

Madmen, demons and spiritual warfare

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Date: 03 September 2023

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[0 : 0 0] So he hasn't been around for a while, and I know several of you here in the church support him and get his newsletter, but I thought I'd have him come up and share just a few minutes about the latest of what's going on.

Good morning, it's good to be back. It's been quite a few weeks since I've been here, and a lot has changed in my life. So, first off, I just wanted to thank you, Grace Bible Church, and for those of you who support me individually, for your support. I really appreciate that.

It enables me to continue to work full-time advocating for unborn babies and ministering to women who are seeking out abortions. One of the things I wanted to share with you this morning is from Philippians 4.17.

You don't have to turn there, I'll just read through it for you. But Philippians 4.17, starting actually in verse 15. Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving, but you only.

For even in Thessalonica, you sent aid once and again for my necessities. And then 17, not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Thankfully, you guys are not the only group of believers who supports me.

[1 : 1 7] But I did just want to share that what Paul says in there, that not necessarily that I seek your gift, but I seek the fruit that is accredited to your account. That's something I've learned about recently and been thinking about, and really is a way that I want to change the way that I go about seeking support for my ministry and change that focus from not necessarily looking for the gift, which is good and allows me to continue to minister, but really to look for the fruit that is accredited to your guys' account by being involved in ministry.

So I just wanted to share that with you, and thank you for your gift. Now, some of the fruit from my ministry that I wanted to share with you guys, I have a few stories for you.

Two of them are about both guys named Adam. I was at BGSU University doing outreach, talking to people about abortion, and there was this guy who was shorter than me.

He had, like, bleach, white hair, gold chains, and sunglasses, looked a little bit like a gangster. And I asked him what he thought about abortion. So we were going back and forth, and he didn't change his mind that day on abortion, but it was really cool getting to talk to him.

He was a very honest individual. And so he would, you know, raise an objection. He's like, well, I think abortion should be allowed because of this. And I would answer that, and he'd get quiet. He'd think about it, and he'd go, you know, that makes sense.

[2 : 4 5] And so, again, he didn't change his mind, you know, all the way from pro-choice to pro-life that day. But I made him think. And you could just see, as we were talking, him, you know, turning things around in his mind and really starting to engage with ideas.

And so that was a really cool experience. You know, he thanked me at the end for the conversation. So you just keep Adam in your prayers at BGSU University up near Cleveland.

The other Adam, whose story I wanted to share with you, was actually I met him at Columbus State Community College in Columbus. And we were doing outreach there, and he was walking by, much taller guy.

He's got a ponytail. And he walked up to me, and he said, you know, we've never met before, but nine years ago, I walked through Columbus State Community College, and you guys were out here with your pictures doing outreach.

And he said, I never talked to you guys, but in my mind I was thinking, how dare you come out here and tell women that they shouldn't be able to have abortions? And he said, well, nine years have passed.

[3 : 50] I now work at Columbus State Community College. And he said, I am 100% pro-life and super conservative. And I just wanted to thank you for your faithfulness and being out there and that you're having an effect even on the people you don't talk to.

And so that was really encouraging for me because a lot of the people you do talk to are the very argumentative types who aren't going to change their minds in the moment right in front of you. That takes a lot of humility to talk to somebody after one conversation and go, well, you know, you're right, and I'm completely wrong and need to change how I think about abortion.

And so it was cool to talk to somebody who we hadn't even talked to but had just seen what abortion does to little baby boys and girls, and it changed his mind because of that.

The last story I wanted to share with you is from Ohio State University. There's a guy named Quinn who was a student there. And we talked about abortion, and at one point in our conversation, he started to ask, he was like, well, why should all human beings be treated equally?

And I said, well, it's because we're created in the image of God. And he said, well, you can say that, but, you know, lots of different religions say different things, and we can't really know what's true.

[5 : 03] And I told him, Quinn, I'm going to make a bet with you that I can prove to you that Christianity can be trusted at the exclusion of all other religions. And so after that, he was like, all right, prove it to me.

You know, I'm open to, you know, the evidence. And so I just took him through the evidence for the resurrection and showed him that Jesus really was who he said he was. And at the end, there's a book called More Than a Carpenter by Sean and Josh McDowell that I recommended he go read.

But it was a really neat opportunity. He was someone who, again, is intellectually honest. He's willing to examine ideas that he might not disagree with and be open to the fact that he might be wrong.

And so it was an awesome opportunity to share the gospel with him and just the Bible. And I hope and pray that he seriously considers that and, you know, comes to know the freedom that can be found in Christ.

So those are just some quick stories over the last few months of people that I've been able to have interactions with. One more thing to share with you just on the upcoming November election.

[6 : 12] In Ohio, there is a constitutional amendment, which is going to be on the ballot in November. It's, I believe, called the Right to Reproductive Freedom for Health and Safety.

