

[3 step program]

:: mark 5 ::

Mark chapter 5 goes like this:

Mark 5.1-43 - Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me."

For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!"

Then He asked him, "What is your name?"

And he answered, saying, "My name is Legion; for we are many." Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.

Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them." And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine. Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.

And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live." So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew

worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."

Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?"

But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' "

And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement. But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat.

So much good stuff in here. Let's grab hold of just a couple things from this passage.

What we have here is a great trio of stories. First, the demon possessed man, then the diseased woman and finally the dead girl.

And if we take a look first at Jesus, we see very plainly that our Messiah is sufficient for any of these problems. Whether it's death, disease or demons, the Lord made swift and compassionate work of them as people were willing to receive His word and His rule over their lives.

It's important that we grab hold of this understanding because so much of life is messed up and wasted when we try to live in our own sufficiency or our own understanding or our own straining. It can't be done. Because on our own we cannot overcome these sorts of struggles that God so easily deals with when we're submitted to Him. So whether it was the Pharisees trying to earn their own righteousness or David putting the Ark on a cart or even Job's friends trying to offer counsel, when we're not finding our sufficiency for daily living in the *Person* of Jesus Christ, then we're in for trouble.

And here it's made clear that our God is great enough to handle what's going on. First we have the demons. We can see them as representative of spiritual problems, sin, those sorts of struggles. Then we have the disease of the woman. That can be seen as a physical problem. A

personal, physical suffering or trial. And then we have the death of Jairus' daughter. To me I could see that as representative of eternal or relational problems. Obviously death gets us thinking about eternity, but the focus is a lot on Jairus in the text, so it also speaks to me of the relational grief he was facing as a father.

For all of these issues and all of these categories the Lord is sufficient. And He's not only big enough to overcome these things, but He's moving around our lives, ready for His power to go out with strength and compassion. That's what we see in Jesus. He's looking at all of these situations and His response is full of kindness and help and willingness. His message to us in this chapter is sort of summed up in verse 36 where He looks at Jairus and says, "Do not be afraid, only believe."

We see how to do that by looking at the 3 examples. Because they share a similar pattern in each story. Jesus is in their midst, they come **to** Him, hear **from** Him and put their faith **in** Him. That's the pattern that led to abundant life in each case.

First, as Jesus was in their midst, these 3 individuals had to **come** to Jesus. But it wasn't like they came to the counter at the DMV or to the checkout at the supermarket. They came to Him in absolute humility and worship. Even the demons, the text says, ran to Him and worshipped Him.

If we don't bring our lives and our struggles before God in humility and submissiveness then we're not understanding the Lord's place and His sufficiency. We have to let go of the idea that we're pretty great and every now and then we just have to phone in some help from God who sort of fills in the gaps where we just didn't have it covered.

The spiritual and physical and eternal issues in our lives can only be resolved by the power of God and His will. It's all of Him, none of us. If we're looking at these analogies in the text, our manmade chains cannot subjugate our sin. Our human desire cannot solve eternal struggles or loses. And even in the physical realm, all our effort and all our resources cannot overcome the problem of sickness and suffering. Only Christ can overcome these issues. And so when we realize that He is in our midst, the loving, gracious Savior, we must fall at His feet and worship Him and understand that there's nothing in us that is of value.

We should come to Him as these people did. We shouldn't come to God like Naaman came to Elisha. He was this great general. He had wealth and power and fame and all that. Yet he was a leper. When he came to Elisha for help, effectively he was coming for God's intervention, yet he came in pride and was at first unwilling to be humble before God. And that would have left him leprous, except that one of his servants convinced him to trust in the sufficiency of the Lord and to let go of his selfishness and his arrogance and his general confidence in himself.

That's the way an understanding person comes before God. In humility and thankfulness and submission. That's what we're called to and that's the attitude that gets us to the place where God can change our lives dramatically and bring us victory.

But then, after they came to Jesus they each heard from Jesus. So far what we've seen in Mark is that the Lord has no problem addressing people who are willing to listen to Him. And His word has power. His word accomplishes victory for us.

But His word isn't always what we're expecting. Sometimes God's word and directives to us are going to seem unprofitable. It was for the pig farmers there at the beginning of the chapter. Jesus had demonstrated the kind of change and help and hope He could bring for them, but at the end of the day they'd rather be oppressed by this demon-possessed man and have a few more coins in their pocket than see lives changed and revival happen. Jesus wasn't profitable to them, so they just out and out asked Him to leave.

Or sometimes the Lord will speak to us something that at first seems unattractive. It was for the demon-possessed man. He wanted to go with Jesus physically, but the Lord set a ministry and a community before him to work in.

Or maybe His word to us might seem unrealistic. It did to the people at Jairus' house. They ridiculed what He said. But the Lord had a very specific and very powerful plan all along. Whether what He said seemed realistic to them or not didn't really matter because with God all things are possible.

Which bring us to the third step in this pattern we're seeing. These 3 people each came to Jesus, heard from Jesus and then put their faith in Jesus.

That was the key to the transformation in each. Jesus calls on us to not be afraid, only believe. And He points out to the woman who was healed that her faith had made her well. While some would take this statement and twist it to serve some perverse prosperity doctrine, we understand that we're called not to faith in miracles themselves, but faith in a Person. Jesus *can* perform miracles. He does them every day. But our faith is to be focused on Him. Even when a scenario seems impossible, we're still called to complete faith.

Now, that's hard for us. It's hard for us to have the confidence that God can do anything, even raise the dead if it is according to His will. Which is why I so appreciate the phrase we get 4 weeks from now in Mark chapter 9 where another dad says, "Lord I believe, help my unbelief!"

So while folks get all caught up in word of faith doctrine and health and wealth stuff, we need to avoid that. Paul speaking about Christians in Colossians 2 says:

Colossians 2.2-3 - I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, WHICH IS CHRIST HIMSELF. In Him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Our faith is to be in this Person, who is revealed to us, just in this chapter, as a God who cares for the people of the earth. None of these struggles were unimportant to Him, even when they were unimportant to other people in the crowds. He's the God who has no problem dealing with these spiritual, physical and eternal issues. In fact, He's come into our midst so that He can bring life where there is bondage and suffering and death. He's the God who gives clear directions and allows us to either receive and act upon those words to go away unchanged. He's the God who moves on our behalf, not holding back His help or His power, but pouring it out for us that we might find abundant life.

God is moving in your midst today. He's come to interact with us. Come to Him. Fall before Him, understanding who He is. Hear His word and believe it. Then put your faith for daily living in this Person who desires to do more than we could ask or imagine.