

# The demon possessed man

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. A special welcome to those who are visiting with us. There's one or two and it's good to see you. If you're able to stay behind please do so and have a cup of tea with us in the hall there at the end of the service.

The intimations you have are on the sheet in front of you here and also have been on the screen. Just to remind you that the evening service is at 6.00 till 7.00. Still I make an effort to stick to the hour for the service. It's good to see some of the children coming out. There's maybe one or two who used to come out but are not coming out just now. So be encouraged parents to come back 6.00 till 7.00 the English service in the evening. Bible study, road to recovery, prayer meeting are all on at the usual times and the usual places. There's no Jam Club this Friday because we have our communion services over the course of the coming weekend and you have the details of that on the sheets here. The service is on Thursday both taken by the Reverend Roddy Morrison whom we know well. Friday morning Gallic Paul Murray and Friday evening through until Sunday evening will be the Reverend Malcolm McLean who's been with us in the past and we look forward to hearing God speak through him and also those others again soon. There will be a fellowship after the evening service next Sunday. Hospitality team 2 will be on duty and there's a sign-up sheet for food at the door on the door on the way out of the church there. So those concerned please take note of that and if those are able to help then please the food would be appreciated. These I think are all the intimations.

One intimation that I want to just make also is for those who are thinking about the Lord's table and who've never yet come to the Lord's table. If you sang verse 3 and meant it there. If you can sing about his blood, Christ's blood, making the foulest clean, his blood availed for me, then the table is a place where you should come. We are those who are sinners. Our hearts are foul as we sang but we have a saviour who shed his blood to make our hearts clean and if we've asked for that forgiveness, if we're trusting him, if he's cleansed us, then we should come and bear witness to that fact.

So if anybody wants to do that they can come over the course of the weekend as usual. If anybody wants to speak to me or one of the elders in advance just to talk about what that means, please also feel free, be encouraged to do so. So let's now draw near to God in prayer. Let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this your day. We thank you for the gospel message that we have sung in the hymn that has been before us. We thank you Lord that although we are those whose hearts are made foul because of our sin, we can come together today in the name of Jesus who is the saviour.

[ 3 : 44 ] We thank you that we can come to him as the one who said to all who are weary and burdened, lay down with the weight, under the weight of sin. We thank you that he calls us to come and to find rest and to find cleansing in and through his blood. And we pray Lord that if there is anyone here this morning who hasn't yet come, we pray that they would even in the course of these moments silently pray in their hearts, confessing the reality of the sin that makes our hearts foul and coming to Jesus for that cleansing. We thank you that when we confess our sin, you have promised that you will forgive us. We thank you that when we admit that we are unclean, that we are foul. And when we ask for that cleansing through the blood of Christ, we are promised that we will be purified from all unrighteousness. So we thank you Lord for the the vastness of these promises. We thank you Lord for the call of the gospel to come to Jesus, the one the Father sent, the one that the Holy Spirit directs us to and shows us our need of.

Enable each one of us we pray this day as we gather in the name of Christ to come to Jesus and to find that rest for our souls, to find that forgiveness of our sins, to find that hope which can be found in no other place. We thank you Lord for your great love for us.

We are called to come and to freely receive that pardon for sin, but we know that it came at such great price. And as we again consider the prospect of coming to the Lord's table, as once more we are directed to remember the death of Jesus, his body broken for us and his blood shed for us.

We thank you Lord for that amazing grace that was purchased through the blood of Christ. Enable us Lord never to be flippant, never to lose that sense of awe and wonder at the cross that Jesus went to suffer and die so that we might live. We thank you that the gospel message is that message about Jesus that he lived for us and that he died for us and that he rose from the dead and he reigns presently and one day soon will return to take all his people to be with him eternally in heaven. Enable us we pray Lord to have eyes to see, listening ears to hear and hearts that will be responsive to that message of the gospel. And if we are those Lord who have responded, if we are Christ's and have not yet confessed that, we pray that each one who believes in the secret we'd come forward to confess their faith, even as we look forward to that table that will be spread next weekend if we are spared to see. We pray for those who will come and bring your word to us.

