

Mark 5:1-20 | Gabe Groothuis

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Preacher: Gabe Groothuis

[0:00] Are we on? Very good. Thank you, Praise Team, for the music. That was great. Really excited to be here with you all. My wife is around here somewhere chasing our daughter around and we always count it a blessing to be here with you all. Thank you for the introduction, Teddy. I'm sure you shared some credentials I don't have. So if the federal government comes after me, I'll just point them to you.

Thank you. Yeah, we just greet everyone here from Bethany Bible Chapel. I know a number came down to the women's conference and they were very blessed by that. So thank you all for doing that and hosting and putting that on. And then we have Teddy's Better Half coming up to our conference here to do a breakout for the ladies in the fall. So we'd love to see you all in September. I think it's 18th through the 20th this year up in Cedar Falls. We'd love to host you all. And yeah, very thankful for your fellowship and time with you all.

I was telling Layla as we were driving down yesterday, it feels like every time to St. Louis, we feel like we leave a little piece of our heart here. We just love being with you all and we can just feel the love that you have for each other. And we're not coming back to take it back. We're coming to leave a little bit more and just continue to grow in relationship with you all and thankful for you all.

I never thought I could love St. Louis as much as I do. I mean, the traffic is crazy down here.

There's not enough Casey's gas stations and there's, you know, there's more people than pigs. You know, in Iowa, we have it the other way. We've got 28 million pigs and 3 million people here. It's mostly people. So I never thought it would be so close to us, but it is. We love it down here and we're so thankful for you all.

So with that being said, let's pray and open God's word together. Father, thank you for your word.

Thank you for the time we have remembering you this morning that you came and died for us.

[1:47] Thank you that you have left us here. Just ask that we would leave change today because of your word. We know that we can see you clearly in the word. We know that we have everything we need in the word and that it would be convicting to those of us who need to be convicted this morning and encouraging to those of us who need to be encouraged.

So we ask it in Jesus name. Amen. You have your Bibles. You can open to Mark chapter five. And I know some of you have heard this before how this message before, but it's on my heart again this morning.

And the Lord has continued to lead me in this chapter over the past year. And so if you've heard it before, just smile and nod along. And if you haven't, you can smile and nod along too. My wife and I always joke when we do kids meetings, you can tell when kids are not being, you know, they don't like your preaching because they make faces.

Adults are much nicer. They just kind of smile and nod. So Mark chapter five is the story of Jesus with a demon possessed man. And when I was sharing this with the youth group back home, I would ask them, you know, find me in the gospels, the story of Jesus and the three beggars. And they would start looking in the gospels and they'd start flipping around and say, you know, I'll give you a hundred dollars if you can find the story of Jesus and the three beggars. And they'd start Googling and looking it up. And eventually we'd open to Mark chapter five.

[3:01] And really the title for today is going to be three beggars, two worshipers and one missionary. Three beggars, two worshipers and one missionary. And we're going to see Jesus's interaction with the demon possessed man.

And so with that being said, let's read Mark chapter five and we're going to read on the first 20 verses. Jesus, for context, he has just calmed the sea and he's crossed over now and he's at the country of the Gardenas.

The area that was actually a Gentile area, he's left Israel and he's just calmed the wind and the waves and he finds himself here. So Mark five and one says, then they came to the other side of the sea, the country of the guardians.

And when he had come out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tomb, a man with an unclean spirit who had his dwelling among the tombs. No one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains.

And the chains have been pulled apart by him and the shackles broken into pieces. Neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

[4:06] When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshipped him. Did you see that? Did you see the worshipping that happens there? He ran and worshipped him. And he cried out with a loud voice. He said, what have I to do with you, Jesus, son of the most high God?

I implore you by God that you do not torment me. For he had said to him, come out of the man, you unclean spirit. And then he asked him, what is your name? He answered him, saying, my name is Legion, for we are many.

Also, he begged him earnestly that he would not send them out of the country. There's the first beggar that we see. Verse 11, now a large herd of pigs was feeding there near the mountains. So all the demons begged once again him, saying, send us to the swine that we may enter them. And at once Jesus gave them permission. And the unclean spirits went out and they entered the swine. There were about 2,000.

