

SHORT-TERM SMALL GROUPS (FALL 2015)

JESUS SERIES- week six

Facilitator: Ask your small group members for any feedback from the message this past weekend.

Facilitator: As a way of introducing your group discussion time, begin by reading Mark 5:1-20 as a group. This will set the stage for the video.

5 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.^[a] ² When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. ⁴ 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. ⁵ Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. ⁷ He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" ⁸ For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!"

⁹ Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." ¹⁰ And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

¹¹ A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. ¹² The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." ¹³ He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

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. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. ¹⁷ Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

¹⁸ As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹ Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." ²⁰ So the man went away and

began to tell in the Decapolis^[b] how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

Facilitator: Watch the video; ask your group members to jot down any words/phrases/thoughts from the video.

Facilitator: Ask for feedback from the group.

The state they found the man:

- Possessed
- Living in the tombs
- Cutting himself (Unable to stop cutting himself)
- Possessed by demons (named Legion); Legion was a military term that represents 1000 soldiers
- Clothes were torn/undressed

In short, the description of his life represents a life of addiction!

The man's encounter with Jesus:

- Healed by Jesus
- Delivered by Jesus
- No longer tormented by the demons
- Clothed
- Right mind (restored)
- Ability to reengage culture (returned to his town)

Several thoughts for discussion:

1. The contrast between the “before and after” of the Gerasenes man. This man's life was totally transformed by his encounter with Christ!

Discussion: Ask if anyone in your group has had a dramatic “before and after” because of their encounter with Christ.

2. The bigger idea of demonic possession is described by Peter where he makes a distinction between “being totally controlled by a demonic force” and “not acting normal to your nature.” Both examples are possible. An example of the last “not acting normal” could be a time when you were not demonstrating courage when normally you would act with courage...in this case you are “not acting normal” in your mind.

Often when an area of life is not working well there are also negative, even at times, tormenting thoughts present. Many times there is fear, anger, hopelessness that things will change, deep sadness, etc...

Many times these situations foster beliefs that are not in alignment with God's Word concerning our lives.

Discussion: Ask the group if anyone would like to share a past or current time in their lives when this has been true.

3. The story closes with Jesus getting into the boat, with the man who had been demon possessed pleading to go with him. Jesus tells him "No" and sends him back to his town to be a witness of what God has done for him.

Discussion: Our story of how Christ has changed and is changing our lives is personal to us, and very powerful. Ask if one or two people (depending on time) would like to briefly share their own God story.

Personal Application:

Ask your group to jot down on a piece of paper several significant points that are part of their own personal story of encountering Jesus. Encourage them to make note of one or more things that have changed in their lives as a result of their encounter with Christ.

Closing Prayer