We ask that you would give to them a word from heaven and we ask that you would give us ears to hear and eyes to see. We ask Lord that we would know your blessing over the weekend as we pray, that we would know your blessing and serve us here today. And just as we pray for ourselves Lord, we pray for others who meet as we meet. We pray for the congregations around us in this place.

[ 7 : 26 ] We pray especially for those who gather around your table in the Free Presbyterian Church this morning. We ask Lord that they would know your blessing and your presence with them. We pray for the ministry that begins in Scalpie and the Free Church continuing and we ask that your hand would be upon Mr. Kemp, that you would speak through him Lord, that you would achieve much through that ministry that will be for your glory. We pray for all those who are in special need Lord today. Those who are sick, we thank you that we can bring them to you in prayer as we read in the Gospels and we pray for those that we are aware of who are struggling and who are sick. Those who would desire to be with us but can't be here today. We ask that they would know your hand of healing upon them and your presence with them. We pray for those who struggle with addictions that keep them away from people for periods and we ask Lord that you would draw near to them. We thank you that Jesus is the one who is able to break the chains of sin and addiction and we pray for those who struggle with that. We pray for those who are troubled in their minds. Those who may have a good measure of health and strength but whose minds are wandering and becoming confused and we ask Lord that you would minister to them. You are the God who is able in the power of the Holy Spirit to do what our words cannot do and we pray for them. We bring them to you Lord and ask that you would be near to them.

We pray now that you would continue with us in this service. Go before us and enable us we pray to fix our eyes upon Christ. For we pray these things in his name and for his sake. Amen.

Boys and girls would you like to come forward please? How are you all today? All good? Can I sit here? Maybe just move back a little bit so I can chat with you.

Put your hands up if you ever, ever get scared. The girls are mostly admitting that they sometimes get scared. Some of the boys get scared sometimes and they're putting their hands up to tell us.

And some of the boys get scared other times and they're not putting their hands up to tell us. I think everybody gets scared sometimes. I remember Maddie's brother. He's a very strapping, strong man and he was a big strapping, strong bond and he was asked in primary one to write a story in his primary school class about what he's scared of. The teacher said, write a wee story about what you're scared of and then draw a picture. And do you know what he wrote? He wrote, I am scared of nothing.

[ 10 : 31 ] And then you do a picture of a tracker because you like him. But even he sometimes got scared and gets scared. A year ago this weekend he actually got taken into hospital very fast because he was very sick and he almost lost his leg. And he was scared and we were all a bit scared for him but we're thankful that God helped him and he's much better. But sometimes we get scared, don't we?

And so what I want to do this morning is I want to give you a message from God, a verse from the Bible that God wants you to hear when you're scared. It's 1 John chapter 4 and verse 4. So this is really important so open your ears up, listen for this one. 1 John chapter 4 verse 4. It says, Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. Now if you're a Christian, who is in you?

Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. God. He is God in you. He's God in you. He's God in you. He's God in you. And he's promised that if you believe in him, if you ask him to take your sinner away, not only does he come close to you and sit beside you like I'm sitting beside you just now, but he promises that he'll come and he'll live right inside of you.

And he says to John, greater is he that is in you. Greater, stronger, bigger, mightier is Jesus who's in you than anyone or anything that's in the world.

So if you're going to your bed and it's getting a bit dark and it's nearly half past 10 and something's in your head and you're getting a bit scared, remember that verse.

[ 12 : 51 ] Maybe you have a scary dream and you wake up at 3 o'clock in the morning. And you remember this, Henry. Greater is he that's in you if you're trusting in Jesus than he who's in the world or anyone who's in your dream.

See, if you're trusting in Jesus. See, if you're trusting in Jesus, boys and girls, who do you have to be scared of or what do you have to be scared of?

That's the right answer. Silence and then nothing. You don't need to be scared of anything.

Last night at 11 o'clock when some of you were probably in your bedrooms and you were almost asleep and you had your wee kind of little bed lights on just so you didn't get too spooked.