And the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea. And they drowned in the sea. So those who fed their swine fled and told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what had happened.

[5:07] And they came to Jesus. And they saw the one who had been demon-possessed. And he had had the legion sitting and clothed in his right mind. And they were afraid. And those who saw it told them how it happened.

And who had been demon-possessed and about the swine. And they began to plead, or the ESV would say they began to beg him to depart from their region. Then he got into the boat. And the one who had been possessed by the demon begged him that he might be with him.

However, Jesus did not permit him, but said, Go home to your friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you. How he had compassion on you. How he departed and began to proclaim and decapolis all the things that Jesus had done for him.

And all marveled. This idea of begging something from Jesus. We're just going to look at three points, three perspectives today. And take some application.

But I want you to think back. What's the last few things that you have asked the Lord Jesus for? Maybe it was a prayer time and you had a list and you were praying through things. Or maybe it was just in the quietness of your heart.

[6:11] Maybe driving to work. Or maybe on your way here this morning. What have you been asking the Lord Jesus for? What have you been begging him for? What do you want from him?

There's a lot of good things we can ask the Lord Jesus, isn't there? My wife and I like to pray that our daughter would come to know the Lord someday. That's a good thing to ask of the Lord Jesus. There's also times I just ask that he would just make my life easier.

There's a lot of times I ask that. And maybe not always the best thing to ask. But it tells us a lot about the position of our heart. When we look at what we've been begging or asking the Lord Jesus for. Or those of you with young kids know that what is being asked of you can show the position of the heart.

Right? What your kids ask you for. I remember when I was a kid, I always wanted whatever the cool thing was. The new fad. The new style. We were a big homeschool family. We did not have the new things.

We had the old things and the hand-me-down things. And I thought the shoes that all my friends had. That's what I wanted. So I begged for those things. Or man, all the cool kids get to eat McDonald's every day.

[7:12] I just want to eat McDonald's. I just begged for McDonald's. And I saw my neighbor was a skateboarder. I was like, I just begged them for weeks for a skateboard. And some of these things I got them as time went on. And they didn't really satisfy.

I remember wiping out so hard on that skateboard and tearing my knee. And I remember when I got my first job, I ate McDonald's like every day for a week and got sick. And, you know, I got the things that I wanted.

And it didn't actually fulfill or satisfy. So let's look at the story and see these different perspectives, the things that they were begging for. Remember, there's three beggars, there's two worshipers, and there's one missionary.

Three beggars, two worshipers, and one missionary. Let's see if you see them. The first group we're going to look at is the demons. Point number one, we're going to look at the demons and what they begged the Lord for.

And in verse 10, we see that they begged that he would not send them out of the country. And in verse 11, they begged to be sent to the swine. It's interesting here, the demons feared the power of Jesus.

[8:09] The demons feared the power of Jesus. It's an interesting thing, isn't it, to understand that someone has power but not have any relationship.

The demons had no relationship with the Lord. They were not in good relationship. They, I would assume, were the ones who were cast out of heaven, but they still understood his power. I'm sure you know, I believe it's in James 2, verse 19, you believe there is one God, that is good.

Even the demons believe that and shudder. And these demons, they did not want a relationship with Christ. They didn't want to be near Christ, but they feared power, the power that he brought. They saw Jesus as the ruler that he was.

You could even argue that maybe they had a better view of Jesus than some of the others in this story. They knew who he was. What did they ask of Jesus? What did they ask of him? They said, let us go into the swine.

And what does he say? If you have your Bibles, it's there in verse 13. At once Jesus gave them permission, and the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine. He said yes to what they asked for.

[9:15] Isn't that interesting? The demons had a request of the Lord Jesus. The ruler of all, Colossians would say, the creator of all. The ones who feared his power, he said yes to them.

You know, the power of Jesus is an interesting thing. It maybe isn't the most exciting thing to talk about. Sometimes people get a little uncomfortable that we serve a powerful God. Right? We like to sometimes sing about we serve a risen Savior.

