

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Mark 5: 11-20

Praise the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We will continue to read Mark chapter 5, verses 11 to 20.

Earlier we read that Jesus took His disciples across the Sea of Galilee and came to Gerasene on the eastern shore. This was a Gentile city and some Jews supposedly lived there. While Jesus carried out His earthly ministry, He always started from the house of the Jews. Jesus came here for a demon possessed man who dwells among the tombs. He cries out day and night and no one could bound him, not even with chains and shackles and he often cut himself with stones. As soon as Jesus went ashore, he came to Jesus and claimed that Jesus is the Son of the Most High God. Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' He said, my name is Legion; for we are many. They begged Jesus not to send them out to the Abyss.

Verse 11: "Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. "

This hillside should be where Gerasene meet the Sea of Galilee. At the bottom of the hillside is the Sea of Galilee, like a cliff, where a large herd of pigs happened to be eating there. In Leviticus 11, verse 7: "The pig is unclean to you because its hoof is divided in two and does not chew the cud". Clean animals chew the cud and with their hoofs divided. Pigs do not chew cud, so they are unclean. Jews cannot eat them nor offer them as sacrifices. Therefore, raising pigs is an unclean business for the Jews. Perhaps it was raised by gentiles and was intended to be sold to the gentiles.

Verse 12: "So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them."

This group of demons knew that Jesus' intention was to save this man, and these demons must be driven out from him. Ghosts can't do anything without a body attached to, although man is the best place for them, they knew that Jesus loves this man and will cast them out of him, so swine are an acceptable choice. They asked Jesus to send them to pigs so that they could possess them.

Verse 13: "And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea."

Jesus gave His permission for demons' request for compared to man's life what are the pigs? From typology, pigs are unclean, and raising pigs is an unclean business. These are matters controlled by Satan in the world. It is reasonable for demons to enter a herd of swine. With Jesus' permission, the demons entered the pigs. As a result, the pigs couldn't control themselves and rushed off the cliff and threw themselves into the sea. The number of pigs in this herd was about two thousand, which was quite a huge operation at that time. All of sudden, they all drowned and all back to zero.

Verse 14: "So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. "

This group of pigs were raised on the hillside. In today's terms, they were organic free-range pigs, a bit like the famous Spanish Billy pigs today. They do not eat artificial feed, they are grazed by humans. When the pig herder saw the pigs suddenly going crazy, they rushed down the mountain, threw themselves into the sea and drowned. He was so frightened that he hurried to the city and the countryside to tell people that something big had happened. When everyone heard it, they came to the cliff together to see what happened.

Verse 15: “Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the Legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. “

When the crowd came to Jesus on the edge of the cliff, they saw the man who had been possessed by demon sat by Jesus. In the past, he always shouted loudly, naked and hurt himself with stones, arrogant and uncontrollable so he lived alone in the tomb. But now everyone saw a man sitting upright next to Jesus. Upon closer look, it turned out to be the man possessed by the devil. However, he was now wearing clothes and in his right mind, and no longer shouting and uncontrollable. Instead, he sat quietly next to Jesus. They must have recognized this man, because of his change, and everyone was afraid. It should be a joyful thing that a person who was demon possessed and crazy is now back to normal. But everyone’s reaction was indeed fearful. This reaction is really strange. Maybe these people have scolded him, hit him, or bullied him before, but now that he has returned to his right mind, they were scared.

Verse 16: “And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine. “

The one who saw this must be the pig herder. He saw with his own eyes what had happened, how Jesus cast out the demons from this man, and how the demons got into the pigs; two thousand pigs rushed off the cliff into the sea, and they all drowned. In the eyes of Jesus, one man is worth much more than two thousand pigs. But in the eyes of that group of people, what does the quality of this man’s life has to do with them? But the two thousand pigs, which were their assets, and their livelihood, were gone instantly. They felt it was not worth it and their living was threatened. Although this way of making a living is unclean, it can bring them monetary gain. Now this financial lose is just the beginning, if Jesus continues to stay there, they couldn’t imagine what more damage they will suffer.

Verse 17: “Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.”

They want Jesus to leave; they do not welcome Him. They would rather stay in darkness and continue their unclean business than accept the salvation of Jesus. Dear brothers and sisters, this is the real situation of people living in a world controlled by Satan. Most people are unwilling to welcome Jesus and accept Him for their own interests or even interests obtained through improper means. Therefore, when we preach the gospel to others and are rejected by others, do not be surprised, because people value earthly possessions and despise spiritual blessings.

