

A Man Delivered

We are continuing to review the Word of God in the broad topic of “walking by the spirit”. Specifically, this morning we are considering items associated with the manifestation of Discerning of Spirits. We will be reading a record out of the Gospel of Mark, but this particular incident is also mentioned in Matthew and Luke as well. The specific verses are Matthew 8:28 – 34, Mark 5:1 –20 and Luke 8:26 – 39.

There are some very obvious differences between these three passages and this gives me the opportunity to mention a book written by Rev. Walter Cummins titled *The Acceptable Year of the Lord*. Many of you will be familiar with the books *Jesus Christ Our Promised Seed* about the birth of Jesus Christ and *Jesus Christ Our Passover* about the last week of his life and his resurrection to the ascension. This book covers the time in between those and puts the records from all four Gospels together within the time frame of one year.

Because Rev. Cummins in his work deals with some of the apparent discrepancies in these three accounts, I am not going to do that this morning. Rather, we are only going to be reading the record in Mark 5 and spotlighting the manifestation of Discerning of Spirits. It is worth noting that in this passage of 20 verses, one can see all three informational manifestations (word of knowledge, word of wisdom and discerning of spirits) and all three power manifestations (believing, working of miracles and gifts of healing).

Mark 5:1 – 5

The incident that we are going to read about takes place on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus spent more time on the western side but here he has crossed to the other side of the sea. When he comes

out of the ship, there met him a man with an unclean spirit (or a devil spirit). Actually, as we will learn, this man had many spirits possessing him. These spirits caused this man to be very fierce and strong and to do unnatural things.

It is interesting to me to note that the community recognized that this man had problems and they tried to help the man by restraining him with chains and fetters. According to one Bible dictionary, fetters were for the feet only but chains were for any part of the body. Among other things, this man was doing harm to himself and the community tried to help him by putting him in these restraints. Today in our society, we are a little bit more sophisticated and we are able to restrain people with these kinds of behavioral problems with drugs. But these drugs do not cure; if the patient stops taking the drugs, the problems come right back. As Jeff Wendling shared with us some time ago, spiritual problems cannot be solved by five senses solutions.

Mark 5:6 – 8

We read these verses and, on the surface, it appears that it was the man doing and saying this. But the man was not in control, the unclean spirit(s) were. It is interesting that the spirit recognized Jesus as the son of the most high God.

Jesus was commanding the spirit to leave. Jesus did not berate or criticize the man; he spoke directly to the spirit. Jesus did not plead with the spirit to leave. He did not pray about the spirit leaving. He did not hope that the spirit would go.

Mark 5:9, 10

Beginning with verse 9, it will be important to be clear about the pronouns that are used and to whom they refer. As we are reading, we will note the pronouns as they occur. Rev. Cummins work that I

mentioned previously takes great care to do this. Through this record reference will be made to the many devil spirits, the ruling devil spirit and to Jesus. We want to be clear on who the pronoun refers to.

Mark 5:11 – 13

Among the critical Greek texts, in verse 13 there are some that read “and forthwith he gave them leave”. Jesus never tells the spirits to go into the swine. (This agrees with what is in Matthew and in Luke). Jesus simply commanded the spirits to leave the man.

Mark 5:14 – 17

Here in verse 15, we see the results of the operation of the power of God. This is a cure – the cause is removed so the symptoms disappear. No more unnatural behavior, no more being out of control. We also see the effect on others who witnessed this scene – they were afraid.

In verse 16, when they that fed the swine began to tell others what had happened, remember that they could not see the spirits. All they knew was that when Jesus arrived, this crazy man ran up to him. Jesus appeared to talk to him and the man got calmed down and all of sudden the pigs went wild and ran off the cliff.

Mark 5:18 – 20

No more living in the tombs. This man gave testimony to the fact he was delivered by Jesus, who was manifesting the spirit and power of God.