The Power of Jesus
Mark 5:1-20

The power of the enemy cannot be tamed by man (1-4)

After the storm that the disciples went through on the Sea of Galilee, they probably would have been happy in just resting when they reached the shore, but following Jesus continued to reveal that everywhere they went there was ministry to be done. As soon as the disciples and Jesus stepped onto the shore, they were met with a demon possessed man that was living among the tombs in the area where their boat landed. God’s Word describes the man with an unclean spirit in an interesting way that reveals the power of the enemy in this world. We are told that no man was able to contain or control the demon possessed man. The demon possessed man was out-of-control, and there were no chains or shackles that could hold him down and tame his behavior. The demon possessed man, being controlled in every way by the power of the enemy, reminds us today that the power of the enemy is significant in this world. The demon possessed man reminds us that we don’t have the power to tame the enemy on our own. Against the power of the enemy, we are powerless with only our own, human power.

1. Do you believe that demon possession and oppression still happens today? Why or why not? What evidence is there in Scripture to support your view?
2. Read John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11. What is Satan called in these verses? What does God’s Word say about his power in this world?
3. Read 16:11 again as well as Revelation 20:7-10. What do these verses tell us about who can tame the enemy?

The purpose of the enemy is to destroy the life that God gives (5)

The demon possessed man had no life. He lived among the tombs, and his only known contact with people was in their attempt to control and subdue him. In verse 5, God’s Word tells us that he walked about “crying out and cutting himself....” What a power picture of the destructive purpose of the enemy in the lives that he possesses. The enemy’s purpose was to destroy this man’s life. He destroyed the man’s social connections with others. He destroyed the man’s security and shelter in life. He destroyed the man’s emotional health, and the enemy was destroying the man’s physical life. In every way, the enemy was damaging the image of God in this man and was destroying the life that God had given him. Today, the enemy’s plans have not changed. His purpose in the world in the lives of those that he oppresses and possesses is to destroy the life that God has given them.

1. Read John 10:10. In the illustration that Jesus used in John 10, he equates the work of the enemy to the work of a thief. What does Jesus say the purpose of the enemy is in this world? Discuss what each of these things means in a practical way in the lives of people in the world today.
2. Have you ever experienced the enemy’s destructive work in your life or in the life of someone you love?

The power of Jesus overwhelms the power of the enemy (6-13)

Incredibly, the man who no man could tame immediately fell in surrender before Jesus. The spirits that possessed the man recognized who Jesus was, and the the spirits knew that they had no power over Jesus. After confessing the reality of Jesus’ identity as the Son of God, the demons asked Jesus not to torment them. They went on to beg Jesus for permission to enter into the swine that were grazing nearby. The exchange between Jesus and the demons possessing the man was amazing. It revealed that in the presence of Jesus
the demons had no power to do anything except what Jesus gave them permission to do. In other words, the power of Jesus overwhelmed the power of the enemy. Today, the power of Jesus is still the same.

1. Read Acts 16:16-18. What happens in Acts 16:16-18 that is similar to Mark 5:1-20? How did the spirit in the slave girl know who Paul and his companions represented? Through whose power was Paul able to cast the demon out?

2. Read Romans 8:11. As believers, who dwells in us? Read Matthew 28:20. As believers, who promised to always be with us? What do these verses remind us of when it comes to dealing with the power of the enemy against the life of a believer?

The power of Jesus can restore life that's been destroyed by the enemy (14-15)

   The power of the enemy had no power over Jesus. With a simple command, Jesus cast the demons out of the man and restored the man to his “right mind.” He had the man clothed, and immediately, the man experienced the restoration of his physical, social, and emotional health. The heart of what the enemy had destroyed in the man’s life — the dignity and gift of life that God had given him — was restored, and all the people who had once been afraid of the man and didn’t want to be around the man now found the man restored and subdued with Jesus. Today, Jesus is the only One with the power to restore what has been destroyed by the enemy in lives of people in the world.

   1. Who has a testimony of God’s incredible power to restore something that the enemy destroyed in their lives or in the life of someone that they know? Share your testimony with the group.
   2. Who knows of someone whose life has been destroyed in some way by the enemy. Make a list of names of people who need the powerful, restoring work of Jesus in their lives. Pray for these people by name.
   3. Who do you need to talk to this week about the power of Jesus to restore life that’s been destroyed by the enemy?

The wrong response to the power of Jesus is a fear that pushes Him away (16-17)

   The people were amazed at the power of Jesus, but they were also frightened by His power. He healed the man that no-one could tame, and he also seemed to be responsible for a whole herd of pigs that had died. The people didn’t know what to do with Jesus, and they were afraid of what else He might do! They were probably wondering what else might be lost if they allowed Jesus to stay in their area, and so instead of responding in the right way, they responded in the wrong way. They asked Jesus to leave. Today, people are often afraid of what Jesus might do or take away from them. Instead of responding in the right way to His power, people at times still respond in fear and push Jesus away.

   1. Have you ever experienced this kind of fear in the power of Jesus, wondering what He might take away from you or do if you really let Him stay in your life? If so, why? Share your experience with the group.
   2. What would you say to someone who was struggling with the pushing Jesus away because of fear?

The right response to the power of Jesus is a surrender that leads you to obey (18-20)

   When asked by the people to leave, Jesus left! But the man who had been possessed by the demons didn’t want Jesus to go, at least not without allowing him to go with Jesus. The man asked Jesus for permission to follow Jesus along with the disciples, but Jesus didn’t let the man go. Instead, Jesus told the man that he wanted the man to stay behind in order to share his testimony about what Jesus had done in his life. If the people didn’t want Jesus to stay, Jesus still wanted someone who knew Him and had experienced His power in their life to stay. Jesus wanted the man to tell others about what He had done in his life. The man responded in the right way, surrendering his wants to the Will of Jesus in his life. The man that had been demon possessed stayed behind and obediently shared his testimony about how Jesus had restored his life.

   1. Wanting to go with Jesus was not a bad thing to desire, so what does it mean for us today that Jesus didn’t allow the man to go? What priority seemed to be higher in the heart of Jesus than just fulfilling the desire of the man’s heart?
   2. Has the Lord ever said “no” to you on something “good” that you desired to do for Him?
   3. In what way does the man being left behind to share his testimony remind you of what we’ve been left behind to do today? Are you surrendered and obeying Jesus in this way in your life?
   4. Pray for your group and for our church that we will proclaim what Jesus has done in our lives!