**WHAT IS YOUR NAME?**

Mark 5:1-20

Key Verse 5:9a

Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

**Introduction**

 After a storm Jesus and His disciples met up with the demon-possessed man. No one could help him. He lived among the tombs without any hope. But when Jesus visited him and asked him, “What is your name?” Jesus helped him to look at himself and confess his life problem until he could become a normal human being again created in the image of God. This change in his inner man gave him a new desire in his heart, “Lord, I want to follow you.” Jesus helped him to begin a new life according to Jesus’ command. This is a beautiful story of how God can change a soul rejected by the world into a most useful man in whom all of heaven rejoiced. May God help us to have the shepherd heart of Jesus and be used in the restoration of one tormented soul.

1. Read verses 1-5. Whom did Jesus meet when he went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes? (1-2) How is the demon-possessed man described? (3-5) What can we learn here about the result of giving in to our sinful desires?

1-1, Read verses 1-5.

They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark+5&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24366a)] 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.

1-2, Whom did Jesus meet when he went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes? (1-2)

 **They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.**





“The region of the Gerasenes”

* Verse 20 also calls the region “the Decapolis,” or Ten Cites. Gerasa was one of those Ten Cities (see map).
* These Ten Cities were on the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire, east of the Sea of Galilee. This region had become a center of Greek and Roman culture.
* The cities began to be settled by Greek immigrants after Alexander the Great conquered the area in 323 B.C.
* Then the Roman general Pompey conquered the area in 63 B.C., and the local Greek population welcomed the new Roman rule.
* The Romans rebuilt each of the Ten Cities with a Roman-style streets, temples, public buildings and connected them with Roman roads. In this way they wanted to fortify this eastern frontier of their empire.
* Jews didn’t eat pork, but Gentiles did, so the large herd of pigs was obviously for feeding the Gentile settlers.
* This is the first time in Mark’s Gospel that Jesus travels outside Jewish society. He wanted to go to this place with his disciples to have a brief rest from the crowds following him.
* But on the way, they’d had to deal with a furious storm. And now when they landed on shore, their hopes for rest suddenly evaporated.

 **2 When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him.**

* Here he’s described as “a man with an impure spirit”; later we find that he has “many” demons in him (9b). It says he “came from the tombs.” Jewish people considered tombs an unclean place, the haunt of demons.

1-3, How is the demon-possessed man described? (3-5)

**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.**

* Evidently, he used to live among people, but due to his impure spirits he was out of control, and people felt he threatened their safety and tried to control him.
* But the man snapped the chains and irons. People brought their strongest men to try to subdue him, but the demon-possessed man beat them all up and ran away.
* His supernatural strength came not from himself, but from the demons in him. The only place he would not be bothered was in the tombs. The demons led him to dwell in a dark, isolated, unclean place. But even there, he found no peace.
* The man was deeply tormented. He couldn’t sleep. He hated himself. He was crying out, in great inner misery. He was mutilating his own body with stones. He no longer wore any clothing. He wasn’t keeping up any personal hygiene.

1-4, What can we learn here about the result of giving in to our sinful desires?

* At one time he might have been just an angry boy. He wanted his freedom to do what he wanted to do, not obeying anybody’s rules.
* He used to say, “This is my life and I am going to do whatever I want to do!” His sinful desires began to grow and he said “yes” to every one of them, opening the door for demons to join in these sinful events.
* Eventually, it was not he who was in control but demons, until he had become a man who was unrestrained by conscience.
* He could not be controlled by the ones he once loved and who loved him. Society no longer had a place for him since his tendencies had become destructive.
* He had become a man bound with heavy chains but there was no chain he was not determined to break, and he did. He had become a man of unlimited human freedom but this freedom led him to the tombs.
* Everyone wants a measure of independence in his or her life. But when independence becomes rebellion, their unnatural behavior and life becomes vulnerable, vulnerable even to evil spirits. Sin is lawlessness. (1Jn 3:4)
* When rebellion grows in the heart and festers, it can no longer distinguish between what is right and what is wrong.

