

Simeon took him in his arms and blessed God, saying,

"Now, according to your word, Sovereign Lord, permit your servant to depart in peace.

For my eyes have seen your salvation

that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples:

a light,

for revelation to the Gentiles,

and for glory to your people Israel." (Luke 2:28-32)

Readings: Mark 5:1-20; Mark 1; Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39; Mark 5:1-20; Isaiah 8, 9; Matthew 4:15–16; John 1, 2, 3, 8

Q: Read the cross reference passages. What do these passages reveal about Jesus and why do you think God had the writers record this story in the gospels? Ask God how He wants you to respond to these scriptures as you read them.

1 So they came to the other side of the lake, to the region of the Gerasenes¹.

2 Just as Jesus was getting out of the boat,

a man with an unclean spirit came from the tombs

and met him.

3 He lived among the tombs,

¹ Some manuscripts of Mark 5:1 and Luke 8:26 read "Gerasenes" (*Γερασηνῶν*) while Matthew 8:28 uses "Gadarenes" (*Γαδαρηνῶν*); a third form, "Gergesenes" (*Γεργεσηνῶν*), appears in other witnesses. Most scholars judge the most plausible original location to be a small lakeshore site often identified with el-Kursi (ancient Gergesa) on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee (geographically the best fit for the pigs rushing into the water). The mountains here are likely in the range of the Golan Heights that run along the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. They reach 2,500 feet (760 meters) in height and have a role in directing the winds that caused the storm recorded in Mark 4:35–41. Later copyists sometimes replaced that local name with the better-known cities Gadara or Gerasa. In other words, scribes likely substituted the better-known city names Gerasa or Gadara for a local name. These variant place-names do not affect the point the writer's of the gospels are trying to make. That is, Jesus has crossed into Gentile territory opposite Galilee and demonstrates authority over demons (Sources: NET Bible. (n.d.). *What does Mark 5:5 mean?* BibleRef.com: <https://www.bibleref.com/Mark/5/Mark-5-5.html>)

and **no one** could bind him **anymore**,
not even with a chain.

It appears that someone (perhaps family members?) were caring for him and trying to keep him from harming others, but at some point they could no longer bind him.

4 For his hands and feet had **often** been bound with chains and shackles,
but he had torn the chains apart and broken the shackles in pieces.
No one was strong enough to subdue him.

5 **Each night**

and every day among the tombs

and in the mountains,

he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

Notes:

The demons appear to be trying to get the man to (1) be disruptive (possibly bring harm to others), and (2) to bring much harm himself.

Q: What would be the motivation for demons to do this?

Why did they single this man out and not attempt to demonize others?

The study notes found in BibleRef² are helpful in thinking about this question:

The way the man lives isn't even human. "Crying out" is from the Greek root word *krazo* and means to croak like a raven. The Greek root word for "cutting" is *katakopto* and means to beat, bruise, gash, and mangle.

Whether in the ancient practice of mediums, or modern books about gothic romance, demons are often portrayed as useful or even sympathetic and redeemable. Nothing could be further from the truth. Self-harm was well established as a rite in the worship of demons (1 Kings 18:28). And demons have no problem harming those they control (Mark 9:14–29). They are neither tamable nor benevolent. They wish to destroy us physically and spiritually.

It's not clear that the demoniac cut himself in worship of the demons. It's more likely he used the pain in an attempt to relieve the psychological agony he felt, similar to those who self-harm today. Those who self-harm often do so because they are lonely, misunderstood, can't express their feelings, or feel over-

² BibleRef. (n.d.). *What does Mark 5:6 mean?* In BibleRef.com. Retrieved December 5, 2025, from <https://www.bibleref.com/Mark/5/Mark-5-6.html>

stimulated. Or because they feel empty and numb emotionally and wish to feel something strong. The demoniac could certainly have experienced any of these things.

As the people of the nearby village found out, the impulse to self-harm can't be healed by shackles and chains (Mark 5:4). Only Jesus can heal the broken pieces of our hearts and free us from evil.

6 When he saw Jesus from a distance,

he ran and bowed down before him.

7 Then he cried out with a loud voice,

“Leave me alone, Jesus, Son of the Most High God!

I implore you by God – do not torment me!”

8 (For Jesus had said to him, “Come out of that man, you unclean spirit!”)

Q: *Why do you think the demon possessed man ran to Jesus in view that he (the demon) wanted Jesus to leave him alone? Hmm...What were the demons desiring?*

Q: *What does the request of the demon's in vs 7 ('I implore you by God – do not torment me!') reveal about who Jesus is? (See Revelation 5)*

Q: How are we to respond to this story (See: Ephesians 6:12)?

9 Jesus asked him,

“What is your name?³”

And he said, “My name is Legion⁴, for we are many.”

