

**Week 20**  
**Mark 5-9**

Theme: An encounter with Jesus

**Conversation Starter**

**What action option did you choose to do after our discussion last week? What went well? What did not go well?**

**What questions do you have from the reading this week?**

**Weekly Review/Intro**

This week, we continued our study of the Gospel of Mark. We saw Jesus continuing in his ministry on Earth. In particular, we saw Jesus interacting with people, and we saw that many people sought him out.

**Have you ever traveled to go see something specific? For example, have you traveled to New York to see the Statue of Liberty, etc?**

**Why did you make the trip? What made the trip worth it?**

Many people like to travel to see new sites and visit different places to say that they did it. These people, on the other hand, were going out of their way to find Jesus.

**Why do you think so many people tried to find Jesus? What was their motivation?**

**Do people still try to seek Jesus for those same reasons today?**

The reasons for seeking Jesus varied from person to person. Some people wanted healing, others wanted to test him, while others wanted to hear him teach. The reasons can become more complex depending on the person.

**Did Jesus have the same effect on every person he interacted with?**

**Did everyone walk away with the same reaction?**

There were different reactions to encountering Jesus. Similarly, everyone who encounters Jesus comes away changed in some way.

**Do you think it is possible to have an encounter with Jesus and not change?**

**Is it possible to have an encounter with Jesus and change for the worse rather than the better?**

Every person who had an encounter with Jesus changed in some way. Saul changed from a murderer to the greatest missionary of all time while the pharisees grew more jealous and bitter after they encountered Jesus. Even the disciples had a negative reaction to Jesus in Mark 6:52.

**What do you think is the indicator of having a positive interaction with Jesus?**

**What qualities do we need to have to have a change for the better when encountering Jesus?**

Our heart is what is the most important part of an encounter with Jesus. We can choose to open our heart to Him or we can choose to harden our heart (like the disciples did).

**Application**

In this week's readings, we saw many of the different things that Jesus did in his time on Earth. Our focus for this week will be one encounter Jesus had in Mark 5. This is a prime example of how an encounter with Jesus can change us.

**Who were the three people Jesus encountered in Mark 5?**

**How did each person interact with Jesus?**

Mark 5 has a diverse collection of people. First, there was the man possessed by demons. Second, there was Jairus the synagogue leader, and, lastly, there was a woman who was bleeding. Each of these people have different interactions and encounters with Jesus. Let's start by talking about the demon possessed man.

**Read Mark 5:1-8**

**After reading these verses, how would you describe the demon-possessed man? What traits or verses stuck out to you?**

Possible responses:

- He lived in the tombs
- He was very strong and no one could restrain him
- He was always crying out
- He was cutting himself with stones

**Do you think the possessed man was hurting either physically, emotionally, or spiritually? Why do you think that?**

These verses paint a very sad picture of a man who appears to be hurting. He lives away from everyone, no one can help him or subdue him, and he is practicing self-harm.

**Does the description I just gave of the demon possessed man sound like someone you know? Do you know someone who is secluding themselves, not allowing anyone to help them, and harming themselves either physically or by the choices they make?**

**How do you feel when you think about this person? Do you ever feel like you do not know what to do to help that person?**

Seeing someone in this state can and should be heartbreaking. Last week, we saw how Jesus modeled having a compassionate heart for others and this man is no exception.

**Looking back at the verses, did it seem like this man wanted to go see Jesus? Do you find it odd that a man possessed by demons would run up and kneel before Jesus?**

**Look back at verse 7, what does this tell you about how the demons viewed Jesus?**

The demon ran and knelt down before Jesus (v. 6). This can seem very odd to us because we know that the demons and Jesus were enemies, but this act was an acknowledgement of the demon that Jesus is the Son of God. The demons' statement also shows that he knows that Jesus has the power in this situation.

**Is it possible to live our life in a way that acknowledges the power of Jesus? How do we do that?**

**How should our knowledge of Jesus' power affect what we do on a daily basis? What areas of our life should this affect and how?**

The responses to these questions above can vary. However, the ultimate response is that we are to humble ourselves before God and we are to live our lives trusting that He is in control.

**After the demon humbled himself before Jesus, what happened? (see v. 9-13)**

**Does humbling ourselves before Jesus automatically take away the consequences of our actions? Do we get a free ride for humbling ourselves before God?**

The demon humbled himself before Jesus, but he was still cast out of the man. The demons were sent to a herd of pigs that ran into the sea. This is an illustration where we can still have consequences for our actions even though we humble ourselves before God. Jesus paid the price that we could be saved from death and Hell, but we still have Earthly consequences to the choices we made. For example, if I drink and drive, I could get arrested. As we saw in a previous session, we should be grieved by our sins and try to avoid them, but we still have consequences for our choices.

**Read Mark 5:14-17**

**What was the man like after the demons were cast out? How did he change? (v. 15)**

**Who changed the man? Where did the change come from?**

The man who had the demons was completely changed. The man was “dressed and in his right mind”. This man showed an instantaneous change after his encounter with Jesus.

**Think back to the person you thought of earlier. What can you do to help them? How, as a christian, can you encourage them?**

**Can you force the person to change? Who has the power to change hearts?**

Psalm 51:10 says “God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me”. God is the one who can change our hearts, and we need to be open to him. Sometimes it takes humbling from God (Like Saul) for us to surrender to God but other times we seek him.

**Do you ever get frustrated that you cannot change the heart of people? What do you do when you feel that frustration?**

**Read Mark 5:18-20**

**How did the man act after his encounter with Jesus? What did Jesus commission him to do?**

**What is some evidence that a person has had a genuine encounter with Jesus? What should we see as a result?**

The man who was possessed was excited to follow Jesus. He begged earnestly to follow Jesus, but, instead, Jesus commissioned him to go to his people and share what he has seen.

**How can we be like the man who was set free from the demons? What can we share with others?**

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**Reflection**

During this week, you are being charged with answering these questions about yourself and your walk with God. Hopefully these will force you to pray and consider what God wants you to do in your life.

- 1) How is your heart? Are you open to hearing from Jesus?
- 2) Have you hardened your heart to Jesus? Are you open to changing?
- 3) How can you do a better job of seeking Jesus?
- 4) How can you encourage others to follow Jesus?

**Action**

Choose one of the following actions to do as part of your walk this week.

- 1) Pray Psalm 50:10 during your quiet time each day. Document how you change over the week.
- 2) Go to someone and share your testimony of what God has done for you.
- 3) Go to a trusted believer and confess how you are. Pray together and seek Jesus in your situation.