2. Read verses 6-9. What did the man do when he saw Jesus? (6-7) What did Jesus say to him? (8) What can we learn here from Jesus? What question did Jesus ask the man? (9a) What was the man’s answer and what does it reveal about his spiritual condition? (9b)

2-1, Read verses 6-9.

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.”

2-2, What did the man do when he saw Jesus? (6-7)

**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!”**

* Obviously this man has never met Jesus before, and may never have even heard of him. It’s the demons in him who know Jesus’ true identity as the Son of God.
* We see here the man’s split personality. He runs to Jesus and falls on his knees before him, indicating that he’s desperate for his help. But then he yells at Jesus, basically, to leave him alone.
* So they say that deeply troubled people have a chemical imbalance and merely need psychotherapy and medication.
* So many Americans abuse pain pills and heroin, because people are so spiritually empty and dark. Demons come into a person when we opt God out of our lives.
* The devil and his demons are basically in rebellion against God, and they’re still working to get people to disobey God.
* And we see how confused the demons have gotten this man. They’ve got him thinking that Jesus would torture him.
* In fact, it was the demons torturing this poor man day and night. The devil still gets us to think that coming to God will be like torture. The demons are so strong, but now they’re trembling before Jesus.

2-3, What did Jesus say to him? (8)

2-4, What can we learn here from Jesus?

**8 For Jesus had said to him, “Come out of this man, you impure spirit!”**

* In the context of what’s been happening in Mark’s Gospel, Jesus clearly was very tired, so tired that he even fell asleep during a storm. But he didn’t turn around and get back into the boat with his disciples, avoiding this troubled man.
* Instead, even when he was exhausted, he saw this man with compassion. As soon as he saw this man coming from a distance, Jesus immediately perceived that he was controlled by an impure spirit.
* Jesus differentiated between the man and the demons in him. He immediately rebuked the demons to come out. Jesus has zero tolerance, absolutely no compromise, for impure spirits.

2-5, What question did Jesus ask the man? (9a)

**9 Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”**

* Here Jesus was speaking to the man, not the demons. It seems like an odd thing to say to him at this moment, “What is your name?”
* It seems kind of weak, kind of a useless thing to do. But we can learn deep lessons from Jesus’ question to this man. God.
* Our identity comes not from labels society puts on us; it doesn’t come from our family, ethnicity, gender, career choice, abilities or talents.
* We’re not defined even by our sins, mistakes or bad choices. Our unique identity, our personhood, comes from the image of God within us.
* We can find our true identity when we realize that the Creator God himself actually made us, and he made us to be like him.
* It’s the image of God that gives human life its dignity and absolute value. It’s not easy to think about, but Jesus is still asking each of us this deep and probing question, “What is your name?”
* Jesus also wanted to have a relationship with this man. It was the first thing we ask when we want to get to know a person.
* He didn’t try to control him in any way, but treated him with dignity and respect. Asking, “What is your name?” was an act of grace to bring even this man into a personal love relationship with God.

2-6, What was the man’s answer and what does it reveal about his spiritual condition? (9b)

**“My name is Legion,” he replied, “for we are many.”**

* Here we see that the demons were answering for the man. They’d taken total control. Sadly, the man no longer could even say his own name.
* A legion was a unit of the Roman army. A Roman army legion was actually stationed not too far away from here.
* But the name “legion” seems to refer to the number of demons in him. At its maximum size, a Roman legion had 6,000 soldiers.
* So with this name, “Legion,” the demons seem to be mocking Jesus, challenging him to even try to get rid of them, because they’re way too many to deal with.

3. Read verses 10-17. What desperate request did the demons make of Jesus? (10-12) What can we learn from Jesus who allowed their request? (13) What does this show about demons? How did the people in the town react to Jesus? (14-17)

3-1, Read verses 10-17.

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.