Man, what a powerful God it is that could be raised from the dead. What a powerful God it is that could cast out demons. And if you look back just in the verses before, you see that he's calming the wind and the waves.

He calms the storm of a sea, and then he calms the storm that are in the mind of a man. It's a powerful God. And the demons wanted nothing to do with that power.

I remember when I was a kid, we would read a lot of books as a family, and my parents would read Narnia to us a lot. And there's a line in The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe where Lucy's asking the beaver, she says, hey, this Aslan guy, this guy who's going to rule, he's going to be king, is he safe?

[10:22] Is he safe? Do you know what I'm talking about? They're all talking there, and she hasn't met him yet. And the beaver says, safe? Who said anything about safe? Of course he's not safe, but he is good.

He's the king. I tell you, he's the king. Man, we serve a God who is powerful. We serve a God who is powerful. And although the Lord Jesus came humbly and lowly and had nothing that should be desired, he still was powerful.

And the demons recognized this. Don't miss that. These ones recognized the power of the Lord Jesus, but they feared it. See, power with no relationship, there's not a lot of trust there. Power with no relationship, that's not a good place to be.

If you leave here today and you only see the Lord Jesus is powerful, but you don't have relationship, man, you're missing out. The demons did worship him because of his power. They did give him glory. And one day everyone will give the Lord Jesus glory.

There will be a day every knee will bow to the Lord Jesus. Those who have believed in this life and those who haven't worshipped will be given to the Lord Jesus someday. Man, what a privilege for those of us who are in relationship that we can worship him now.

[11:28] Yeah, it's a fearful thing to know the power of God but not have relationship with him. The demons feared his power. They asked to be sent to the pigs. They saw him, the ruler that he was, and they wanted to be separated from him.

And Jesus granted that request. Point number two, I call them the villagers. I think one of the translations says villagers. This one says the swine tenders or the ones who took care of the pigs. How did they view the Lord Jesus? What did they beg him for? Do you see it there in verse 17? In verse 17, they began to plead with him to depart from their region.

The ESV said that they would beg him to leave that place. Beg him to leave that place. So I would say the demons feared the power of Jesus. The villagers or the pig tenders, they feared the presence of Jesus.

They did not want Jesus' presence. They didn't want him to be near. They didn't want him to stay there. They saw some things they didn't understand. The demons had a very real understanding of his power.

[12:29] I don't think these people had any understanding of what was going on. And it's very interesting to me. They seemed to have a greater love for their pigs than for the Lord Jesus. Isn't that interesting?

They had a greater love for their pigs than the Lord Jesus. I know it's kind of funny to say, who could ever love a pig more than the Lord Jesus? But they saw that as their livelihood.

I'm sure they saw it as something that 2,000 pigs, it depends on the price of pork, but that's a lot of money. Maybe they just saw their dollar bills plunging into the ocean. And they thought, if this is what it's going to be to have a relationship with this person, we don't want anything to do with that. We want to be far away from that. They feared the presence of Jesus. I was thinking about pigs, and I was thinking of the acronym, you know, P-I-G. What is anything we put in God's place or put in the place of God? We all have those things that we love.

We all have pigs in our life, right? Maybe they can be good things. It could be our job or even our community, even other things we put in the place of the Lord Jesus. There's times it can be costly when the Lord Jesus takes things out of our lives.

[13:31] And if we want to be in the presence of the Lord Jesus, there may be things that he takes out. And these people said, no, we don't want this. You know, we're warned in 1 John 2.15 not to love this world or the things of this world because it gets our minds so twisted.

You know, it was interesting to me. I thought these are probably the same people that chained and bound this man and tried to control him multiple times. You know, in my neighborhood where I live, Cedar Falls, Iowa, it's really not that loud and crazy.

But occasionally there's a duplex next to us. There's occasionally some things that get a little funky over there. And the group chats in the neighborhood are incredible. Like there's like a Facebook group chat and then there's the text and then there's Nextdoor.

And it is incredible to me how territorial people get about their space. And I think we're the youngest couple on the block by a lot. So it's a lot of retired people and they want to keep a tight ship.

