



A BETTER WORD

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

A Study Through the Life of King Jesus | with Pastor Nick Gatzke

The Warrior King

Mark 5:1–20

THE BIG IDEA

The warrior king does not wage war on unclean people. He wages war on uncleanness itself — and he has come to rescue even the most unclean.

SERMON SUMMARY

Until now Jesus has worked among the Jews. Here he crosses the lake to the Decapolis: Gentiles, Roman occupiers, nonpracticing Jews, outcasts — the unclean ones. He steps ashore in a graveyard, itself unclean, and is met by the most unclean man imaginable: naked, gashed, screaming among the tombs, so strong that chains could not hold him. Sin had been welcomed, then it took control, and it cost him every relationship he had.

The demon gives its name — Legion — borrowing the language of Rome's six-thousand-man killing machines. Six thousand against one. And before the battle begins, the six thousand are negotiating their surrender. Jesus is not fighting the unclean man; he is fighting what made him unclean. The town, terrified, begs him to leave. The rescued man begs to come along. Jesus instead sends him back to his friends to tell them how much the Lord has done.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Count how many things in verses 1–5 would have made this scene ceremonially unclean to a Jewish reader — the region, the setting, the man, the animals. Why does Mark stack them up? What is he showing us about where Jesus is willing to go?
2. The demons name themselves after a Roman legion (v. 9). Given how Rome was viewed, why is that name chosen? What does it change that they open by begging rather than fighting?
3. Jesus wages war on uncleanness itself, not on unclean people. Where do we get that backward? How does the Pharisees' refusal to touch anything unclean compare with what the Son of God does here?
4. The townspeople see the man clothed and in his right mind — and are afraid (vv. 15–17). Why would restoration frighten them? What did they conclude was worth more than his healed life?
5. The man begs to go with Jesus and is sent home instead (vv. 18–20). Why is that a commission rather than a rejection? Read 1 Chronicles 16:8 and Acts 1:8 — what would it look like to tell someone this week how much the Lord has done for you?

LIVING IT OUT

A bishop once looked out at fresh snow and saw a filthy gray dog crossing the lawn — then realized it was his own white terrier, the one he had always thought spotless. Our sense of being clean is relative to a stained world. Jesus did not come to make you relatively good. He came to make you holy. Whatever it is — anger, drinking, self-focus, lust, or greed — he is able to rescue the unclean.

Heart Check: What in your life started as something you controlled and now controls you? Are you willing to name it as uncleanness before God rather than as a habit, a struggle, or a personality trait?

This Week: Bring the thing you named into the light with one other believer this week and ask them to pray with you. Then tell one person outside the faith a short, honest version of how God has changed your life — start with, “Let me tell you what the Lord has done for me.”

REFLECTION & PRAYER

“Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.”

— **Mark 5:19**

Thank God that in the depths of despair a rescuer comes who is stronger than a legion. Ask him to cleanse what you cannot clean yourself — and to give you the words to tell someone about his mercy.

Your Prayer:

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