

# Bible Stories for Adults

## The Demoniac in the Decapolis

Mark 5:1-20

### Opening

Gathering: What demons destroy the lives of people today?

Today's Focus: Jesus cast out demons from the life of a man who then served as a great witness to others.

Key Verses: *What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?* Mark 5:7

*Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how He has had mercy on you.* Mark 5:19

Opening Prayer

### Lesson

There's No Place Like Home (*Mark 1:21-34*)

Where did Jesus focus His ministry of revealing the good news of God's kingdom?

Luke 8:1

Was there any particular place He frequented?

John 6:16-17, 24

Why did He use Capernaum as a home base? Was He especially drawn to the lake view?

Mark 1:21, 29

Come To Me (*Mark 3:7-10*)

Did He come to Capernaum to get an occasional rest in Peter's home?

Mark 2:1-5

Did He find rest by taking peaceful walks along the shore of the lake?

Mark 3:7-8

Was the lake shore a good place since people could just sit on the beach around Him?

Mark 3:9-10

Did He have the boat waiting so He could get away quickly?

Mark 4:1

Teachings From the Boat (*Mark 4*)

What did Jesus teach from the boat in our study two weeks ago?

Mark 4:2, 30, 33 (Matthew 13)

What did He decide to do after a full day of teaching in the boat?

Mark 4:35-36

What lesson about God's kingdom did Jesus teach His disciples during this journey?

Matthew 8:23-27 (Matthew 6:25-34)

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Gerasa, Gadara, Gergesa (*Mark 5:1*)

Where did Jesus and His disciples land on the other side of the lake?

Mark 5:1

Gerasa was 36 miles southeast of the lake. Does Matthew give us a better location?

Matthew 8:28

Gadara was 6 miles southeast of the lake. How did later scribes respond to this?

Matthew 8:28 (KJV)

Gergesa was on the eastern shore of the lake. Origen (3<sup>rd</sup> Century AD scholar) suggested Gergesa

Steep bluff south of Gergesa descended to a narrow shore

Area has lots of caves that were clearly used as tombs

The Decapolis (*Luke 8:26*)

Gerasa and Gadara were two of the ten cities of the Decapolis (Greek for *ten cities*)

Gergesa was a town in the Decapolis

Decapolis was region south and east of Sea of Galilee

Free Cities - Allowed to govern themselves during this time

Settled by Greeks after conquest by Alexander the Great - Kept Hellenistic (Greek) flavor

Captured by Jews in 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC, then by Romans in 63 BC - Few Jews

The Gospels identify that Jesus landed in this region. What info does Luke add?

Luke 8:26

Welcome Party (*Mark 5:2*)

What time did Jesus likely arrive at the other side?

Mark 4:35

Although the journey was only around a dozen miles long, what likely slowed them down?

Mark 4:37

Was anyone around at this late hour?

Mark 5:2

Was this man by himself?

Matthew 8:28

Demon Possession

The ancient world believed that evil spirits were everywhere looking for opportunities to harm people

The air was so full of demons that you couldn't poke a needle into it without hitting a demon

Some said that there were 10,000 evil spirits on each side of a man

God placed guardian angels over children to help protect them

How much of this do we know to be really true?

1 Peter 5:8-9

Demons were especially thick in unclean places (tombs) & where there was no cleansing water (desert)

They were very active at night, in the mid-day heat and in lonely places

Demons could enter a person through any of 36 places, including the mouth with food

They could take control of all aspects of the person – physical, mental, senses ...

Demons would produce all forms of illness trying to destroy God's perfect order and creation

To get rid of a demon, you had to call on the power of a greater spirit

Barclay - *If a man gained the idea that he was possessed by a demon, he would easily go on to produce all the symptoms of demon-possession. He could genuinely convince himself that there was a demon inside him.*

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### Signs of Demon Possession (*Mark 5:3-5*)

What signs does Dr. Luke give that this man was possessed (or believed himself to be)?

Luke 8:27

What did Matthew add?

Matthew 8:28

Besides noting that the man was out at night, what did Mark add?

Mark 5:3-4

What final signs did Mark give?

Mark 5:5

### Demons React (*Mark 5:6-9*)

Truly demon-possessed or not, how do we see that the man had spiritual insight into who Jesus was?

Mark 5:6

Why did he do this?

Matthew 8:29

What did the demon mean by the appointed time?

Revelation 20:7-10

How did the demon try to call upon a higher power to protect himself?

Mark 5:7

How does Jesus show us the extent of this man's demon-possession?

Mark 5:8-9

Legion - A Roman legion had up to 6000 soldiers – at least 4000

### Appropriate Destination (*Mark 5:10-13*)

What was the demons' concern about what Jesus could do to them?

Luke 8:31 (Revelation 20:1-3)

What alternative did they propose?

Mark 5:10-12

Why was this herd of pigs an appropriate destination for the demons?

Deuteronomy 14:3, 8

How did Jesus respond to their pleas?

Mark 5:13

### Don't Touch My Pig (*Mark 5:14-18*)

How did the night-shift swineherds respond to what had just happened?

Mark 5:14

What did the people find when they arrived?

Mark 5:15

What other confirmation did the people get that the swineherds were telling the truth?

Mark 5:16

How did the people respond to this great miracle?

Mark 5:17

Have you ever done the unthinkable and asked Jesus to leave?

How did Jesus respond to this rejection?

Luke 8:37

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Share at Home (*Mark 5:19*)

What then happened to the formerly demon-possessed man?

Mark 5:18-19

*Oikos* – Greek for extended family – Relatives, friends, neighbors, coworkers ...

How is this different than what Jesus told others?

Mark 3:11-12

Why did He say this to others, but not to this man?

John 6:14-15

Web of Influence (*Mark 5:20*)

What did the man do?

Mark 5:20

How effective was this man's witness?

Mark 7:31; 8:1, 9

How effective can we be as we witness to Jesus in our Web of Influence?

Matthew 13:23

Spiritual Multiplication (From *Each One Reach One* Devotions)

A museum in Chicago had a fascinating display that demonstrated the power of spiritual multiplication. It showed a checkerboard with 1 grain of wheat on the first square, 2 on the second, 4 on the third, then 8, 16, 32, 64 and so on until the seeds could no longer fit on a square.

Then it asked the question, "At this rate of doubling each successive square, how much would you have on the checkerboard by the 64<sup>th</sup> square?"

You could punch a button at the bottom of the display to find out. The answer? "Nine sextillion — enough grain to cover the entire subcontinent of India 50 feet deep." Incredible!

If each of us leads just one person to Christ each year, and each of those persons leads one to Christ each year, the harvest would soon be enormous. It's happening in some parts of the world. It can happen here.

Closing Prayer

**Response** - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When have I felt attacked by the powers of Satan?  
(*Mark 5:2-5; Luke 5:5-10; 8:12; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 John 3:8-10; Revelation 2:10*)
2. When have I felt God's protection from Satan's attacks?  
(*Mark 5:15; 2 Kings 6:16-17; Job 1:6-10; Psalm 91; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 2:14*)
3. How have I ever asked Jesus to leave? Why?  
(*Mark 5:17; Isaiah 6:5; Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75; Luke 9:51-56*)
4. Who is in my *oikos*, my extended family, my Web of Influence?  
(*Mark 5:18-20; Matthew 9:9-10; 12:46-50; John 1:35-51; 4:28-30; Acts 8:4*)
5. When have I seen God produce a crop from my witness?  
(*Mark 5:18-20; 4:26-29; 8:1-13; Matthew 13:23; John 4:39-42; 15:8*)