And all of a sudden, everything went super dark. I'm just going to be in my room steady. You might get very scared.

[ 14 : 09 ] But we don't need to be scared of the dark. We don't need to be scared of anything, do we? If we know that Jesus is in us. And just so you remember that, I'm going to show you one thing.

And you can think about this when you're feeling a bit scared. Now, this is something that somebody showed me and I showed you this before. So you're thinking, I've seen this before.

You have seen it before. Some of you haven't, but most of you have. But it's a good thing to remember. Imagine you're this cup. What's in that cup?

Nothing. Nothing. Can I crush it? No. Crushed. Isn't it?

Yeah. Because there's nothing in it. You'll be dead. And I'm a bit stronger than this plastic cup. Don't you see the next one, though? What's this?

[ 15 : 11 ] A cup. A cup. A cup. But what's in it? It's strong. It's steel. It's super strong. And see if I try and crush this.

It's in a marriage. No. No. It's metal. Did it crush? No.

It didn't crush. You know why? Because the thing that is inside of you is stronger than me. And if Jesus is living inside of you, there's no one and there's nothing in this world that can crush you.

So you don't need to be scared. If you're trusting in Jesus, do you? So let's pray. Dear Lord, we thank you. In a world that sometimes feels a bit scared, we have the promise strongly that we're trusting you.

We don't have to be scared of anything or anyone. We ask, Lord, that you would help us. Whether we're in primary school or whether we're in church here.

[ 16 : 22 ] We ask, Lord, that you would help us all, young and old, to trust you. And to know that you are living in us. And we thank you, Lord, that when you're living inside of us, we don't need to be scared.

But we can be encouraged and we can feel safe every day in this world and forever. So help us, Lord, we pray to trust in Jesus. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Okay, boys and girls. Remember as they go to pray for them. If we can turn in our Bibles to Mark chapter 5, please. Mark chapter 5. And we'll read the first 20 verses of the chapter.

This is God's word. They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him.

This man lived in the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. For he'd often been chained hand and foot. But he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet.

[ 17 : 27 ] No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day, among the tombs and in the hills, he would cry out and cut himself with stones. When Jesus saw from a distance, when he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him.

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.

For Jesus had said to him, Come out of this man, you evil spirit. Then Jesus asked him, What is your name? My name is Legion, he replied, for we are many.

And he begged Jesus again and again, not to send them out of the area. A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, Send us among the pigs.

Allow us to go into them. So he gave them permission. And the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. They heard about 2,000 in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

[ 18 : 35 ] Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and the countryside. And the people went out to see what had happened. 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. Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man and told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he had mercy on you.

So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed. Amen.

And may God bless that reading of his word to us. Could you turn with me, please, to Mark chapter 5, the passage that we read together. We'll pray as we go there.

[ 19 : 43 ] Lord God, we wait upon you now, as the psalmist did, with expectation, believing in your promises that those who seek to draw near to you, you will draw near to.

We thank you, Lord, that you are the God who promises that when we wait upon the Lord, you will renew our strength. And we pray that we would know your presence, and we pray that we would know your strength now, as we meditate upon your word.

It's food for our souls. And we pray that those who are believers, Lord, that we would be built up through it. And for those, Lord, who are not yet believers, we pray that you would speak and enable ears that have previously been blocked to be unblocked, and eyes that have previously been shut to see, hearts that may previously have been increasingly hard to be softened.

Lord, we ask that you would work amongst us for your glory. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. One of the things that we look forward to over the communion weekend, as we look forward to it just now, is we look forward to the prospect of hearing testimonies, hearing about what Jesus has done and is doing in the life of his people.

And every person who is a Christian, every person who is a Christian has a testimony. And yet every testimony is different.

[ 21 : 15 ] There are no two, there are no three testimonies of God's work in the life of a person that are the same. Some may be very dramatic and sudden.

They can take people and they can take the friends of these people unawares. God breaks in. And others can be much more gradual and gentle.

