

Life Connections

Small Groups – Big Impact



Breakout

I Am Free

Mark 5:1-20

(For the final three sessions in the series, “Breakout”, we will use the pastor’s teaching outline to review the passage, and the pastor’s discussion questions at the end of his sermon for our group reflection.)

Ask: What do you remember about the background and cultural contexts that Pastor David described?

Background to the Story

- Mark 1:7 — John the Baptist declared one more powerful than he was coming
- Mark 3:22-27 — Jesus rebutted the scribes’ ridiculous claim that he cast out demons with demonic power
- Mark 4:36-41 — Jesus demonstrated his divine power by stopping a storm. The disciples asked: “Who is this man?”
- Immediately following the storm at sea, Jesus and the disciples encounter a wild demon-possessed man on the shores of the Gerasenes.

Cultural Background

- **Decapolis:** a cluster of ten cities in a region primarily inhabited by foreigners (Gentiles)
- **Legion:** a Roman military term for a regiment of 6,000 foot soldiers and 120 cavalry
- **Regional/territorial gods:** a culturally held opinion that gods and spirits were limited to a certain region or territory
- **Pigs:** not only banned from the Jewish diet as an unclean animal, but used by Gentiles to try to force Jews to denounce faith in God by force-feeding them pork.
- **Name:** it was believed that to control or manipulate a god or spirit, one could evoke the spirit’s or god’s name.

READ THE STORY: MARK 5:1-20

Ask: What three sets of characters did Jesus encounter in the story?

- the evil spirits
- the man
- the community

Ask: How did each set of characters relate to Jesus?

- the evil spirits tried evasive tactics
 - ▶ fake worship
 - ▶ intimidation
 - ▶ control/manipulation
 - ▶ turf protection
- the community tried their own version of evasion
 - ▶ more concerned about the man's behavior
 - ▶ more concerned about the pigs
 - ▶ more concerned about protecting their own turf

Ask: What requests did these characters make of Jesus?

- the evil spirits asked Jesus to send them to the pigs
- the community asked Jesus to leave and not come back
- the man asked Jesus to let him go with him as a disciple

Jesus granted two of the three requests. Which one did he not grant?

How did the community find the demon-delivered man?

- **Sitting:** a metaphor for discipleship
- **In his right mind:** a metaphor for freedom; to be whole
- **Clothed:** a metaphor for receiving Christ's righteousness

What should we take away from the story?

- Jesus needs no special techniques to overpower evil.
- Jesus places more value on one man than he does 2,000 pigs or a community's profits.
- People are up against super-natural powers that are opposed to God. (Ephesians 6:10-18)

- Jesus knows no hopeless cases.
- Only Jesus can make us wholly human, and set us free to be the persons he created us to be.

Reflection Questions:

1. What powerful forces keep you from being the person God created you to be?
2. What promises of freedom through Jesus did you hear in today's story?
3. How will increasing your intentionality and time spent in God's Word help you break free?
4. What has Jesus already done to set you free? Who will you tell?

How do I find meaning in this story?

John 8:31-32, 36

- ***Sit at Jesus' feet:*** study and obey the Word.
- ***Know the truth:*** Truth is a Person, not a concept. Pursue a love relationship with Jesus, the Truth.
- ***Live Free:*** Free from sin and fear, be the person Jesus created you to be.
- ***Tell your story:*** Report to others how Jesus has set you free and made you whole.