

**MARK 5:1-17****ANYWHERE BUT HERE!**

<sup>1</sup> They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. <sup>2</sup> When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. <sup>3</sup> This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. <sup>4</sup> For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. <sup>5</sup> Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones. <sup>6</sup> When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. <sup>7</sup> He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" <sup>8</sup> For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!" <sup>9</sup> Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." <sup>10</sup> And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. <sup>11</sup> A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. <sup>12</sup> The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." <sup>13</sup> He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. <sup>14</sup> Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. <sup>15</sup> When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. <sup>16</sup> Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. <sup>17</sup> Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

Jesus has the power to change lives, and that is not always perceived as good news. One cliché that comes to mind is, "We prefer the demons we know to those we do not." The deranged man was out of their control. He was possessed by a powerful negative force, in fact, a whole company of demons. But, at least he was off among the tomb where he could do no harm to others and remain out of their sight. Everyone knew he was there and occasionally could hear him howl, but by and large he did little to impinge on daily life.

Then along comes Jesus, who heals the man. Suddenly they have on their hands an even greater power, and that a power that shatters the uneasy truce they have had with the demons. Jesus' power is so strong that it overcomes the otherwise uncontrollable power of evil, but more than that appears to release it into their midst where they have to deal with it. It is no longer the matter of an isolated individual, it now affects their lives – their livelihood – their pigs.

Of course they're pig herders and therefore, gentiles. Why should they think Jesus is anybody other than a greater and more powerful demon? But, then again, wasn't that also the verdict of the Pharisees (Mark 3:22)? What about us? Are we any different? Would we be as comfortable with the supernatural power of Jesus if we had to do more than read about it? Do we really see his promise to radically change our lives to be good news? Or are we content to relegate the Son of God to the relatively safe and power-dampening venue of Sunday morning?

**Come Lord Jesus and strip away my fears of how I will lose control of my life if I am totally open to your power. Empower me to welcome you into my daily life and to trust you with more than my mind. Amen.**