

## TALKING POINTS

### Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demoniac Mark 5:1-20

These points may be helpful as you plan discussion, teaching and/or preaching:

1. Where had Jesus just come from? The other side of the Sea of Galilee, which was the Jewish (religious) territory. Now he is standing on Gentile territory, making himself ritually unclean.
2. Where else in the Bible is there a water-crossing event? (When the Israelites cross the Red Sea). Each time Jesus crosses the water, the reader or hearer of these stories is to recall the story of the Crossing of the Red Sea, its significance, and how it points to Jesus as the Messiah (Jesus recapitulates the story of the Israelites in what he is doing, i.e. crossing water to free someone or a people. See point #9).
3. What might Jesus be showing his disciples about the Red Sea Crossing and their own story this day as they cross over to the gentile land known as “The Decapolis?”
4. What happened prior to this story while crossing the Sea of Galilee? Jesus calms the storm (see Mark 4:35-41). What might be the significance of this?
5. Notice: The disciples do not step out of the boat. Why? This is Gentile territory and was understood by the religious Jews as “unclean” land and people. Pigs lived on this land. To step out of the boat would make themselves “unclean.” Jesus however steps out of the boat. What is the significance of this?
6. v. 6 - The demoniac *SAW* Jesus from afar, we are told. Then we will *SEE* Jesus’ power to cast out demons. Two times sight is mentioned. A theological parallel can be made to a “first touch” and “second touch” Jesus gave to the blind man, and to the disciples (i.e. before the resurrection and after the resurrection).
7. A “Legion” was a brigade of approximately 5000 Roman soldiers, depending on the period of Roman domination in history. This name, “Legion,” identifies who the people *thought* their real enemy was at that time (i.e. the Romans). Jesus in turn will show them who the real enemy is - the Demonic. The understanding of the realm of the enemy is transferred from a nation or political power (The enemy in the Old Testament was always other nations - Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, etc. and now the Romans in the New Testament) to the realm of the demonic.
8. The Demonic can be defined as any form of Power, Profit or Position (the 3 P’s, or the “deadly trio”) which serve to benefit the self (H. Wendt, Crossways).

9. What God says, God does. Jesus spoke to the demons, giving them permission to enter the pigs, and they did. Jesus commanded the pigs to enter the Sea, and they did and were drowned (like the Egyptians who entered the Red Sea and drowned). Now, the disciples are witnessing who the real enemy is right before their eyes (the demonic), and the power that Jesus has over this enemy. Their own story (Israelites, Red Sea) is recapitulated now as Jesus re-enacts it in various ways to show the meaning of the Kingdom of God in their midst.
10. Once Jesus cast the demons out of this man, he sat “clothed and in his right mind.” He was healed. Forgiven. A Word of forgiveness from God casts out demons).
11. Notice: Jesus sends the man back to his own people to tell them what the Lord has done for him, even though the man wanted to go with Jesus. Who wouldn't want to go with the one who rescued you from the demons? It was not to be, and the man, at Jesus' command, went and told all in his home town and region of the Decapolis of what Jesus had done for him.

I hope these points may serve as “springboards” for further ideas in teaching and preaching this story.

In Christ,  
Pastor Paul Oman

## TALKING POINTS

### Jesus Heals a Woman and Raises Jairus' Daughter Mark 5:21-43

These points may be helpful as you plan discussion, teaching and preaching:

