

## SESSION 6

# RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW



*Who is a neighbor you're glad you've gotten the chance to know?*

**QUESTION #1**

#BSFLbrokenvessels

*You don't have to go far to share your transformed life in Christ.*

## THE PASSAGES

Mark 5:1-2,8-15,18-20

## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

We can probably be placed into one of two groups.

1. Those of us who love to travel
2. Those of us who prefer to stay close to home

Those of us who love to travel relish new experiences—different points of interest, different foods, and different ways of doing things.

Those of us who prefer to stay close to home do so, not necessarily because we don't ever want to try something new, but we're more comfortable with what is familiar.

Travelers and non-travelers alike share one common discovery, however: interesting and different people surround us whether we venture around the world or across the street. Even in our own communities, we meet people of various ethnicities, backgrounds, and cultures. We meet people who seem “just like us” at first, but as we get to know them, we find they have diverse personalities and interests. But all these people share one thing in common.

They need Jesus.

Jesus called one man to go on the mission field—of his own neighborhood. Through this man's encounter with Jesus, we see that we don't have to go far to change the world.

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## **Mark 5:1-2**

**1** And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

**2** And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

### **KEY WORDS**

**country of the Gadarenes** (v. 1)—This area could be near the eastern seaside village of Kersa or near Gadara (about six miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee).

The next thing you read will not surprise you. We live in a broken world. The news reports mass shootings and bombings. Human trafficking is a global phenomenon, and it's in our own backyards. Racism is common, no matter which racial group you fall into.

We see the brokenness of our world even in how we respond to tragedy. In late spring of 2016, two tragedies occurred. At the Cincinnati Zoo, a young boy fell into the enclosure of a beloved gorilla. To save the child, zoo authorities were forced to kill the gorilla. Less than a month later, a boy was killed by an alligator on the property of a Walt Disney World hotel. Certainly, these events were tragic in themselves, but it was also appalling how people responded. People didn't merely respond by offering their opinions; they responded with hate, pointing the finger at others and vilifying those involved—and those who disagreed with them. Sadly, our broken world often responds to tragedy with more brokenness because we are broken people.

In this passage, we encounter a man who personally understood this fact; he knew very well he was broken. Jesus and His disciples had traveled across the Sea of Galilee to an area that was populated primarily by Gentiles. The moment Jesus stepped ashore, this unnamed man appeared—alone. He was alone for a valid reason. He was very broken—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

We do not know how he became possessed “with an unclean spirit,” but his pain and struggle were obvious.

- ▶ His crazy and erratic behavior kept him isolated from the community and any family he might have had.
- ▶ The community’s only “treatment” for him was to bind him with shackles and chains, but he simply broke the chains (v. 4). This demonic strength only caused the people to fear him more, so he was left to fend for himself—in a cemetery.
- ▶ He was naked, which surely caused him further pain from exposure to the natural elements (Luke 8:27).
- ▶ He was in such physical, emotional, and spiritual torment, that he intentionally cut himself. This may have been a vain attempt to drive out the demons or to end his pain by suicide.

This man was not merely a crazy maniac. He was demon possessed. It is natural for us to want to avoid people with such brokenness. But we are surrounded by people who are broken and hurt. They may not be driven by demons to hurt themselves and others, but they are broken nonetheless, just as we were before we met Christ.

**How do you typically react when you encounter brokenness?**

## QUESTION #2

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### **Mark 5:8-15**

**8** For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.

**9** And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.

**10** And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

**11** Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

**12** And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

**13** And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.

**14** And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

**15** And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

#### KEY WORD

**legion** (v. 9)—The main fighting force of the Roman army, which numbered up to 6000 soldiers. Here, it indicates the man was controlled by a large number of demons.

Jesus did not desire to leave the man in the state he was in, and He confronted the cause of his brokenness. He called the unclean spirit to come out, and He asked the unclean spirit to identify itself. Throughout Scripture, a person's name was associated with his character, so by asking, "What is thy name?" Jesus was leading the demon to confess the nature of the evil that had enslaved the man.

The demon responded, "Legion." A Roman legion was comprised of about 6,000 soldiers. Consequently, this was not one demonic force, but thousands working together! An army of evil had possessed this broken man!

The biblical writer then presented a shocking picture of the demons entering "about two thousand" pigs, and the herd rushing "down a steep place into the sea," where they drowned.

While such mass destruction of the pigs may seem cruel, it is important to note that Jesus did not command the demons to inhabit and destroy the pigs; He allowed the demons to go there for several reasons:

- ▶ It unequivocally showed the evil intent of the demons. What the demons did to the pigs was the total destruction they intended to do to the man.
- ▶ The demise of the pigs demonstrated beyond doubt that the demons had left the man and he was healed.
- ▶ It was a witness to the power of Jesus to heal. Consider the impact this had on the people. They came running because of what they heard about their pigs, but when they arrived, they saw that the man was now sitting, clothed in his right mind.

Jesus did a wonderful thing. He restored this broken man and gave a bold display of the destruction of these demonic forces, but the people responded with fear. Sadly, they feared Jesus more than they feared a demon-possessed man; they cared more about their pigs than about a fellow member of their town.

What matters most in this story is that this man experienced freedom. Jesus came to earth to set humanity free. He was so moved by the agony, brokenness, and oppression this man was experiencing that He wanted to set this man free no matter what the cost.

