's open mic in a prison. You're going to hear some stuff. Anyway, Friday night, one gentleman gave his heart to cross Christ. And he didn't say very much. But Saturday night, the same guy, he walks up.

I get emotional telling the story. It's one of my favorite. He. He walks up to the mic and he's holding and he's looking. You can tell he's never even stood in front of people and talked before.

And the first thing out of his mouth was, I'm said his name. I'm 55. I've never had a plan in my life. But last night I gave my heart to Christ and I prayed my first Christian prayer.

And I know it doesn't happen like this all the time, but in 15 minutes, one of the guards came and got me and said, hey, you've got a call. And the warden's going to allow it. Well, the prayer that he prayed, he said, I prayed. I don't know where my brother is. I haven't seen him in seven years.

I don't even know if he's alive. But God, wherever my brother is, help me to find him. I want him back in my life. I want him to know that I. I love him.

He picks up the phone and it's his brother who was in a prison in Texas. Said, man, I've been looking for you for a long time. You're my brother and I want you in my life.

God knew he was going to save that man. God knew his need and he met it before he ever prayed the prayer to save his life. And he said, now I got a plan when I get out of here. Going home to my brother, I'm gonna see him.

I could tell you dozens of stories like that. That one just breaks me every time. Thanks, Mark. You too. I'm a big bully.

I made the preacher cry. Listen, if you guys have further questions about Kairos ministry, I'm telling you, you don't have to have a messy story to go in and serve and pray for these guys. And if you want to get involved, you want to support in any way, Mark's your guy to do that. Now you know what I look like? Yeah.

I'm the guy that's wearing all the prison stuff. Yeah, yeah, you, you look rough. We'll find you, we'll track you down anywhere I was going, but Romans chapter one says this the gospel. The good news of Jesus is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. That psalm we read earlier, Psalm 68, where God sets the only in families and he leads the prisoners out with singing.

When God releases people from captivity, he sends them out with a song. And these songs can be messy as you can imagine, but they're freedom songs, they're good news songs, they're gospel songs. And in the case of this young man in the hills and the tombs, that song changes lives. Today as we take the bread and the cup, these are gospel reminders that God loved us so much that he did not leave us living scarred and broken lives in the shadow of death, living in the tombs. But he delivered us by taking his sin, by taking our sin onto himself.

He died on a cross and he entered his own tomb. But he didn't stay in the tomb. Instead he left the tomb victorious. He broke the power of sin and hell and grave that kept us bound up and gave us victory. It was a hard fought victory, it was a hard won victory.

It required his life, but it brought us out of our prison and into his freedom. And so today as we take communion together, there's three things I want you to respond to. One, take the bread. Take the cup. Give thanks for the freedom that Jesus has brought into your life.

That's number one. This is the point of our time together. But secondly, if you need prayer, we've got people at the back right now in that little. That little sofa and chair area. If you need prayer for anything, anything, anything, think of the thing that you don't want to pray with someone about.

They will pray with you about that. They will pray with you, anything. And they want to pray with you. So take advantage of that opportunity. And secondly, if you need a place to come home to, I tell you, we are not a perfect family here.

We are just as dysfunctional as any other family here in the county. But we do our best and we will love you and we will wrap our hands around you, and we'll get you connected as you want to be connected. So if you're looking for a place to come home to, Bedford, Sherwood Oaks could be that place for you. Jesus did today. Wherever these people are, wherever we are, in our own hearts and minds, we ask that you just meet us here as we take the bread and the cup and remember your love for us.

Amen. Mark, I'm going to ask you to do something a little bit different for communion. Normally, we have just a meditative moment, but I want you to hear this song. And so this song this morning, is our communion. Listen.

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