Basically, what it's going to do is put abortion through all nine months of pregnancy, so at any time, for any reason, in the Constitution, making it a constitutional right.

This would mean that all laws we currently have limiting abortion and any laws we might want to pass in the future limiting or abolishing abortion, we couldn't do that because abortion would be in our Constitution.

And in order to take that out, we'd have to remove it from the Constitution, which is extremely difficult to do. So this is going to be voted on in November. And so I am just trying to get the word out to people, you want to vote no against that in November.

The way I remember it is no-vember. So please be praying for this. This is really, really, really bad.

[7 : 14] If this passes, it's going to be a dark time in Ohio, probably for a long time. They just recently passed something like this in Michigan. Michigan is a much more liberal state than we are.

But we shouldn't, just because Ohio is traditionally considered a more conservative, Midwestern state does not mean we should think that this will not get through.

There are a lot of people out there working. There's a lot of out-of-state money from California and other liberal states that are being poured into Ohio to try and push this through. Ohio is sort of a test case of if they can pass something like this in Ohio and put abortion in our Constitution, then they can probably do that in other conservative states as well.

So please be praying for that, that that will fail, that there would be confusion among the enemy, and that the lives of little pre-born baby boys and girls would be protected.

One last update on just a personal note. I proposed to my girlfriend Claire on June 21st, and we'll be getting married on October 21st.

[8 : 26] So she wasn't able to be here this Sunday, but I'm hoping that in a future Sunday before our wedding, we'll be able to come visit you guys again, and you can meet her. So we're currently looking for housing, and the Columbus housing market is a little bit crazy right now, so that's proven to be a little bit difficult.

So if you could pray that we'd be able to find safe, affordable housing in Columbus, I would really appreciate that. That's all I have with you guys. Thank you again, Grace Bible Church, for your support and prayers.

It's really appreciated. And thanks for the opportunity to share with you. All right.

Thank you, Ethan, for sharing all that. You know, when you take a step out of the world and share with people, you know, you get a mixed bag.

Some people are resistant. Some people are more humble. But you'll never find out unless you open up your mouth and just start sharing with people. Reminds me of that verse, some of those testimonies you were giving.

[9 : 30] It's actually found in several different places. God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. All it takes is a little humility, just a little humility. Being willing to know, well, what is the truth?

I think Roger Neff shared a testimony from the fair, and he asked somebody, well, if I told you something different that was true from what you believe now, would you want to know it?

And I said, no. What do you do? God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. If you're willing, if you want to know the truth, it's there for anyone to be able to find.

I just wanted to say one other thing related to Mike and Marvis. This is a really difficult time for them. So doctors aren't very positive about the outcome here for Mike.

And you can imagine what Marvis is going through with all that. What's been really neat for me to see is all the people who have been right there at their side through all this.

[10 : 38] In fact, Susan, who's usually teaching children's church today, is not here because she's helping take care of different things for them. So continue to uphold Marvis and Mike as they go through this difficult, difficult time.

And all those who are trying to help them along the way. All right. By the way, I really love that song, Lord, You're Beautiful.

In fact, somebody remind me. Maybe that's something we can sing. I liked it really a cappella too. That was really neat. We're just using our voices. I think that's the best instrument.

It's the one that God created. The instrument of our voices. All right. Well, let's jump into Mark this morning. If you have a Bible, open it up to the book of Mark.

We're in chapter 5. We're looking at the life of Jesus. And today, we're going to be looking at an account.

[11 : 46] Sometimes you call it a story. I try to avoid the word story. I don't know if I've mentioned this before. Because a lot of times in today's language, when we use the word story, we think of like fictional stories.

And so, I tend to try to avoid the word story. It's not wrong at all. But, you know, you tell a bedtime story. And usually, it's a fictional story.

The Bible's not a fictional book. These aren't just stories to warm our hearts or help teach us lessons in life. These are things that actually happened in the life of a man named Jesus of Nazareth.

And this is quite an incredible one. This is an account where Jesus, he finishes crossing the Sea of Galilee on a boat. And he finds a man who is just severely, we would call it mental illness today.

But back then, they called it madness. And even here in this country, we call it madness. And all kinds of effects of that.

[12 : 47] And we'll read the details here in a moment. But this is an intense time of spiritual warfare. Jesus is addressing and talking to these, not just one, but many demons.

So, we're going to go through this story. And one of the things we're going to talk about is, well, the spiritual warfare that Jesus did then. And then also the spiritual warfare that we deal with and need to fight today.

But I want to start off with an experience that I had many years ago. To just try to talk, to bring up the reality of the spiritual battle that exists out there.

When I was 18, I think I was 18 years old, I was in the youth group band. And I played the keyboards. A fun time. And we would usually come to youth group early, before it would start, and practice.

And then, right before the service, we would get together and pray. There was a young man there. I think he was maybe 13, 14, maybe 15 years old. In middle school, I believe.