10 He begged Jesus repeatedly not to send them out of the region.

11 There on the hillside, a great herd of pigs was feeding.

12 And the demonic spirits begged him,

³ See: Jude 1:19: “But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you.’”

⁴ “The name Legion means “thousands,” a word taken from a Latin term for a large group of soldiers. The term not only suggests a multiple possession, but also adds a military feel to the account. This is a true battle. A Roman legion consisted of approximately six thousand foot soldiers.” (Source: <https://app.biblearc.com/>; NET2 Bible Translation Note)

"Send us into the pigs. Let us enter them."

Q: How are Christians to approach people who may be demonized⁵?

13 Jesus gave them permission.

So the unclean spirits came out and went into the pigs.

Then the herd rushed down the steep slope into the lake,
and about two thousand were drowned in the lake.

Q: Many commentators/scholars have discussed why Jesus gave permission to the demons to enter the pigs. What may have been Jesus's purpose in allowing this to take place?

14 Now the herdsmen ran off and spread the news in the town and countryside,

and the people went out to see what had happened.

15 They came to Jesus

and saw the demon-possessed man sitting there,

clothed and in his right mind – the one who had the "Legion"

– and they were afraid⁶.

16 Those who had seen what had happened to the demon-possessed man reported it,

and they also told about the pigs.

17 Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their region⁷.

Q: Why do you think the people responded to Jesus this way (vs 17)? Is this surprising?

18 As he was getting into the boat

the man who had been demon-possessed asked if he could go with him.

⁵ See: Matthew 10; Mark 9:29; Acts 19:13–16; 1 Corinthians 10:20–21; Ephesians 6:10–18; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8–9; Jude 1

⁶ Note that the disciples responded in the same manner when Jesus stilled the storm in chapter 4. vs 41: "They were overwhelmed by fear and said to one another, 'Who then is this? Even the wind and sea obey him!'"

⁷ See: Mark 7:31–37; The people appear to change their minds. Perhaps do to hearing the testimony of man that had been possessed.

19 **But** Jesus did not permit him to do so.

Instead, he said to him,

“**Go** to your home and to your people

and tell them what the Lord has done for you,

that he had mercy on you.” (cf. Matthew 28:17-20)

20 **So** he went away

and began to proclaim in the Decapolis⁸ what Jesus had done for him,

and **all were amazed**.

Questions/Activities

1. Compare and contrast the response of the man who was healed with the people that asked him to leave.
2. How does our Christian cultural view of the supernatural shape the way we think about God and miracles? Give one example from social media, work, or your personal life.
3. Do you believe God still performs miracles today? Why or why not? Which experiences, teachings, or doubts most shape that belief?”

⁸ The Decapolis was a loose league of Hellenistic-style cities east and southeast of the Sea of Galilee. These were predominantly Gentile, Greek-speaking urban centers such as Gadara, Hippos, and Gerasa. As noted earlier (see footnote 1) manuscript traditions vary between “Gerasenes,” “Gadarenes,” and “Gergesenes,” but the episode’s geography and details (the swine, the Gentile reaction, and the man’s subsequent proclamation “throughout the Decapolis”) in Mark 5:1-20 points to Gentile, Hellenistic setting; the story highlights Jesus’ authority over demonic forces beyond Israel and introduces a theme of mission to the nations—despite local fear and resistance, the healed man becomes an evangelist to the Decapolis!

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6. Israel Antiquities Authority. (n.d.). Kursi (Gergesa) — archaeological site information. Retrieved from <https://www.antiquities.org.il> (see site entry for Kursi / Gergesa).

4. *How does your belief or disbelief in these areas inform your prayer life and how you trust God? Would God have you change how you apply your understanding in these areas of your life? How and in what ways? Does what you do in life and practice match what you think you believe?*
5. *Summarize the main idea of the passage.*
6. *Create two or more application questions from this passage and ask God how you may apply them within the next several weeks.*

21 When Jesus had
crossed again
in a boat

to the other side,

a large crowd gathered around him,

and he was by the sea.

22 Then one of the synagogue leaders,

named Jairus, came up,

and when he saw Jesus,

he fell at his feet.

23 He asked him urgently,

"My little daughter is near death. Come and lay your hands on her so that she may be healed and live."

24 Jesus went with him,

and *a large crowd followed*

and *pressed around him.*

25 Now a woman was there who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years.

26 She had endured a great deal under the care of many doctors

and had spent all that she had.

Yet instead of getting better,

she grew worse.

27 When she heard about Jesus,

she came up behind him in the crowd

and touched his cloak,
 28 for *she kept saying,*
 “*If only* I touch his clothes,
I will be healed.”
 29 *At once the bleeding stopped,*
and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

30 Jesus knew *at once* that power had gone out from him.

He turned around in the crowd and said,

“Who touched my clothes?”