And we can see our work that begins and progresses and eventually is brought to a point of salvation. And here in this chapter here, Mark 5, I was going to look at the whole chapter but I decided to just stop.

You can be relieved about that. And rather than looking at the whole chapter, I want to look just at the first 20 verses. In the chapter, structurally you'll see, we have three testimonies.

We have three encounters, three different people who encounter Jesus at points in their lives and who come to faith or who are touched in a dramatic, remarkable way by Jesus.

[ 22 : 25 ] But I want to just consider the first testimony in the passage today and that's the conversion of the demon-possessed man. And I want to look at this under hopefully five headings if we have time.

The first heading is war. War. Verse 1. They, that's the disciples, went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.

When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. During a time of war, a soldier must never be, be off guard.

There's always the potential for attack. So the soldier has to always remain alert. Now Jesus, when he came into this world, instantly was the, the center of and the epicenter of a spiritual warfare that had been going on since the fall but intensified as Christ came into the world.

As soon as he came into the world, as an infant it was war. Herod wanted him dead and he made every effort to, to seek him and to kill him.

[ 23 : 44 ] Matthew chapter 2, you can read about that dark episode in the Christmas story. And then when Jesus' ministry begins, as Mark records it for us in Mark chapter 1, no sooner is Jesus out of the water having been baptized, stood in the place of sinners and the Holy Spirit came upon him and there was such a blessing.

No sooner has that blessed experience come to an end and there's war. He's in the wilderness and he's under attack.

You can read about that in Mark 1, 9 to 11. And throughout Jesus' ministry that war continued. Even think about this in the chapter that we're in and the previous chapter that we were studying last week.

We have in the previous chapter such intense demands on Jesus in terms of ministry. The crowds pressed in on him constantly. There was such overwhelming need and Jesus ministered constantly and he met these people at the point of their need.

He must have been exhausted. It wasn't like me doing two hours a week. Constant ministry. Constant. And then at the end of that day that Mark paints for us in Mark chapter 4 he goes into the boat and the crowds are pressing in on him constantly.

[ 25 : 08 ] Part of the reason he went into the boat and he says let's go over to the other side and then the weather changed and there is this storm that seems to come from nowhere.

A tempest as it has it in the AV. Some of the commentators say that the Greek word that's used to describe the storm at the end of Mark 4 is a word that has a sense of satanic menace about it.

There's a hint of war even in the storm as Jesus tries to get his head down for a few minutes. And then after the trauma of that episode no sooner is Jesus on the shore and we see a man with an evil spirit who flies at Jesus.

He comes from the tombs to meet him. He doesn't want to greet him. He doesn't want to worship him. He wants to go to war against him. And what Jesus experienced is what his people will experience.

We need to be real about this. If we are Christ's people we're in a war. If you're looking for a life of peace and tranquility the Christian life is not a life that offers that to you.

[ 26 : 22 ] There is rest. There is eternal peace. There is a sense of one who is with us and who steadies us in the battles but it's a constant battle. Ephesians chapter 6 listen to what Paul says the apostle.

He says be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers against the authorities against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore put on the full armor of God so that when the day of evil comes you may be able to stand your ground. These are words of warfare. Peter tells us in 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse 8 be alert and of sober mind your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Warfare. Spiritual warfare. We see it constantly throughout the ministry of Christ. It intensifies because God the Son is there. We rarely see demonic possession today but in the passages of the Gospels there are so many episodes of demonic possession.