1. This passage BEGINS WITH JAIRUS. Jairus' daughter was dying. Jairus goes to someone he believes can make his daughter well... Jesus. Jairus then went with Jesus... into the crowd. The meaning of the "healing" Jairus is asking for has a double-meaning: physical healing and salvation.
2. Jarius' story interrupted with a WOMAN who enters the scene; the woman had a menstrual flow of blood for 12 years, identified as "unclean" as a result. She is most likely not married. There is a likely connection between the mention of 12 years in these stories and 12 tribes of Israel.
3. She saw many doctors, but she grew worse; perhaps the doctors were taking advantage of her (ripping her off?) even though they were unable to help. She went to the full extent of the law to try and find healing and had nothing left.
4. She had heard about Jesus. As an unclean woman, she was not to be in public, yet she still came to Jesus for help and healing; she touched his garments. As she touched Jesus' garments, she made Jesus unclean because she is unclean with the flow of blood; a rabbi would most likely not want this incident to be noticed in the crowd so that everyone would not know that he was now also unclean. He would likely keep moving on without saying a word. Jesus, however, is not concerned about this. Instead, Jesus asks, "Who touched my garments?"... so that the disciples and the crowd would hear his question.
5. She says, "If I touch his clothes I will be made well." Immediately she was made well, and immediately Jesus knew power had gone forth from himself.
6. She was now afraid, terrified of becoming a public spectacle. She fell down before Jesus and confessed (told him the whole truth).
7. Jesus restored the woman to the community and put her in his family by calling her "Daughter" which is a family term. Jesus identifies that "Your *faith* has made you well." Then says, "Go in peace and be healed of your disease."
8. Something to consider: Could it possibly be that this woman is not only a metaphor for Israel, but also for the Temple system and its sacrifices? The sacrificial system has not helped the woman, but only made the Temple system rich.
9. BACK TO JAIRUS. Jairus is now told, "Your daughter is dead." It's too late. Hope is gone. Perhaps if he hadn't been delayed along the way with the healing of the woman, Jairus' daughter would not have died (sounds like the Lazarus story).

10. Fear is not believing. Jesus knows Jairus is afraid and is unbelieving. Jairus is afraid he is too late in coming to Jesus. But, Jesus says to Jairus, “Do not fear, only believe.”
11. At Jairus’ house, there is a commotion. Jesus enters and says to them, “The child is not dead, she is only sleeping.” The implication is that she will wake up again, but that sounds ridiculous, even offensive perhaps, in this moment of grief. The people laughed at him for saying this. They knew she was actually dead, and that was it... dead is dead.
12. Jesus sends the crowd out, took the child’s father and mother and a few with him, and went to the dead child. Jesus took her hand and said, “Little girl, get up!” Immediately she gets up. What Jesus says, happens. When Jesus speaks, new creation is created. What God says, God does.
13. The little girl was 12 years of age. Something to consider: The number 12 appears again. Might this point to the truth that the new, true Israel in Jesus brings resurrection? The loss of the Temple and Jerusalem was not a problem. It had become a den of robbers.

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## TALKING POINTS

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand and the Four Thousand  
Mark 6:30-44; Mark 8:1-13

These points may be helpful as you plan discussion, teaching and preaching:

1. Jesus took his disciples “to a deserted place” to rest. They were out and away from where people would typically be located. The people, however, found him and were waiting for him on the shore. They had noticed something about Jesus. He was able to meet their physical needs (i.e. their daily needs, such as food, health), so the people chased after him for these needs.
2. Jesus saw the people and had compassion for them, for “they were like a sheep without a shepherd.” Jesus, out of compassion, provides what his children *need* (not what they *want*, necessarily). Jesus gives. The people receive.
3. v. 36 - The disciples decide that it is time for Jesus to “send them away” since it is late and so they can go and get their own food. Jesus sees this opportunity to set the disciples up with a command that they cannot fulfill: “You give them something to eat.”
4. The disciples did not see all that Jesus was giving them, or was about to give to them. This is the same with us. We are independent (so we think) and believe that we can manage life on our own, even though Jesus is with us from day to day.
5. “Give us this day, our daily bread.” In this petition of the Lord’s Prayer, we pray for “daily bread.” We pray for all that we *need* (not want) to sustain us in this life.
6. God provides those things we need to get us through each day. In faith, we see it. In unbelief, we do not see it, but instead live in a belief of scarcity.
7. God is the author of creation. God speaks and creation happens. Jesus speaks and it happens. Jesus speaks and the loaves and fishes are multiplied.
8. For Law/Gospel theologians, getting bread and fish from God is not the gospel. It is still in the law. It is a gift for sure, and it is a something we need to survive in this world. It is a need that God provides.
9. Hoarding reveals a lack of trust; unbelief.
10. v. 42 - “All ate and were filled.” They were “filled” it says. Filled. Content. Jesus made them content. He met their daily needs, so much so that there were leftovers - twelve baskets leftover after the feeding of the 5000; seven baskets leftover after the feeding of the 4000.