31 His disciples said to him,

“You see the crowd pressing against you and you say, ‘Who touched me?’”

32 *But* he looked around to see who had done it.

33 Then the woman,

with fear and trembling,
 knowing what had happened to her,
 came
 and *fell down before him*
 and told him the whole truth.

34 He said to her,

“*Daughter, your faith has made you well.*
Go in peace,
and be healed of your disease.”

35 While he was still speaking,

people came from the synagogue leader's house saying,

"Your daughter has died." Why trouble the teacher any longer?"

O: People's reaction vs Jesus'

36 But Jesus, paying no attention to what was said,

told the synagogue leader,

("Do not be afraid;

just believe."

37 He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James.

38 They came to the house of the synagogue leader

where he saw noisy confusion

and people weeping

and wailing loudly.

39 When he entered he said to them,

"Why are you distressed and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep!"

40 And they began making fun of him.

But he forced them all outside,

and he took the child's father and mother and his own companions and went into the room where the child was.

41 Then, gently taking the child by the hand, he said to her,

"Talitha koum,"

which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up."

42 The girl got up at once and began to walk around (she was twelve years old).

They were completely astonished at this.

43 He **strictly** ordered

that **no one should know about this**,
and told them to give her something to eat.

Questions/Activities

1. *Compare and contrast the differences between the suffering woman⁹ with Jairus? (See: James 1:-11, James 1:26-27, James 2; Deuteronomy 10:17–1, Deuteronomy 24:17–22, Psalm 68:5, Isaiah 1:16–17, Jeremiah 7:5–7, Zechariah 7:9–10)*
2. *What do we learn about God's desires for His children from these passages (e.g. What other scriptures, in addition to the ones listed above, demonstrate or command us concerning how we treat and pray people not as fortunate as us?)*
3. *Are there things God would have you do to help others who are needy in our community?*
4. *Why is it hard to assist people in need, and who may be different from us?*
5. *What do these stories reveal about God's love for the lost and what are some things we can do when discipling others to help them grow in God's love in caring for others?*

⁹ Hughes notes that she would have been an outcast woman. "According to Jewish law the hemorrhage rendered her ceremonially unclean in Jewish Society (Leviticus 15:25-27), which meant that she was a transmitter of uncleanness to all who came in contact with her." If she was married *her husband likely divorced her* (my words). The suffering woman was likely broke, cut off from family and friends, society, and her synagogue, and all this happening amidst declining health during her 12 years with this disease! She was tragically desperate and in need of help! (See: Hughes, R. K. (2015). *Mark: Jesus, Servant and Savior* (Vol. 1). Crossway Books. p. 123)

Note:

Constable's notes in the online version of the [NET Bible](#) are helpful when studying this passage. For Example, from of his notes concerning the woman with the hemorrhage, Constable describes the following¹⁰:

This is the only place in the Gospels where Jesus called someone "daughter." The woman's faith in Jesus had brought her into His spiritual family (cf. Isa. 53:10; Mark 3:35; 7:26; 10:52). Her faith was the means whereby she obtained Jesus' help. It expressed belief that Jesus could heal her and hope that He would.

The phrase "Go in peace" (Heb. shalom) was a common way of saying "good-bye" among the Jews (cf. Judg. 18:6; 1 Sam. 1:17).

Shalom ". . . means not just freedom from inward anxiety, but that wholeness or completeness of life that comes from being brought into a right relationship with God." [163]

It was God's will for this woman to experience healing. Jesus assured her that her healing was complete and permanent with these words. She could now enjoy social interaction and participation in public worship, as well as physical health, since she was clean.

"From Mark's perspective, the entire incident is a call for radical faith." [164]

¹⁰ Biblical Studies Press. (n.d.). NET Bible: Mark 5. NET Bible. Retrieved December 17, 2025, from <https://netbible.org/bible/Mark+5>

Appendix A - Thoughts from R. Kent Hughes

The following is Quoted from Hughes¹¹, 2015, p. 117:

Of course, not all demonization is so blatantly gross. Second Corinthians 11:14, 15 tells us: “And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as angle of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of rightness.” Demonized men and women can appear utterly conventional. They can even be spiritual leaders in the Christian community. I myself have known some whose bondage to evil was uncovered.

However, we must not foolishly think that human beings must be demonized to descend to the degradation of the Gerasene demoniac. Sin is endemic to the human situation: “each person if tempted . . . by his own desire” (James 1:14). As Turgenev said, “I do not know what the heart of a bad man is like, but I know what the heart of a good man is like . . . and it is terrible.”

. . . Nevertheless, demons do drive men and women to the depths of degradation. Why? Because Satan and his minions hate God. They will do anything to attack Him. Mankind was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and brings glory to Him the more we manifest His image. Satan hates this. Thus, the demonic function is to distort and destroy the image of God in man.

¹¹ . p. 117

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