We say why is that? It's because God the Son is there and there's an intensification of that spiritual warfare but it's a warfare that if we're God's people or if God is working in us or amongst us we have to expect this and especially before communion be alert this week be on guard this week the devil will be at his most active seeking to keep those who have come to faith seeking to keep them away from the table seeking to cause disunity amongst those who will sit at the table seeking to cause any manner of trouble he will be active we're at war let's remember that let's be aware of that let's be alert to it first point here is we see that warfare that war second point here as we look at this episode is there's a warning that we see in this look at verse 3 this man lived in the tombs and no one could bind him anymore not even with a chain 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 night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones sometimes you get an advert on television it's designed to shock us designed to kind of shake us out of the sleep sometimes that we fall into when there's imminent danger the advert that springs to mind is the advert that comes on from time to time about drink driving sometimes you see these adverts and they paint this kind of scenario and one moment it's Christmas time and there's a

[ 29 : 27 ] Christmas party and people are in their party dresses and they're laughing with each other and they're having a drink and it's all very civilised that's the first scene and in the second scene you see one of the people who had the glass in their hand get into their car and in a split second it's devastation it's a smash and there's blood and there's injury and there's trauma and there's sirens and it's graphic it's a picture of ruin and it's designed to warn us or to shock us into not going down that foolish dangerous path now these verses are graphic and they're meant to be this is a scene that we see and it's kind of disturbing you have a picture of a man here a man who's made in God's image image and yet he is disturbed beyond words can even paint for us and it's a warning it's a warning about evil for us to take note of the rolling stones sang a song I don't know was it the 60s or the 70s and one of the lines in the song was don't play with me because you're playing with fire here we find a man and we don't know much about his history we don't know much of his backstory but we do know that he played with the fire of evil and his life now in the pages of scripture in that community at that time his life now is burning up before their very eyes no longer is this man living at home with his family in some measure of peace no longer does he have a circle of friends that he can share life's experiences with he's living in isolation he's in the tombs he's in the graveyards he's been driven out of the community he's not permitted to live there he's been tied up with chains that's what they would do with people like this they would chain them somewhere away from people and initially the chains held him it seems but now we learn in verses 3 and 4 that the chains no longer hold him and no one could bind him and no one could subdue him he's a man who's out of control people are terrified of him take a good look at this because this is what evil looks like this is the devil's work in a life this is a very clear and stark and disturbing presentation of what the devil will do if a life is opened up to him we know I hope we know anyway the devil likes to glamorize his persona and his work he's an expert wearer of masks and all of them are beautifully crafted and all of them are very convincing and he has many many strategies that he tries to draw us in with for some it's the image of a beautiful body that he puts before us and says look and look some more and look some more it's designed to draw one in for others it's the sparkle of just another drink just one it'll be fine it's not fine for others still it's the hit of a narcotic high for others still it's that thrill of passing on that juicy bit of gossip that juicy bit of gossip that you've heard you don't know if it's true but you've heard it and no one else knows it and you can pass it on and there's a thrill in doing that see temptation wouldn't be hard to resist if it wasn't attractive if it wasn't some measure of pleasure in it but in this passage the devil's mask is removed the destroyer you could say he's exposed the depravity of what he does in a

life that is open to him it's laid bare in these verses and it's a warning to us we might look at a passage like this and almost disconnect ourselves from this and say well you know this is an extreme example of something that happened far away and long ago it's nothing to do with me this is a warning for every one of us this is a lot to do with every one of us we see sin in high definition here we think we can play with it to be honest but it's like playing with fire and before we know it when we're playing with sin it's out of control the spark of sin has caught fire and before we know it everything about our lives is ablaze we think we can keep sin under control just chained up subdued but we can't it grows and it bursts through every boundary this man is a warning to you and I about sin and evil and any degree of tolerance in our lives towards it so even

Jesus in his first sermon in his first point said repent don't entertain sin don't play with it turn away from it here's a man who didn't turn away from it and who now is consumed overwhelmed with this evil with this sin we have a warning here about sin and evil we're also given a warning here about hell I hear people saying when they talk about the prospect of eternity well you know I don't want to go to heaven I want to go to heaven because that's where all my friends are that's where the party's going to be that I want to be at that's where all the best tunes are playing I want to be in that place with all the people that I've spent my life with it's one of the devil's lies this man is in total isolation hell is isolation it's abject total eternal loneliness and separation from all that is good this man is in torment he's cutting himself he's always in pain he's always crying out and again we're given a taste of what hell looks like it's a place of never ending pain and torment and crying this man is living in the tombs he is tied to death day after day he's removed from life and everything that is good and again it has the flavor of hell about it it's a place of eternal death the second death so we have a warning here in this man's life about sin and evil and what that looks like as it escalates in us we have a warning here about the prospect of hell we see something of what the devil does and what he leads us to if we decide to go down his path and so the application here is for us to note the warning the point that we have to grasp here is that if we choose not to be with