3-2, What desperate request did the demons make of Jesus? (10-12)

**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.”**

* The man is begging on behalf of the demons to stay in this area. Why that is, we can’t really be sure. For some reason they like this dark place.
* Jews considered pigs an unclean animal. And in ancient accounts demons often would ask for a concession when being forced out of somebody they occupied.
* Here, the cost for healing this man was an entire herd of pigs. A conservative cost today would be $500 per pig. There were about 2000 pigs in that herd, so today they’d all be worth about one million dollars.

3-3, What can we learn from Jesus who allowed their request? (13)

**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.**

* Jesus surely knew what would happen to the pigs. Despite this tragedy to the pigs and the townspeople, Jesus didn’t hesitate to permit this to happen, if only he could ransom this one man from the torment of so many demons.
* We learn from Jesus the value of one person, even one badly damaged and troubled person. One person, created in God’s image, is worth more than the entire universe. Jesus’ action here is challenging our value system.
* What do we value most? Our possessions? Our money? Or a person? What are we willing to sacrifice to help somebody?
* Jesus didn’t just use other people’s property to help this man. He himself paid the ultimate sacrifice to ransom all people from the control of sin and Satan.
* The key verse of Mark’s Gospel, Mark 10:45 reads, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”.
* Jesus sacrificed his very life to ransom us, and, all troubled people. It was the greatest sacrifice ever made. He calls us as his followers to imitate his example.

3-4, What does this show about demons?

* The destructive nature of demonic spirits was shown by their effect on the swine. They are like their leader, Satan whose desire is to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. ([John 10:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/john/10/10/s_1007010))
* This shows another reason why Jesus allowed the demons to enter the pigs – because He wanted everyone to know what the intention of these demons was.
* They wanted to destroy the man just as they destroyed the pigs. Because men are made in the image of God, they wanted to completely destroy him.

3-5, How did the people in the town react to Jesus? (14-17)

**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.**

* Those tending the pigs were so shocked by what happened. They immediately didn’t want to get into trouble.
* So they went and told the townspeople that this loss was caused by Jesus and that demon-possessed man.
* When they came and saw the man sitting there, dressed and in his right mind, they should’ve been happy.
* But instead, they were afraid. Partly they were afraid of the power of Jesus. Mostly they were afraid of losing any more. They were materialistic.

4. Read verses 18-20. What request did the formerly demon-possessed man make? (18) What did Jesus tell him to do instead? (19) What did the man do, and what was the result? (20) What can we learn about Jesus’ hope for all men living under the power of sin and death?

4-1, Read verses 18-20.

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](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark+5&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24385b)] how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

4-2, What request did the formerly demon-possessed man make? (18)

**18 As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him.**

* No doubt this man was so moved by the love of Jesus for him. He’d found real healing and the joy of life in Jesus.
* No doubt he also was so reluctant to go back to all those people whose lives he’d wrecked.

4-3, What did Jesus tell him to do instead? (19)

**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.”**

4-4, What did the man do, and what was the result? (20)

**20 So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.**

4-5, What can we learn about Jesus’ hope for all men living under the power of sin and death?

* This man could be a light among the people of these Gentile cities in a way that Jesus and the disciples could not.
* This story showed the value of one life to Jesus, because this was the only reason why Jesus came to this side of the Sea of Galilee.
* His story also showed that with Jesus, no one is beyond hope, because if this man could be changed than anyone could.

**Conclusion**

 Jesus wanted the man to come back to himself and find his true identity. Today people are busy in life, working, buying and selling, and drinking and indulging in their spare time. But so often people don’t even know who they are. Rather than asking questions about identity and the meaning of life, people focus on pragmatic issues and technological development. People just want to be comfortable and convenient. This way of life has left many people feeling so empty, and crying out in their souls. They end up being isolated, tormented and extremely dark. Jesus’ question, “What is your name?” was the gracious voice of God to bring this man back to himself and live as human beings made in the image of God.

**One word: What is your name?**