

Sunday Morning Message

Looking Unto Jesus and His Plan for Reaching our Family and Friends

Text – Mark 5:1 - 20

Congregational Reading – Mark 5:18 – 20

Our theme for the year is Looking unto Jesus

Our theme verses are Hebrews 12:1 – 2

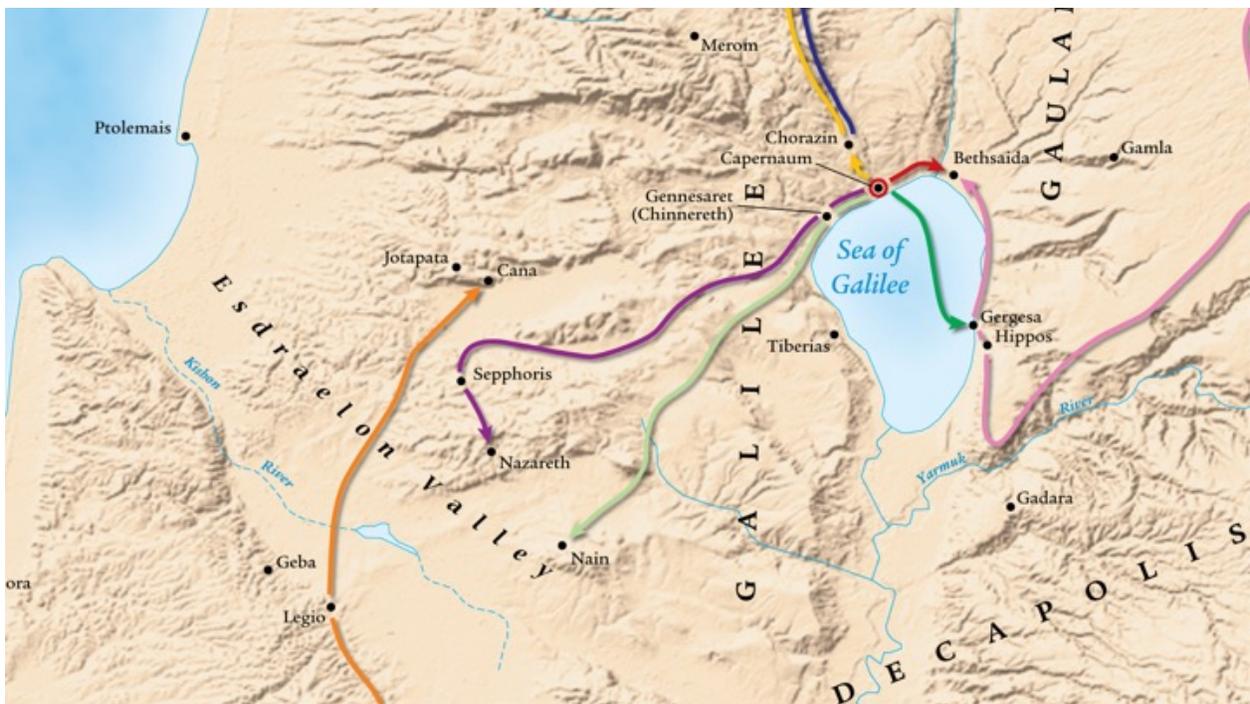
"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2)

This year, we will be preaching messages from the 4 gospel accounts in the New Testament and we will be closely examining the life of our Lord Jesus Christ while He walked the earth, learning the principles that He teaches us, specifically looking for ways to apply His life to our own.

Introduction

This story is found in all three of the synoptic Gospels. Mark gives us the longest account, so we will use his book as the foundation, and we will supplement where necessary with what we can glean from the other two passages.

The story takes place in “the country of the Gadarenes” (Matthew’s Gospel says Gergesenes – see map below)



This area was known for its tombs that were located in the cliffs outside of the city. In fact, according to some research that I have done, some of these tombs are still there, and are actually inhabited by people today. They also use them to store grain in.

Jesus saves two men here in the wilderness outside of Gadara, and actually casts out a legion of demons that had been in possession of the men. A legion (according to Easton's Dictionary) contained six thousand soldiers, and six hundred footmen. This guy was in a bad way.

Before we get into the story itself, I want to point out that before this took place, Jesus was on the other side of the Sea of Galilee; and after this, Jesus went back. So it appears that the only reason that Jesus travelled to this devil-infested graveyard was to reach this man (or possibly men).

I would also like to point out that Jesus allowed the disciples to experience some rough seas on the way over to this man.

Jesus will go to great lengths to reach even the vilest individual. *One man is worth the effort.*

"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." - (Luke 15:10)

[Read the entire text giving explanation along the way.]