Jesus we choose the devil and these are his terms this is his plan for your life this is his plan for eternity you may dress it up with all kinds of glamour that Jesus strips it all away in this passage and he says this is what the devil does so you warn there is a war there is a warning third point there is a wrestle the scene is set now we have the demon possessed man here before us he has many demons that have overtaken him a legion of demons is raging within him a whole community is terrified of him there is not a soul there is not a group of men there is not anybody that seems to be willing to take this man on they're terrorised by him so we have this man on this side and then we have Christ who walks off the boat and into the scene and they're set against each other and they're in different corners and they're at war and now the wrestle begins verse 6 when

Jesus saw when he saw Jesus from a distance he ran and fell the AV says he worshipped him it's a bad translation he didn't worship him he shouted at the top of his voice what do you want with me Jesus son of the most high God does that sound like worship swear to God that you won't torture me for Jesus had said to him come out of this man you evil spirit then Jesus asked him what is your name my name is legion he replied for we are many and he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area a large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside the demons begged Jesus send us among the pigs allow us to go into them he gave them permission and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs the herd about 2000 in number rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned what I wanted to highlight in this point the wrestle it's just the fact that it's no contest you know the better point actually would have been the walk over not the wrestle there is no struggle between

[ 39 : 24 ] Jesus and this man there is no question for a split second over who is the strongest here the second the bell goes and the fight begins we find this demon possessed man and he's driven to his knees and we hear the evil spirits and they're forced to submit to Christ instantly and then we see the evil spirits leaving we visibly see them leaving through the pigs another demonstration of the destruction and the death that the devil inflicts upon all those that he gets a grasp of but what I want us to see is just the power of Christ note here the power of Jesus we get a glimpse in these moments of the authority and the power of Christ can you imagine the disciples as they were standing there watching all of this at the end of the last chapter they're in the boat the boat's getting thrown all over the lock they're in fear of their lives they wake up

Jesus they say don't you care he stands up and he speaks a word peace be still the storm is gone the wind and the waves obey him to the terrified disciples and then once they get to the shore they see the intense powers of darkness are no contest whatsoever to Christ he speaks a word that's all he does come out of this man you evil spirit says Jesus and he has to come he overcomes them with a word he wrestles and he instantly wins and the point of application is for our encouragement how good it is to have this Jesus for us if you're a Christian how good and encouraging for us to know that God the son he is with us he's in us and as

Paul the apostle said if God be for us who can be against us if God is for you if God is with you yes you'll come up against a whole lot in the warfare spiritually speaking but his promise is that there is nothing in this life and there is nothing in death that can overcome us if you're trusting in Christ this morning you have nothing and no one to fear what a blessing that is what is it that keeps you up at two o'clock in the morning three o'clock in the morning if you're in Christ you don't need to fear nothing no one in the past in the present in the future because most of our worries are off in the future but there's nothing in the future that we have to fear if Christ is with us and Christ is in us so take heart be encouraged if Jesus is your saviour and if he's not your saviour take him as your saviour you'll never overcome him if you determine that you are going to set yourself against

Jesus and you can either be for him or against him there's no middle ground if you decide to set yourself against Christ you have no hope but if we trust him we have eternal hope and assurance one would think that on that day in that place as they witnessed all that they saw their response would be to instantly trust Christ and bow before him and say be my saviour be my protector be my shield be my defender but sadly the reality is different fourth point there's a willful rejection verse 14 those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside and the people went out to see what had happened 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 those who had seen it told the people what happened to the demon possessed man and told about the pigs as well then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave the region we have such a clear illustration of what