Jesus did not argue with them, and left quietly with His disciples. This is the discipleship training Jesus gave His disciples. Don't think that because you have become a messenger of God's gospel, they should welcome you and accept you, even if you help those in need. On the contrary, other people's reaction will be to resist you because they have suffered financial losses. God gives people free will, and He never forces people. Likewise, when we preach the gospel and people don't accept it, we shouldn't get angry, let alone curse. We should just leave quietly and go elsewhere to find the Son of Peace whom God has chosen.

Verse 18: “And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. “

Jesus took His disciples into the boat again to return to Capernaum. The purpose of Jesus coming to Gerasene was to save this man who was possessed by a demon, and at the same time, He brought 12 disciples with Him: it is considered to be their field internship. When Jesus and the disciples were getting into the boat, this demon-possessed man came to Jesus and asked to go with Him. When we look at this man, not only did a group of demons were cast out of him, but he also repented and was saved and he wanted to follow the Lord.

Verse 19: “However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.”

Normally, if someone wants to follow the Lord, the Lord will gladly accept it. But for this person, the Lord did not allow it because the Lord has another task for him. The Lord says to him, go home to your relatives. There, that is, to those who love you and accept you, you testify to them. You tell them how God has shown mercy to you and how He has used His power to drive out a large group of demons from you.

Jesus wanted this man to use his personal experience as gospel to testify to others, because what we have experienced ourselves is the most subjective, direct and convincing way. He wanted to follow Jesus, maybe he would like to learn more from Him. But Jesus told him that his duty is to be a messenger of the gospel of God, and be sent by Jesus to bear witness to others.

We see that the large congregation in Glasson all saw or heard a great miracle, but they valued earthly possessions more and missed the heavenly grace and blessings. This man who was possessed by a group of demons was the most despised and lived alone in a tomb, a crazy person who hurts himself. Now he met Jesus, the demons were cast out, he repented, and he was saved. Not only that, he was sent by Jesus to become a messenger of the gospel and bear witness for Jesus. What a great transformation! God indeed resist the proud but gives grace to the humble. Grace is like water, always flowing from high to lower ground. As long as we are humble enough and our position is low enough, we will be able to receive the abundant flow of grace from God.

Verse 20: “And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.”

Decapolis, ‘Deco’ means ten and ‘polis’ means city; they are 10 big cities at the southeast side of the Sea of Galilee. They were all important cities at that time. Decapolis is a huge area. The man heard Jesus’ words and obeyed and was sent by

Jesus to bear witness for Him in Decapolis. He went thru Decapolis and proclaimed the name of Jesus to all; they were all marveled for what he said, he had experienced himself; such testimony is the freshest, liveliest and most touching way to proclaim the gospel. We know that in a few months, Jesus will take His disciples on a second missionary trip. At that time, they will pass through Decapolis again. Therefore, Jesus wants this man to prepare people's hearts in this area first. To tell them about His testimony was to prepare their hearts to be ready for Jesus to come in person to preach to them. Although he wanted to follow Jesus, Jesus told him directly what his mission was. Dear brothers and sisters, God has a different plan for each one, and our responsibility is to prepare ourselves first: read the Bible and pray every day, receive supplies from the Lord, and always seeking for His presence. I believe that sooner or later you will understand what God has entrusted to you, and the greatest glory in our life is when we are done in this world and see the Lord, the Lord will say to us, 'good and faithful servant, come in and enjoy the joy of your master.'

Let's pray: Lord, thank You. You value every soul, even the one possessed by a group of demons and despised by men. You still value him much greater than those two thousand pigs. Lord, give us the same vision, regardless of man's worldly position and status, but to cherish each one that You send to us. Everyone is created by You and cherished by You. Also give us the opportunity to take what we experienced and enjoyed as a testimony of the gospel and spread it to friends around me. I am not better than others, nor am I more precious than others, but You chose me and gave me the wisdom of salvation, so that I can receive Your grace and accept You as the Savior of my life. You also helped me to understand Your commission to me. Give me the heart of faithfulness and goodness that I may obey Your will and fulfill my ministries from You. Pray, in the holy name of Jesus Christ.