11. Twelve baskets indicate the mercy of God to the twelve tribes of Israel (the religious world); the seven baskets likely indicate that the mercy of God is also for the outsiders, the gentile world (Decapolis, where feeding of 4000 happened), and in particular, likely a reference to the seven hated nations named in Deuteronomy 7:12 (the despised nations in which the Israelites were to “show them no mercy”). Jesus is showing a reversal in the understanding of God and the kingdom of God in showing mercy to the hated gentile nations.
12. Jesus is God. God is Creator. Jesus creates. God/Jesus has come among us.
13. We have a God who has compassion for us in this creation. This God will bring about daily bread for us, forgive us, and raise us from the dead when this creation ends.
14. *The Feeding of the Five Thousand* story in the Gospel of John is the fourth of the seven signs in John.

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## TALKING POINTS

### Jesus Heals the Man Born Blind

John 9:1-41

These points may be helpful as you plan discussion, teaching and preaching:

1. God has elected this man born blind. God has chosen him. God is going to work through him. Jesus answers how God is doing this, for Jesus is God.
2. This is the sixth of the seven signs in the Gospel of John.
3. Jesus heals the blind man on the Sabbath.
4. You can divide this story into 7 scenes, like a 7-act play: v. 1-7; v. 8-12; v. 13-17; v. 18-23; v. 24-34; v. 35-39; v. 40-41.
5. Helpful insights from Dr. Harry Wendt, Crossways Manual, Section 5, p. 166:  
*Jesus' actions declare Him to be the the Light of the World. Jesus is also the Judge of those who encounter His light. The Pharisees' problem is that they call evil good and good evil. Their concern is ritual, not human need. They slander and condemn both Jesus and the one Jesus heals. However, the ones who are judged and found wanting are the Pharisees themselves. Judgment is exercised **on** the Pharisees, not **by** the Pharisees. Those who think they can see are declared to be **blind**. It is important to note the titles used by the man Jesus healed of his **physical** blindness as his **spiritual** sight grows. First, "the man called Jesus," 9:11. Second, "He is a prophet," 9:17. Third, "Lord, I believe," 9:38 (after which he worships Jesus). The irony is that one who is **blind** is empowered to see (the truth about Jesus), while those who believe that they can see are in reality **blind** (to God's truth and to Jesus' identity).*
6. The Gospel is where God intervenes. It always comes to us as a surprise, not where we think it will or should come, but where we least expect it. In this case, the Gospel comes NOT to those who can see, but RATHER to those who are blind.
7. The Pharisees do not want the blind man healed. If the blind man is to be healed, it should be through their own works of righteousness and power. In addition, Jesus will do the healing APART from their works. See v. 3 - "We must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day."
8. Grace means God is doing the work, not us.
9. No one seems happy that the blind man is healed, except the blind man himself. He experiences resistance all around... from the Pharisees, from his parents... perhaps because this situation is out of their control.

10. The law of the day required that one helps a blind beggar. No one was helping him it seems.
11. Consider the comfort we, today, find in keeping things the same, whether they are for good or for ill. Think of things in your community, your church, your schools, your family. Consider traditions, addiction, authority, power, abuse, violence, and more.
12. Jesus operates outside of the Law in healing this man. The Pharisees, however, were looking for a reason in the law as to why this man was born blind.
13. Jesus uses mud, a tangible earthly element, along with the pronouncement of his Word in the sacramental work he completes as he directs the blind man to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam. Jesus Word with the mud and water, and the resulting action thereof, creates faith in the blind man. The blind man hardly knew who this Jesus even was until now.
14. The blind man becomes the witness to Jesus as “the Son of Man” and as “Lord!”
15. Faith cannot SEE its way to believing; rather, faith HEARS its way to believing.

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## TALKING POINTS

### Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead John 11:1-44

These points may be helpful as you plan discussion, teaching and preaching:

