

Teaching Notes/Life Group Study Questions.

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Uniquely Jesus

October 16, 2016

Mark 5

Coffee / Question

We've all heard the expression "everything is connected."

Do you agree or disagree with this saying and why?

Share an example that confirms your position.

Feedback

As I read and study my way through the gospel of Mark, I am observing that Jesus lived each day with great intentionality. Do you see this as well?

There is no indication that he lived like a tumbleweed, blown from town to town, barely one step ahead of the circumstances happening around him.

Jesus lived with a profound sense of purpose and destiny.

With him everything he did was connected.

We are in Mark 5 today.

But we actually need to start in Mark 4 because the last incident in that chapter connects to what happened in Mark 5.

4:35.

Jesus didn't tell the disciples **WHY** they were going to the other side of the sea, but the Holy Spirit who directed him each day, had impressed upon Jesus that he needed to go there.

4:36.

"Leaving the crowd behind..."

The fact that a crowd of people was there, tells us that Jesus had most likely, taught and healed, all day.

"...they took him along, just as he was, in the boat."

One advantage of having four fishermen in his band of followers was that instead of having to walk around the lake that evening, they were able to travel in a boat.

4:37a.

Here's what you need to know about the Sea of Galilee and storms.

"The sea of Galilee is 700 feet below the Mediterranean. Thirty miles to the north is Mount Hermon which is 9200' high. The cold air from the mountain often clashed with the warm air coming up from the Galilee, resulting in impressive thunderstorms and squalls." Kings Cross, p.50.

4:37-38.

The fisherman (Peter and James, John and Andrew) would have been used to such storms. But the fact that they thought they were going to drown, tells us this storm was unlike others they had experienced.

4:39.

Jesus dealt with the very real threat of drowning, not by helping to bail water, but by speaking... to the storm. And when he did... the storm went from a hurricane force gale to a dead calm.

Those fishermen knew that when a storm passes, the wind and the waves would gradually lessen.

This is why, when they saw the "complete calm," they were terrified and asked each other – "*Who is this?*"

Have you ever been in a crisis, like the disciples were, where you too voiced this question, to yourself or to someone else?

What was it about your perspective of Jesus that shifted?

What emotion was stirred in you?

Jesus demonstrated, that night, power that only God has – power over nature.

What Jesus did, in calming the storm, revealed him to be **"the Lord of the storm."**

King's Cross, p.52.

What does being "the Lord of the storm," reveal to us about who God is?

Why do you think Jesus wants us to know him in this way?

Remember: the “Lord of the storm” directed his followers to cross the lake because the Holy Spirit had told him to go.

Did God the Spirit not know a storm was coming?

Is that why Jesus was told to set out that very night, instead of waiting until morning?

Does the Holy Spirit still direct Jesus’ followers into situations that are dangerous?

Do you think Jesus would knowingly put your life at risk?

Why? Why not?

Can you think of others whose stories are told in the Bible, that would confirm your answer?

Nothing catches the “Lord of the storm” by surprise.

His ways are good.

His plans are not haphazard.

His power has no equal.

If Jesus is by our side; if he is with us, and he says he is, then is that not the safest place we can be?

Our answer to that question reveals the extent to which we are living by faith.

After calming the storm, Jesus asked his disciples two questions, which are relevant to us today.

1. Why are you so afraid?

We fear that which we don’t understand, or can’t explain.

We fear that which threatens our well-being or our life, or that of those we love.

We experience fear when it appears that our skills or resources are not enough to overcome some obstacle or deal with some challenge.

What stirs fear in you?

Why does that thing or someone make you afraid?

2. Do you still have no faith?

Timothy Keller says this phrase could actually be translated, *“Where is your faith?”*

Remember – that during his years of public ministry, in addition to healing and teaching great crowds of people, Jesus was building the character and the faith of a core group of followers.

What he taught them that night, is applicable to every follower of Jesus.

The crucial factor with faith is not the **strength** of one’s faith, nor the **quality** of one’s faith; not even the **quantity** of one’s faith; but its **object**.

Jesus wasn’t teaching them to have faith in faith.

He was teaching them to have faith in him.

The object of our faith is Jesus.

Hebrews 12:2: “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith...”

As we come to chapter 5, Mark writes of three situations that reveal how remarkable and trustworthy Jesus is.

Mark also emphasizes in each instance, what it means to put one’s faith in Jesus.

We are going to look at the first situation, and then in your Life Groups I invite you to look at the other two.

Mark 5:1-20.

5:1.