And when these people kind of act up, it is like they would do anything than have any kind of rustling in the neighborhood. And I think about this neighborhood here. Like imagine you're a realtor showing a house, you know, at the Garcians.

[14:37] Like here we have the pig farmers. Here's the village. There's the tomb where the man cuts himself day and night and screams and casts himself upon the rocks. And occasionally we bind him with chains. But don't worry, he'll get out.

And he's been doing this for years. And, you know, it's like that's not normal. That's not normal behavior. It had to be a terrible thing for that community. It had to be a pretty helpless place to be to think we can't even bind this man.

We can't even hold him back. But what they were saying to the Lord Jesus is we would rather have that and our pigs than you and lose our pigs. Isn't that wild?

We would rather have this unruly, demon-possessed craziness happening day and night that we have no control over. At least we know what's going on there.

We don't know what's going on with you. And when your presence comes here, it may make us uncomfortable. It might cost us something. They would rather have had the demon-possessed man and their pigs than give them up for the Lord Jesus.

[15:34] So they begged him to go away. They begged him to leave. Billy Graham used to preach on this, and he would always say that the saddest prayer the Lord Jesus answered is when an unbeliever asks him to go away.

The saddest prayer he answers is when an unbeliever asks him to go away, and he says yes. They begged him to leave. He said, leave here. I'm sure no one here is asking the Lord Jesus to leave them.

But I would wonder if there's areas of our lives where it might be easier if the Lord Jesus would just maybe, we would just want a little space from him at times. Oh, you know, we're committed to being with you maybe certain days of the week or these areas, but this one area of my life, I would really like to keep that for myself.

That's a place that's uncomfortable when your presence is too close there. My conscience is bothering me. It'd be better just to have, yeah, just leave me with a couple of my pigs.

I've given up most of them. Like I said, in Iowa, there's 28 million pigs and 3 million people, so we each could have 7 or 8, you know. I've given 6 of them. Can you keep, just let me have one or two. I just want one or two left for myself.

[16:38] I think of Nehemiah, who in the temple had that room that was supposed to be for the offerings, and Tobiah and the wicked people were filling it up with things for themselves. And Nehemiah purged that out of the temple.

Not any place in the temple should there be anything except for what's for the Lord. I mean, our bodies are the temple, right? We should be purging out anything that's not of Christ, and it may cost us something. But let us never be ones who would beg the Lord Jesus to leave us.

Let us never be ones who would beg the Lord Jesus to go away. I think of the Lord Jesus, and we'll see, it still had very much a heart for these people. I think he saw their fear. I mean, I wonder if they did notice.

Maybe I'll just read it. Mark chapter 4, verse 35. Just the context before this, it says, I'm sure this was strange for the disciples.

Why are they leaving the area of Jesus? Why are they leaving? I mean, I've heard all kinds of thoughts on why he was leaving the Jews to go to these Gentiles, and you can have all your thoughts on that. I don't know the answer, but it is interesting he does that. In verse 36, when they let the multitudes, they took him along in the boat.

[17:41] The other little boats were also with him. A great windstorm arose, waves beat into the boat, so it was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. I love that detail that there was a pillow in the boat, like one little comfort when you're serving the Lord.

It's like, I love that. I always bring along a little bit of nerd clusters or something when we have a trip together. Just one little comfort. I'm not sure it's biblical, but I like it. You can point there. When they awoke him, he said to him, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?

He arose, rebuked the wind and the sea, and said, Peace be still. When the wind ceased, there was a great calm. And he said to them, Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? And they feared exceedingly and said to one another, Who can this be that even the wind and the sea obey him?

I would just imagine that these villagers are viewing this from the perspective of land. The disciples and those who were with him were fearing when they saw him do this. What were these people thinking? They just thought, What in the world?

This one, he can control the wind and the waves. He can heal this demon-possessed man. He commands even creation. Even the pigs obey him. Is he safe? Can we have him with us here? [18:46] What else could this cost us? Man, they had no idea what it would cost them to not be with the Lord Jesus, right? They had no idea what it would cost to not turn to him. The Lord Jesus, it sounds like he listens to them.