1. This is the seventh of the seven signs in the Gospel of John.
2. The power in this story is in the truth that Lazarus did not do anything (and was unable) to stop his death or alter the course of events that transpired. Lazarus did not have anything to do with God's choice of raising him from death. Lazarus did not dictate his future with his Lord Jesus. Jesus simply spoke, and Lazarus was raised from the dead. Jesus directed his path.
3. Christ delivers us a promise in death, that God has defeated death and will call you out of the grave with a Word... a new Word that creates something new in you.
4. This is the seventh of seven signs in the Gospel of John.
5. At death, a person is removed from the accusation of the law and from the ability to continue in sin. They are "absent from the the body and present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8)
6. The coming Messiah would raise the dead. Here he is!
7. Human response to Jesus: "If only you would have come, you could have prevented this from happening, Jesus!" However, Jesus says that this death happened so that the glory of God would be revealed. Jesus waits four days.
8. Some ancient religious beliefs claimed that the spirit would leave the body within three days after death. Some within a day. Perhaps Jesus was making a point here by waiting four days to show that the power of God is greater than these religious traditions.
9. We think (or want to think) we can fend off death, so we try.
10. Death is the end of sin. Jesus ushers us through death to a place of rest, in peace, apart from sin. A new creation follows with a Word that the Lord will pronounce to us.
11. Jesus was "deeply moved/disturbed/troubled" (11:33). Consider the meaning of this phrase along with the words preceding it from the Biblical Greek language. The meaning is something other than what is usually interpreted from our English translations. Often we assume (in English) that this means Jesus was empathizing with them, and caring for them in this gentle, "shared-sorrowing" kind of way. This

is not what the original language says. Rather, Jesus is disturbed because of anger. This word is used other places to denote anger represented by “a horse that snorts angrily.” Perhaps, and likely so, his anger was because of the unbelief of the people (Mary, Martha, the disciples, the crowds). Jesus was frustrated to the core with what was going on around him. We like to soften Jesus’ frustration with sin in an attempt to make Jesus appear to be compassionate as we imagine he would be, or should be in our imaginations, in such situations. Our projections into such stories however can cloud the reality of what was going on. Jesus has been declaring that death is not the end, speaking of the things that are to come, and the ways of the kingdom of God. He appears to be frustrated that they do not believe His words. A passage from Corinthians speaks to the sin that is evident when we experience the “sting” at the death of a loved one (1 Cor. 15:56). This shows us our need of Christ to give us faith once again.

12. The well-known shortest verse in the Bible, often quoted, is in this story: “Jesus wept” (11:35). “Wept” here is a different word than when it is used for others who were crying at other points in the gospels. It is not the sad crying over a death that we might assume that it is. Why was Jesus crying? The following verse shows the Jews watching this situation and saying, “Look, see how he loved him.” It appears that they did not understand either.
13. Our common question when someone dies “before they were supposed to” (i.e. they did not die of old age, for instance) is this: “God, why did you let this happen? Why didn’t you stop this?” As a preacher, you can quickly touch on points to bring the law to the surface (the law is already at work in your parishioners), such as still birth, a child dies, suicide, cancer, military death, car accident, a death at a mid-life age, etc.
14. In wrath, Jesus remembers (re-members... reinstates... re-institutes) mercy. In death we see God’s wrath against sin. Sin comes to an end. God then takes death (and the end of sin) and makes new life. New life (resurrection) is the final word.
15. The shape of the Christian life is this: From life, to death, to new life. Or better yet, FROM DEATH TO LIFE (sin to salvation).
16. Jesus makes life out of his words. Jesus speaks and new life comes into existence.
17. This event is too much for the religious authorities to handle. Jesus is holding too much power, threatening the power of the Temple system and its ability to gain wealth and hold authoritative position, etc. This was the triggering event that moved the religious authorities to decide that Jesus needed to be put to death. They also wanted to kill Lazarus to get rid of the evidence (see 11:45-57).
18. When Lazarus comes out, the things that bound him (his wrappings) began coming off. Why is this significant? We are all bound by death today...the fear of death. When something bad happens and someone dies, we ask questions in attempt to

harness the fear and power of death that looms “out there” threatening us. For example, if someone dies in a car accident, we ask, “Did they have a seatbelt on?” “Were they going to fast?” “Were they driving an unsafe car?” Etc. Or, take an illness such as cancer: “What did they come into contact with? Was it their lifestyle that caused this?” Etc. Or with Covid for example: “Did they have a pre-existing condition?” We ask these things in hopes that we can find a way to be an exception, to side-step the threat, to attempt to defeat death, at least for a little longer. We are bound in death. This story however, unwraps us, unbinds us, and speaks our future into existence. Death is not the end. The power of God through a new Word from Christ is what frees us to move from death to life.

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Pastor Paul Oman