In the study notes for the Life Groups I’ve copied and pasted in information about the Gerasenes, that you can read through on your own.

Gerasenes

The New Testament references ([Mark 5:1](#); [Luke 8:26](#); cf. [v. 37](#)) describe Jesus’ healing of the demoniac and the drowning of the pigs in the Sea of Galilee (cf. [Matthew 8:28](#)). The textual evidence shows that the MANUSCRIPTS preserve three variant spellings of the name in each gospel. The best text in Matthew reads “Gadarenes,” in Mark and Luke it reads “Gerasenes,” whereas some MANUSCRIPTS preserve “Gergesenes” and “Gergustenes” (cf. Gadara).

Because some confusion exists in the gospel MANUSCRIPT evidence and perhaps in other source material, absolute certainty cannot be attained; but the following identification seems correct.

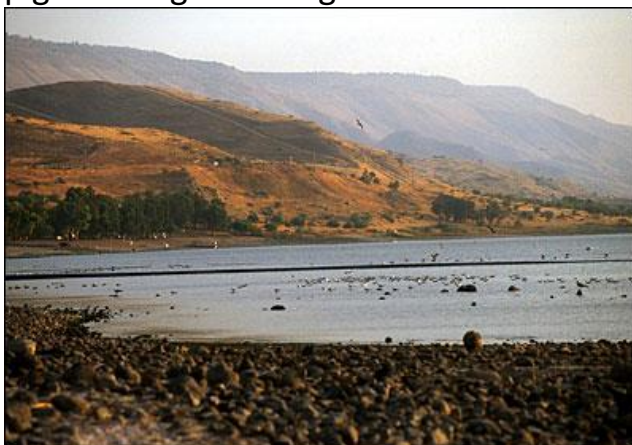
GERGESA

This town is not to be confused with either Gerasa or Gadara. Gergesa is located, with relative certainty, midway along the east bank of the Sea of Galilee; Gadara is six miles south-east from the south end of the Sea of Galilee; and Gerasa is some thirty-five miles south-east.

The fact that Matthew places the healing of the demoniac in the “country of the Gadarenes” whereas Mark and Luke place it in the “country of the Gerasenes” may be harmonized on the historical grounds that geographical boundaries overlapped, and on the exegetical consideration that “country” embraced a wide area around the cities.

Further, the conclusion seems warranted that there was confusion in some MANUSCRIPTS of Gerasa with the more likely site for the miracle near Gergesa. In any event, the apparent differences in the texts probably led to the substitute reading “Gergesenes,” a reading that was suggested by a study of the geography of the area.

This solution is as old as Origen (*Commentary on John*, VI, 24) who, faced with the textual problem, suggested that the precise site of the healing of the demoniac was Gergesa, the small town in the territory of Gadara, but hardly in the more remote territory of Gerasa. Origen says this is a good example of how Biblical writers simply were not concerned to precisely identify certain sites. Most scholars today would agree with Origen that near Gergesa was the precise site for the healing of the demoniac. It was a small village about midway along the East shore of the Sea of Galilee. This agrees with the general description of the site ([Mark 5:1](#); [Luke 8:26](#)). In this immediate area, steep hills come down to the shoreline and fit the story of the pigs rushing headlong into the sea.



Steep slope south of Kursi (Gergesa)

Adapted from a photograph by BiblePlaces.com

No other place on the east side of the sea fits this requirement of the story. The mountainside has caves and hewn tombs where, according to Mark and Luke, the demoniac had taken shelter. The site is identified today with the town of Kersa, or Gersa, just below Wadi es-Samak. <https://www.biblicaltraining.org/library/gerasenes>

5:2.

Jesus had come in search of that man, and when the man saw Jesus, instead of running away, he came to Jesus, indicating his desire to be set free.

In the gospel of John, 8:44, Jesus said that satan is the father of lies. satan does not tell the truth, because he is incapable of telling the truth.

Read 2 Corinthians 11:14 and 1 John 4:1-6.

Why do you think the fallen ones' masquerade as angels of light?

Can anything they say be trusted?

How do we test a message?

How do we recognize the Holy Spirit and a spirit who is false?

Jesus asked the man: What is your name? (5:9)

But it was the spirit who answered: "my name is Legion," and he gave the reason for the name – "for we are many."

Legion is a military term that describes a quantity of soldiers.

How many soldiers were in a legion? "5000." www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/romans/Legio.html

Were there that really that many spirits within the man?

We will never know; because that isn't the point Mark is wanting to make.