If you finish reading through the Gospels, there's no evidence he ever returned to this area. He doesn't say explicitly that he doesn't, but there's no evidence that he did. I can't find anywhere that he ever came back. So it would seem that he listened to them.

He answered yes to the demons who were worshipping him, but they feared his power. He said yes to these villagers or these pig herders who feared his presence. There's no evidence that they ever worshipped him.

But now let's talk about the demon-possessed man. Verse 18 of Mark 5 says, When he got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged him that he might be with him.

Begged him that he might be with him. Is that a good or a bad thing to be with the Lord Jesus? Good thing.

[19:48] It's a good thing, right? A good or bad thing to spend time with the Lord Jesus. It's a good thing. Good or bad thing to walk with the Lord Jesus. Good thing. This was a difficult one for me.

Man, you see this. Man, why would the Lord Jesus not let him come with him? There's times the Lord Jesus says, follow me, isn't there? When he calls Nathaniel and Peter and James and follow me.

Even the rich young ruler he offered, follow me. But this man, he said, no. Go back. You know, something interesting is Jesus talked with his disciples. He told them time and time again, a time is coming when you will not see me.

There's a time coming when I will not be with you. When the bridegroom is here, you'll rejoice. But there will be a time the bridegroom leaves. And there will be one who will be left for you, the helper, the Holy Spirit. Have any of us here seen the Lord Jesus physically?

I mean, we have not seen the Lord Jesus the way the disciples did, the way this man did. And I think this man begged to be with Jesus. I think what he feared was a life of faith in the Lord Jesus.

[20:54] Having to be separated from this one. How could he possibly continue? How could he go back? I mean, what would it look like? I mean, he had the physical Lord Jesus here. He probably just wanted to hold on to him for all he was worth.

I'm guessing there were similar thoughts maybe with the disciples as the Lord Jesus ascended. You've read right at the end of your Gospels when the Lord Jesus brings them out. It says they worshipped him, just like this man was, but some doubted.

How were people doubting the Lord Jesus after he raised from the dead? I think they were afraid. Afraid that he would leave. They wouldn't be with him. They couldn't grab on to him. They couldn't hold him. They were like Thomas saying, I need to touch him to believe.

I think this demon-possessed man who was healed, he feared a life of faith. He feared what it would take to walk by faith and not by sight.

Not to be near to the Lord Jesus. He's just a baby Christian here, right? Luke's Gospel, Luke 8 and 35 says when they came up the same story, they said he was sitting at the feet of Jesus. That's a great place to be, sitting at the feet of Jesus.

[21:53] You could go through the Gospels and see all those, Mary and the one who broke the perfume, and others who were at the feet of Jesus. It's a great position. I would say in the Gospels it's the position of prayer, being at the feet of Jesus.

But for us it's a spiritual position. We don't have a big statue up here today of Jesus, and we don't go and kiss the feet or do anything like that, right? But we can be at the feet of Jesus, can't we? We can walk with Jesus. We can go along. The Lord Jesus was telling him, hey, you're worshipping me now, but your worship's going to go further than this. I'm going to send you out as a missionary to your own. You're going to go live a life of faith.

He was going to have to learn, just like the early church was, that it's a walk by faith, it's not by sight. Jesus tells him no. It's interesting, isn't it?

He says yes to the demons, yes to the unbelieving crowd, and he says no to the believer, the one who was sitting at his feet, the one who wanted to be with him. I think if I brought someone to the Lord, it's like a new convert and he's saved.

[22:51] I mean, would there be anything better than I could tell you all? I mean, this guy is doing great. But what if after six months, nine months, a year, two, three years, he's still caught up that he's never seen the Lord Jesus physically?

You would start to press this. No, you will see him physically one day. You will. And I believe, don't we believe that? You will see the Lord Jesus? I mean, as clearly as you see me now, I believe you'll see the Lord Jesus.

And man, what a day that will be. But until then, what a privilege, what a joy. It's very interesting. It says he went out and proclaimed all that Jesus had done for him and all marveled.

The ones who had rejected the Lord Jesus, who had asked the Lord Jesus to leave, when they heard it from this man's own mouth, they marveled. I don't know what they did with that marveling. I pray and hope that it led to repentance.

