

## Break Out of Chains Mark 5:1-20

### *The Gerasene Demoniac*

5:1 AND they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes. 2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him, 3 and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; 4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. 5 And constantly night and day, among the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out and gashing himself with stones. 6 And seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; 7 and crying out with a loud voice, he \*said, "What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!" 8 For He had been saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" 9 And He was asking him, "What is your name?" And he \*said to Him, "My name is Legion; for we are many." 10 And he began to entreat Him earnestly not to send them out of the country. 11 Now there was a big herd of swine feeding there on the mountain. 12 And the demons entreated Him, saying, "Send us into the swine so that we may enter them." 13 And He gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea. 14 And their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and out in the country. And the people came to see what it was that had happened. 15 And they \*came to Jesus and \*observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the "legion"; and they became frightened. 16 And those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and all about the swine. 17 And they began to entreat Him to depart from their region. 18 And as He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was entreating Him that he might accompany Him. 19 And He did not let him, but He \*said to him, "Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you." 20 And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone marveled.

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Beside the imagery discussed below, notice the begging:

- the demons begged to be left alone, and for mercy
- the towns-people begged that Jesus just leave
- the delivered man begged that Jesus not leave him

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Think about the imagery in this story:

- The man lives in the tombs, and sometimes we think our life is over
- The man shrieks in pain, and we often cry out to God in our pain
- The man is demon possessed, and sometimes we feel like we have no control over anything in our life (it can feel out of control)
- The man beats up his own body, and life sometimes beats us up (*see his bludgeoned, bruised and battered body*)
- The man is naked, a symbol of shame and humiliation we have all felt

The man's life is an image we're all too familiar with ... hurt, humiliation, and hopelessness.

And, of course, there are the **chains**. We're told 3x that chains can't hold the man. Matthew (8:28) tells us that this is a serious problem, because the man is violent and dangerous, and obviously, very strong (the "spirits" make him strong --- think about Samson and "Spirit of the Lord" coming upon him).

The mention of chains is critical to this story, because chains are an image of bondage. See, **it's ironic that while the man could not be held by chains, but he was still in bondage** (*focusing on the image of bondage*).

The man had found himself in dire straits, an utterly **hopeless situation**. His life was over, and the demons were set on seeing that literally happen. That's why we see him annihilating his own body. And, of course, the fact that he lives in the tombs has a morbid overtone to it. But Jesus turned hopelessness into happiness!