What we do know is that fallen spirits lie; they exaggerate; they misrepresent; and they do so in order to deflect; to blur truth; to create fear.

They can never be trusted to speak the truth. Never.

What we do know, is that when Jesus commanded the spirits to leave the man, there were enough spirits in him to take over a herd of 2000 pigs.

In the same passage in John, 8:44, Jesus said satan is a murderer.

What happened on that particular day, in the slaughter of the pigs, shows the murderous nature of these impure spirits.

Why would they kill a herd of pigs?

Because that's who they are.

They are malicious.

They are cruel.

They care nothing for life - human or animal.

They are creatures of death.

** What happened that day, in the healing of that demon possessed man, confirms that Jesus is the greater power and authority. He still is.

** What happened that day also speaks to the incredible lengths to which God will go to in order to rescue a lost person.

Every one of us here; every person alive on this earth, is as lost as that man who lived in the region of the Gerasenes. We are born spiritually dead to God. And then by our actions, words and choices we confirm that deadness.

When it comes to the spiritual lost-ness of the human race, there are no categories like a little lost, lost, super lost and hopelessly lost.

Our stories may not be as dramatic as his.

But we are all equally lost.

Jesus came to this earth; he lived among us; he died on a cross, because he was not willing that anyone should perish. Because of his love for us, he took our place.

He paid our debt. He defeated our enemy.

And having done that he searches after each one for us.

It's not that he doesn't know where we are; it's that we don't know where he is; nor who he is; nor how desperately we need him.

And so he intervenes in our lives, in numerous ways, to get our attention.

He comes to us.

And when he does, the question is, will we come to him?

Only in relationship with Jesus when we believe in him and receive him into our life, can our story change, like the man from the Gerasenes, from one of **being lost**, to one of **being found**.

5:14.

The pig herders were eye-witnesses of all that happened.

When the townspeople heard their news, they went out to where Jesus was to see things for themselves. What did they find?

5:15.

Jesus had done what no one had been able to do with the man.

- the man was sitting – before he had wandered in the tombs and on the hills
- he was dressed – before he had not worn clothes
- he was in his right mind – he wasn't shouting; he wasn't cutting himself

Why do you think the townspeople were afraid when they saw the man?

We are not told.

But as they heard and saw what Jesus had done, they too made a choice.

5:17-18a.

Jesus granted their request. He left.

We all need to recognize that God will honor the choices people make.

He will not force a person to come to him; to believe in him; to receive him.

If someone doesn't want God, he will leave them alone.

But that doesn't mean he gives up on them.

Do you know how we know that?

5:18b-20.

"Tell how much the Lord has done for you; tell how he has had mercy on you."

To each of us, who has a lost and found story, this is what Jesus wants us to do – tell how much the Lord has done for you.

What has the Lord done for you?

What have we learned about faith?

It is not the quantity of a person's sin that condemns them.

We are all sinners and we all need a Savior. And that Savior is Jesus.

We see in this passage that Jesus is not shocked by someone's past.

There is no one who is a write-off in Jesus' estimation.

Until a person breathes their last breath it is never too late for them to be found by Jesus.

It is possible that some of you have already sensed that Jesus has been searching for you. But you have to come to him in order to be found. Will you?

With the demon possessed man, though the distinctions between him and the demons within had become blurred, in faith he came to Jesus.

It wasn't the size of his faith that freed him from the horror he lived; nor forgave him for the sin he had committed that allowed those demons to move into his life.

It was who he trusted in – Jesus.

He came to Jesus.

And in coming, he was forgiven and set free.

Jesus receives anyone who comes to him.

Just as the man had come in faith to Jesus, so in faith he obeyed when Jesus told him to go home to his family and tell them what the Lord had done for him.

Anyone who comes to Jesus ...comes in faith.

Anyone who obeys Jesus...does so in faith.

We live our lives by faith in Jesus – from start to finish.

On his behalf I invite you to come to him today.

Our closing song expresses this invitation, as well as the assurance that if you come to Jesus you will never regret it.

To those of you who already follow Jesus, you need to know Jesus will be active to build your faith in him. For to follow Jesus is to live by faith.

And as he builds our character and our faith, you also need to know Jesus will take you into situations that you might not like; situations that appear to be risky.

The storm was no pleasure cruise.

Those fishermen thought they were going to drown.

But it was in that situation, they learned just how capable and trustworthy Jesus is.

They came to know Jesus that day as the Lord of the storm.

Even though Jesus was close by, they too had to go to him, to ask for his help, in dealing with a situation that was beyond them. And when they did, Jesus intervened.