And when you share what the Lord Jesus has done for you, man, people will marvel at that. What are you begging the Lord Jesus for?

[23:51] He sent him back to these people because he, I think he loved those people. He wanted them to know, and he wanted this man to walk by faith. Just an encouragement for some believers here.

There have been times in my Christian life, I was saved at a young age, and I've seen this also in others. There's times in your Christian life where sometimes you think, it would just be easier if I could just go home to heaven right now.

It would just be easier if I could just be with the Lord Jesus. If he could return and I could see him physically, or if I could just go be with him. We got a report from our chapel yesterday.

There's a man, he is going through some severe pain back home, nerve damage and different things. They just can't get it under control. It's not his secret. He's very depressed right now. He's really struggling. A lot of us are praying for him, and the chapel family is definitely coming around him.

But that man has a road to walk right now that's tough. It's really tough. I'm sure that's a prayer he's thought. Man, it'd just be easier if I could just go home. Our culture and our society doesn't really know how to handle these thoughts, do we?

[24:55] When depression and suicidal thoughts and anxiety, and I just don't even know. How can I continue on? Think about this man who was possessed by demons.

Man, that's tough. He's possessed by demons and going back to the land. He said, man, this is difficult. Man, I just want you to know the Lord Jesus is so near to those. I don't think the Lord Jesus was far off from this man at all.

I think when he sent him back, he was telling him, you can live a life of faith. I'll be just as close to you. I'm sending my helper, the Holy Spirit. He said, it's better that I leave so that the Spirit can come.

Man, it's a difficult thing to say I'm going to walk by faith. To live is Christ. To die is gain. We were exhorted by Zach Lynn with that yesterday. I just thought, man, he made a great point.

We all would say to die is gain, but can we honestly say to live is Christ? No matter the hardship he's put in front of us, to live is Christ. It's all for Christ. We're going to walk by faith. It reminds me of someone else who was asking the Lord for something.

[25:58] You know, in the Scriptures, there's a lot of times people ask the Lord of things. Mark 1, there's a leper who begged Jesus. Mark 10, blind Bartimaeus. Mark 9, a father begging for his son. Mark 5, the synagogue leader begging for his daughter.

All these people begging the Lord Jesus for things, but the one that I thought of was in the Old Testament. We will close there. Open to Psalms, if you would. Psalms chapter 27.

Here is someone who was begging Jesus for something. Someone who would have experienced hardship, family hardship, physical hardship, spiritual hardship, sin, reconciliation, many things. It's God's servant David, a man after his own heart. In Psalm 27 and 4, one of my favorite verses in the Psalms, it says, One thing I have desired, or one thing I have asked, and that I will seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

That was the one request of David. He said, If I could ask of one thing of the Lord, it would be to be near him. It would be to be with him. In this life, that's by faith.

[27:08] Day by day by day. Hebrews 11, 6. Without faith, it is impossible to please God, for we must believe that he exists, and he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him. By faith now, it will be by sight later.

The mission that God has called us to, it is not a lonely mission. We are still close to the Lord Jesus. And man, I think it's absolutely appropriate to beg him for reassurance of that, because there's times it doesn't feel that way.

But the Lord Jesus, he did not forsake this man. He did not abandon him. So what are you begging him for? Are you worshiping him as a new believer? Praise God. Are you worshiping him just in fear? I would encourage you, have a relationship with him.

Get to know him. He is altogether lovely. There is nothing deceitful in him. He is worth knowing. But be careful. Be careful when you beg him for things that you shouldn't. Reach out and beg to be near him and beg to be with him, that we could gaze upon his beauty.

I don't know if there's a closing song. Do you guys do a closing song? Maybe I'll just give thanks, and then we can have our closing song. Father, we thank you for the Lord Jesus. We thank you for this account in Mark's gospel.

[28:14] He perfectly knew the heart of man. He perfectly knew their need. And he knows our hearts and our needs. And these are encouragements to me this morning. I pray the encouragement to the believers here. We thank you for their encouragement to us.

Would you reward and bless them for their hospitality and kindness, we would ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you.