

The Life of Christ

Lesson 6: Lord Over Disease, Demons, and Death -- Mark 5:1-43

In a single chapter, Mark takes us to three places where human power runs out. A graveyard where a man lives among the tombs, so tormented and strong that chains cannot hold him. A crowded road where a woman, sick and bleeding for twelve years, has spent everything she had on doctors and only grown worse. And a home where a twelve-year-old girl, the beloved daughter of a synagogue ruler, slips from illness into death while her father pleads for help. Demons, disease, and death. These are the great enemies, the powers before which all of us are finally helpless.

And into each scene walks Jesus, and the powers give way. He speaks to the legion of demons, and the man who could not be bound sits clothed and in his right mind. A trembling woman touches the edge of His garment, and twelve years of suffering end in an instant. He takes a dead child by the hand and says, in the tender language of home, "Little girl, get up," and she rises and walks. There is no struggle, no straining, no incantation. He simply commands, and the enemies that hold us obey.

Mark wants us to see who this is. The One who calms storms in the previous chapter now masters the spiritual world, the body, and the grave. These are not legends grown in the telling. They are reported as things that happened, in real places, before real witnesses, and they confirmed for all who saw them that Jesus is exactly who He claimed to be. The miracles are signs, lifted up like road markers, pointing past themselves to the identity of the One who performs them.

But Mark also shows us the human responses, and they are as varied as ours. A whole town, frightened by His power, begs Him to leave. A delivered man begs to stay with Him and is sent home to tell. A desperate woman reaches out in trembling faith. A grieving father is told, in the face of death itself, "Do not fear, only believe." This lesson invites us to bring our own places of helplessness to the One who is Lord over all of them, and to learn what it means to trade our fear for faith in Him.

Group Discussion: In Mark 5, Jesus confronts three things that leave human beings utterly helpless: demonic power, incurable illness, and death itself. Why is it important for our faith to see that Jesus has real authority over all three, and how does that shape the way we face our own fears?

Personal Reflection: To the grieving father, Jesus said, "Do not fear, only believe." Where is fear currently gripping your heart, and what would it look like to bring that exact fear to Jesus and trust Him with it this week?

Read Mark 5:1-43

Study Questions

1. In Mark 5:1–13, Jesus confronts a man no chains could hold, possessed by a legion of demons, and with a word He sets him free. What does this account reveal about the reality of evil spiritual powers and about Jesus' authority over them?
2. After his deliverance, the man begs to go with Jesus, but Jesus sends him home to tell his own people what the Lord has done for him (5:18–20). Where is Jesus calling you to bear witness to His work right where you live, among the people who already know you?
3. When the townspeople saw the delivered man and learned what had happened to their pigs, they were afraid and begged Jesus to leave their region (5:14–17). What does their response teach us about how people can react to the disruptive power of Jesus, even when He has done something good?
4. The people of that region preferred their comfort and their property over the presence of Jesus. Where are you tempted to choose the familiar, the comfortable, or the safe over allowing Jesus to disrupt your life with His power and His claims?
5. In Mark 5:25–34, a woman who had suffered for twelve years reaches out in faith to touch Jesus' garment and is instantly healed, and Jesus says, "Daughter, your faith has made you well" (v. 34). What does this account teach about Jesus' power to heal and about the kind of faith that lays hold of Him?

6. This woman pressed through a crowd and through her own fear and shame to reach Jesus. Where do you need to press through obstacles, discouragement, or embarrassment to come to Jesus with your real need rather than keeping a polite distance?
7. When word came that Jairus' daughter had died, Jesus told the grieving father, "Do not fear, only believe" (v. 36), and then took the dead child by the hand and raised her to life. What does this reveal about Jesus' authority even over death, and how does it ground our hope?
8. Jesus' words to Jairus, "Do not fear, only believe," came at the very moment fear seemed most justified. Where does fear most tend to paralyze you, and what would it look like to answer that fear with trust in the Lord who holds even death in His hands?
9. These miracles were real, historical works that confirmed Jesus' identity and authenticated His message (compare John 20:30–31). At the same time, Scripture presents such signs as confirming God's revelation in the apostolic age (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3–4), now complete in the New Testament. How should we understand the purpose of Jesus' miracles, what they prove about who He is, and why we look to the confirmed and completed word rather than expecting the same miraculous sign gifts today?
10. Of the three helpless situations in this chapter, the bondage of the demoniac, the long illness of the woman, and the death of the child, which one most mirrors a place of helplessness in your own life right now? Name one specific way you will bring that need to the Lord who has authority over all of them.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: John 20:30–31, where John explains that the signs were written so that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ; Mark 16:20, where the Lord confirmed the apostles' message by accompanying signs; Hebrews 2:3–4, where the great salvation was attested by signs, wonders, and gifts of the Holy Spirit; Psalm 103:1–5, which praises the Lord who heals all our diseases; 1 Corinthians 15:54–57, where death is swallowed up in victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.