I **The Man's Condition (vs. 1 – 5)**

He was lost – he was no more or less lost than you or I was before we were saved. He was just lost.

He was blinded by Satan:

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Corinthians 4:4)

He was under the control of Satan:

He didn't wear clothes

A parallel passage in Luke's gospel says this:

"And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs." (Luke 8:27)

By the way – there is a direct correlation in our society between the amount of clothes people wear and the Satanic influence on the culture. The more this world is controlled by Satan, the more immodestly people will be dressing.

He was focused on death (vs. 2 – 3)

He was out of control – he couldn't control himself, not could anyone else control him. He was filled with rage.

He abused his body – self mutilation, piercing, marking, drugs, etc.

Thank the Lord that he did not leave this man in this hopeless condition. There are many people out in our world today that we think are beyond hope – beyond the ability of our Lord to save. God can save anybody. Don't give up on anyone.

II The Man's Conversion (vs. 6 – 13)

Jesus removed the unclean spirits and gloriously saved this man.

Today, when a person gets saved, the Holy Spirit of God moves in to that person's body and soul, and the spirit of that person is revived:

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19)

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise," (Ephesians 1:13)

Jesus came to the man – I believe that this man was the primary reason that Jesus travelled all the way to this place, Gadara. Jesus main area of ministry was Capernaum, which was at the northern tip of the Sea of Galilee. Gadara was way over on the other side of the lake, at the southeast end. In my view, this is similar to the story of the woman at the well in John 4. Jesus purpose for making this trip was to reach this man with the gospel. He went to great expense, and took a lot of time to save this man.

The man responded to Jesus

He recognized his need

He was remorseful over his condition

He realized that Jesus was his only hope

He received the gift of salvation

III The Man's Commission (vs. 18 – 20)

The man wanted to go with Jesus, but Jesus had other plans for the man.

Jesus wanted him to go to his friends.

There are two primary purposes of the local New Testament Church:

1 Glorify God in all things

"That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ." (Ephesians 1:12)

This means that we are to:

Magnify the Lord in all things

"O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together." (Psalms 34:3)

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Colossians 1:18)

Make God look good

I fear that we are not doing a good job at making God look good in the eyes of the world. The world for the most part looks on the church, and the God of the church with eyes of disdain.

2 We are to fulfill God's great commission:

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

(Matthew 28:18-20)

The first teach is μαθητεύω (mathēteuō) – meaning to make disciples (aorist, active, imperative – we are to be commanded to continually and actively make disciples)

The second teach is διδάσκω (didaskō) – meaning to instruct or impart doctrine.

The Great Commission has three parts to it:

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|------------|-----------------------|
| Evangelize | Win |
| Baptize | Wet |
| Stabilize | Word (then work them) |

Paul told Timothy:

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:1-2)

Throughout the history of the New Testament, churches have employed a variety of methods to help them to do what Jesus commanded them to do.

Door to door visitation; confrontational soul winning; street preaching; invitations to church; big days; evangelistic crusades and revival meetings; radio, television, and now the internet.

While I am for any means that is effective in bringing people to the Saviour, I am convinced that what Jesus commanded this saved demoniac of Gadara to do is by far the method that has been more used of God than perhaps any other.

"Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel." (Mark 5:19-20)

The man wanted to go "full-time" in the ministry and follow Jesus wherever Jesus went, but Jesus had different plans for the man. He told him to go home and tell his friends, his family, his neighbors, his co-workers, and everybody else that he came in contact with about what the Lord had done for him.

Illustrate – The Woman at the Well

"And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him." (John 4:27-30)

The woman at the well also went and told her friends. She was willing and able to reach her people. The disciples had just come in contact with these people, but they were unwilling, and perhaps unable to reach them.

You can reach people that I cannot reach. I can reach people that you cannot reach. Thus we both need to be active in sharing the gospel with the people around us.

Conclusion

Here's the message in a nutshell. Most people will not be called by God to go to Bible College, and then serve in an official, "full-time" capacity within a local church; but all of us are called to go home and tell our friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers what great things the Lord has done for us.

1 Build upon your testimony

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18a)

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Matthew 11:29)

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

2 Watch your testimony

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;" (Philippians 1:27)

"Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." (Titus 2:9-10)

The Demoniac of Gadara got saved, and his life was transformed. He was no longer the same. He was drastically different, in a positive way, from what he used to be, and he was visibly different now from the rest of the culture.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:1-2)

He was a new creature.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

3 Give your testimony

All this man had to do was tell his friends what Jesus did for him, and that is all we need to do today as well. Tell them what great things Jesus has done for you - how Jesus saved you.

Assignment – Tell a friend this week about Jesus.