Can we not expect that he would build our faith in similar ways, by putting us in situations that are beyond us, in order to teach us that his grace always is sufficient, and that he never will abandon us?

If you are living right now through a great challenge, this song's invitation, is to you as well – come to Jesus. Press into him. Hold on to him. Jesus – who is the object of your faith can never fail.

Song: Come as You Are.

Blessing

Ephesians 3:20-21

Additional Life Group Study Questions

Mark 5:21-42

Jairus' daughter is going to die unless Jesus heals her.

In Jairus' mind he just has to get Jesus to his daughter before it is too late.

But...as Jesus walks with Jairus it is slow going because...a large crowd pressed in around Jesus.

Another person was in that crowd. And while her need wasn't one of life and death, she had suffered for 12 long years – because of her illness and because of the treatments. She had spent everything on trying to find a cure and nothing had worked. She too was desperate for Jesus' help.

But she wasn't as bold as Jairus. In fact, she didn't even speak a word to Jesus. She just pressed into the crowd and kept pushing her way ever closer to Jesus, until finally his cloak was in reach of her hand.

And when it was, she reached out and touched the cloak, confident that doing so would heal her. And it did. Immediately, her suffering ended.

Mark 4:30. This is the first time in Mark that this word, *dunamis* (dynamite) is used. Jesus sensed power had gone out from him. Power that made right what had been wrong in her body; power that restored her body so that it functioned as God had intended it to function.

The power with which Jesus healed, came into him, from the Holy Spirit, and went out of him.

Up until that point, Jesus and Jairus had been making progress, albeit slow. And keep in mind, every second counts. Jairus' daughter is dying. Her body is shutting down. She doesn't have long to live.

And then Jesus did something that must have caused Jairus' heart to sink – he stopped; he turned around; he spoke to the crowd.

When you and I go into the emergency room at a hospital, we go understanding that those who are most sick, get treated first.

Why didn't Jesus do that with the woman.

Surely the Holy Spirit could have told him who she was and where she lived?
They could have had the same conversation, just a little later.
Her need was not as great as Jairus' daughter.

So why did Jesus choose to deal with her first?
Why did he make Jairus wait?

What do we learn here about Jesus?
He will not be hurried.
Jesus doesn't deal with people assembly-line like.
He engages with people individually.

Why would Jesus make the woman go public?
Why would he keep looking around for her?
Because she mattered to him.
He wanted her to know he saw her – not another sick person, but her.

The woman had been coping with a blood flow that made her ceremonially unclean.
Her life had become restricted because of her illness.
There were limits to what she could do and where she could go.

But mixed in with her faith was superstition.
It wasn't a touch that healed, but her faith.
Jesus healed her, body and soul.

"Your faith has healed you." "Go in peace."
It was important that she hear Jesus say this to her, as well as his assurance, "...and be freed from your suffering."

She had felt in her body she was freed from suffering.
Jesus wanted her to realize that her soul was also freed from the suffering she had experienced – the shame; the disappointment; the isolation.

What does this say to us when we pray for people's physical ailments?

Because of the delay, what Jairus feared would happen, happened.
Jesus didn't speak to the counsel of the one who had come to tell Jairus his daughter was dead.
Instead he spoke to Jairus – don't be afraid; just believe.

Faith in Jesus had prompted Jairus to go to Jesus.
Now Jesus tells him – don't stop trusting me, because in your estimation it is too late to do so. Continue to believe.

"God's sense of timing will confound ours. His grace rarely operates according to our schedule. He wants us to remember that just as his grace and love will be with us in the storms, so his grace and love will be with us in the delays."
Kings Cross, p.63.

What have you learned about Jesus in the delays you've faced?
Have you ever felt impatient with Jesus?
Have you ever thought he missed an opportunity?

Jesus knew what he was doing. He wanted Jairus to trust him.
Jairus came for a healing when Jesus planned to give him a resurrection.

"If you go to Jesus, he may ask of you far more than you originally planned to give, but he can give to you infinitely more than you dared ask or think."
Kings Cross, p.66.

Jacques Ellul, 'The Technological Society,' writes: In Western society we have been taught that nearly everything in life is there to be manipulated for our own ends.

Do you think we sometimes do that with God?
Do you ever get frustrated with God thinking you know best what he should do in a particular situation?

Do you think God might address this arrogance within us by deliberating choosing to delay?

Do you think he might let us come to the end of ourselves; to a dead end; to what looks like a situation from which there is no recovery, no comeback, in order to grow our faith in him as the God who can break through every obstacle?