John spoke of in John chapter 3 verse 19 he says this is the verdict light has come into the world Christ but people love darkness instead of light and for so many here in this passage the concern they had was for the pigs who had no soul rather than the man and is never dying so their concern was over the economy and the money that they had just lost they weren't really interested in the salvation that Christ had to offer their concern was over the authority that this Jesus had and when they saw it and when they experienced something of it it made them uneasy they didn't want him ruling over them not in their region so rather than coming to Jesus in faith they plead with Jesus to leave they reject him willfully I wonder if there's anyone here this morning and that's what you're doing you see the authority of

[ 45 : 22 ] Christ you've experienced something in your life of the power of Jesus as he draws you to come to him but he unsettles you he scares you a little and to be honest you'd rather have the pigs you'd rather keep the money you'd rather have a have a Jesus free life so you close your ears and you close your eyes and you you plead with him leave me leave me to live my life my way I don't want you as Lord I know none of us articulate that in prayer but every week we walk out that door unconverted having heard the gospel silently we speak it we choose pigs over pearls we choose cash over Christ we choose Satan over the Saviour we choose hell over heaven see as Lewis said there are only two kinds of people in the end those who say to

God thy will be done and trust him and those to whom God says in the end thy will be done you didn't want me you don't get me all that are in hell says Lewis choose it there's a willful rejection and finally very briefly there's a witness we go back to this man Jesus has saved him he's transformed he's gone from being this naked bloodied frenzied crazy man whom everyone was terrified of and he's sitting now and he's in his right mind and he's fully clothed he's transformed he's gone from being a demon possessed man to becoming a disciple of Christ and we know that because his new desire is to be with Jesus verse 18 as Jesus was getting into the boat the man who had been demon possessed past tense had been now freed had been demon possessed begged to go with him and that's the definition of a disciple somebody who desires to be with

Jesus there's many people who who can have an encounter with Jesus but the disciple the converted the saved transformed person wants to go on with Jesus and that was this man's new desire he wanted to go with Jesus off scene off to a new place a new adventure but in this situation Jesus actually wanted him to stay he wanted him to stay with the family that perhaps he'd become estranged from go back to them he wanted him to become reacquainted with the friends that perhaps once he was close with and now he'd lost he wanted the people who were so terrified of him to see him why so that he could tell of how much the Lord had done for him so that he could tell them and show them the evidence of the mercy that

God had shown him witness says Jesus don't walk away witness Jesus did not let him verse 19 he said go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you so the man went away and began to tell the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him and all the people were amazed and if we're Christians this morning that's what Jesus calls us to do to tell of the fact that we're Christians to witness to people to our family to our friends to what Jesus has done in our lives to witness to the fact that God had mercy on us we are sinners but God had mercy on us to witness to the fact that our desire is to be with him to not be ashamed to call him our Lord witness and witness says Jesus and the table is the place that we go to do that we do that every day but we do that in a special way next Sunday for a spirit to see it we bear witness to what the Lord has done in our lives we bear witness to the fact that we who deserve punishment were shown mercy we bear witness to the fact that once we were blind but now we see we bear witness to the fact that Jesus is the

God who saved a wretch not just like this man but like this man like all of us who are trusting Christ we pray heavenly father we thank you for sending your son the Lord Jesus into this world we thank you for these encounters that are recorded for us in the gospels we thank you that Jesus is indeed the one who is able to break the chains of sin that bind even the most depraved lives even the lives that have become so entrenched in evil and yet with a word they are freed to the power of Christ we thank you Lord that that is still the power of Jesus that comes through the word and the power of the Holy Spirit that when we look in faith to him we are promised that the chains of sin that bind us will be broken and that the forgiveness of God will be given to us so help us Lord we pray not to reject the Lord

[ 51 : 04 ] Jesus not to ask him to leave us to be to live the life that we want to live but enable us we pray to submit to Jesus to trust him to seek that salvation while it's still available to us and then to bear witness to all the mercy that you have shown to us in Christ and we ask this in Jesus name Amen and now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forevermore Amen