Jesus wants to do the same for you and me. Jesus wants to replace our brokenness with life in Him. He wants to take what the enemy has stolen and replace it with something better: a life in Him.

No matter how dark your life is, Christ can transform you by His grace. No matter what skeletons may be in your closet, Christ can cast light into the shadows and heal you. No matter how broken your relationships with others might be, He can open the door to a new day. Jesus is not only in the business of forgiving and healing your past, but He also wants to redeem your present, and transform your future. Allow Jesus to be your healer.

**When have you observed such a significant transformation in someone's life?**

**QUESTION #3**



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**Mark 5:18-20**

**18** And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

**19** 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.

**20** And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

Jesus frequently sent His followers to new places. For example, after Jesus commissioned His twelve disciples, He sent them out. They were to go from village to village to “preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:2). Later, Jesus sent out 72 disciples to tell others about the kingdom of God (10:1-12). But not this time. Jesus told the once-possessed man to “go home.”

It's not hard to imagine why the man wanted to go with Jesus. First, the man no doubt wanted to leave the town and countryside because of the bad memories of his past life. He wanted to be with the One who gave him a second chance in life. But Jesus had another plan. The people had begged Jesus to leave their area (Mark 5:17), but Jesus still cared about them. Jesus would not leave them without a witness—and that witness would be one of their own.

**How can you use your story of transformation to share the gospel?**

**QUESTION #4**

One of the excuses people give for not sharing the gospel goes something like this: “I don't know what to say. First I need to study more Scripture and grow deeper in my faith.”

Perhaps this excuse stems from the fear of failure or the fear of embarrassment. Of course it's good and necessary to grow in your understanding of God's Word and to know with assurance and confidence the reasons for your faith. However, you'll likely never reach a point where you'll know enough to feel completely ready.

Grow. Learn. But know this: God wants you to share your faith story with others *now*. You can tell of your own encounter with Jesus and engage others in spiritual conversations. He wants to use you to declare the gospel to this lost and broken world. *Now*.

The beautiful thing is Jesus has promised He will be with us and give us the words to say when we speak about Him. "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say" (Luke 12:11-12). God will guide your conversation. And if you are asked a question you can't answer, don't be afraid to say you don't know! You can always look it up or ask a pastor or Bible study leader and get back to the person at a later time.

## DIGGING DEEPER



### DECAPOLIS

Place-name meaning "10 cities."

A group of Greek cities referred to in Matt. 4:25; Mark 5:20; 7:31, originally 10 in number but including more cities at a later time. The second century A.D. writer Pliny named the 10 cities as Damascus, Philadelphia (modern Amman), Canatha, Scythopolis, Pella, Hippos, Gadara, Dion, Raphana, and Gerasa (modern Jerash). Ptolemy, another second-century writer,

names 18 cities in the Decapolis, omitting Raphana but adding nine others. A later source mentioned 14 cities in the group. Thus the number varied from time to time. They were established after the time of Alexander the Great and were predominantly Greek in culture and influence. These cities were scattered south and east of the Sea of Galilee. Only Scythopolis was west of the Jordan River.

"Decapolis," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, gen. eds. Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 408-409



When Jesus heals your brokenness and calls you to Himself, He is also calling you to participate in His mission. God wants to use you to display His healing power and ability to redeem. So invite others into your life and let them see “how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.”

**How can our group help bring healing to the brokenness in our community?**

**QUESTION #5**

# TRANSFORMED

*Like the man in today's passage, we're called to tell others how Jesus has transformed us. List the names of family, friends, and acquaintances who may not know Jesus.*

Friends

Family

Acquaintances

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*What is one specific thing that Jesus has done in your life that you can use as a conversation starter with each one?*

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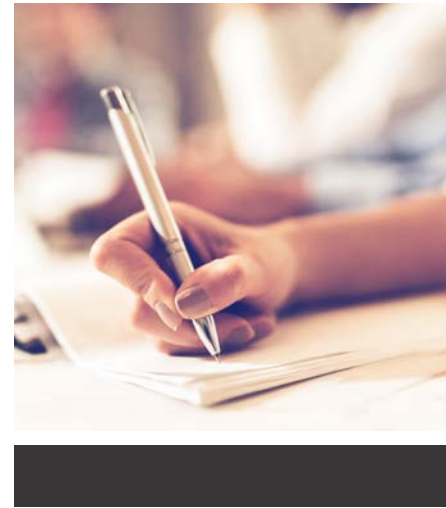
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# LIVE IT OUT

How will you share your transformed life in Christ this week? Consider the following applications:

- ▶ **Write.** Write down the names of three people in your life who are far from God. Ask God for an opportunity to have a spiritual conversation with each of them.
- ▶ **Walk.** Walk across your street, hop over your fence, or knock on the cubicle next to you. Start a spiritual conversation with someone and ask God to guide your words and the conversation.
- ▶ **Research.** “Hasn’t science disproved Christianity?” “How can you take the Bible seriously?” “If your God is so loving, why do you believe in hell?” We can respond with grace and intelligence to the skeptic’s questions. Launch your study with a book like Jeremiah Johnston’s *Unanswered* or *Holman QuickSource Guide to Christian Apologetics*.

You don’t have to travel far to share your transformed life in Christ. The first place God calls you is often not across the world, but across the street. Will you go?



Share with others how you will live out this study: [#BSFLbrokenvessels](#)