[13 : 56] Who his parents had asked him if he could join the band. And I think their reasoning was, he was kind of getting in with the wrong crowd. He'd grown up in a Christian family.

But was really getting way off. And so, he thought the influence of, you know, being part of this youth group. And specifically, the music team would be a good influence on him.

Well, like we usually did, we all gathered to pray. And we would hold hands. We'd get in a circle, five to six, seven of us maybe. And pray before we had the service.

As we were praying, I think I was holding his hand. As long, as well as someone else's. As we were praying for the service. And there was something odd happening.

And even like a little bit of a trembling. And so, I looked over and he was starting to tremble. And the prayers, because each person would go around and pray.

[15 : 00] And everybody was kind of getting, everybody was starting to notice something was, something weird and strange was going on. And after just a few moments, people started, stopped praying for the service.

And started praying for this young man. Because obviously, there was something very wrong happening. He was trembling and shaking. And then as I looked up and looked at him, his eyes were rolling up in the back of his head.

And everybody stopped holding hands. And everybody just started praying for this young man. I didn't know what to do. I'm 18.

I'm a young believer. What in the world do you do in a situation like this? But eventually, as I was praying for him, I grabbed his hands and I said, Lord, tell me what in the world I should do here.

And so, I just felt an impression. Do what Jesus did. And so, as we see many times in the scriptures, Jesus said, come out of him.

[16:07] And so, I just said, come out. And when I did, he dropped on the floor as if he was dead. Now, that's a shock. That was a shocking experience for me.

Eventually, and I can't remember, this is so many years ago, how long. But eventually, he kind of rose back up and, you know, he stopped shaking. And all those things that he was experiencing at that time was gone.

And so, I didn't know what in the world, what just happened. I have no idea. But I knew that there was some kind of evil involved there.

And knowing from the Bible, very likely demonic activity. I found out later, he, in fact, I think it was the next week, he started coming more often.

And his life really was changed significantly. So, we saw a turning to the Lord in his life. But I think it was the next week, he told us, he said, I had all this music that I would listen to.

[17:15] And I don't know what it was. But I can imagine what kind of music it was. And for whatever reason, he recognized that that music that he was listening to had some kind of negative impact on his life.

And very well, maybe, have caused some kind of a demonic influence in his life. But based on that experience, that was a very real experience to me, to know that the demonic realm of Satan and all of the evil spirits that are out there, however many that there are, is very, very real.

This isn't fiction. This isn't just made up. This is a real thing. There is a demonic world out there. We're going to read this story about Jesus and him delivering a man from not just one, but many demons.

Let's go ahead and read, and then we'll get into the details. Again, Mark 5, verse 1. 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 they had often been bound with shackles and chains.

[18:32] 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 he worshipped 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 him 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 2,000. And the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea and drowned in the sea.

[19 : 37] 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.

Now 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.

You know, I told you a story about an experience that I had, but I think it's important that we do not just base our theology, our doctrine, our idea of how things work based on just our experience.

[20 : 50] We need to look at the Word of God. And so that's what we're going to do today. Look at the Word of God and examine it and see what happened here with Jesus. And then we'll look beyond to some other scriptures as well.

So in this first verse, we'll just talk a little bit about where Jesus was. Jesus had crisscrossed the Sea of Galilee several times. It started with the parable about the sower, and then he crossed, and there was a storm that happened.

And then it says that he's crossing again. And it says here that he's in a place called the country of the Gadarenes. Now, this has caused people who are scholars who really studied the Bible and analyze it a little bit of confusion or sometimes skepticism because there's actually a couple of different places mentioned in the Bible.

Here in Mark, it says the country of the Gadarenes. In the book of Matthew, it mentions, I think, the Gergesenes. And if you look at some of the original manuscripts, you actually see three different places mentioned.

And they're actually all legitimate places that are all in that general area, but they all have similar names. So a place called Gadara, a place called Gergesa, and another place called Garesa.

[22 : 10] And try naming all three of those real fast and going through all those. And so there's a controversy, and the place called the Gadarenes or Gadara is actually a well-known city of that time.

But the problem is that place was actually about 35 miles away from the shore of the Sea of Galilee. And as we read this story, it seems pretty clear that where he was at was right there on the shore.

These pigs, where did they go into? They went over some cliffs into the Sea of Galilee. And so, anyway, I don't want to go a lot into the details, but there's people who have written all kinds of things about this dispute.

And for some people, it's an example of a mistake in the Bible. There are a few different options. One, sometimes we reference kind of a more well-known place when we're talking about a less well-known place that's nearby, right?

Have you ever done that? You live in a little tiny town that nobody knows about, but you tell everybody, well, I live in Dayton. I don't really live in Dayton. I live in Cedarville. Or maybe even there's a little tiny town.

[23 : 33] There's just a college there. That's basically, it's called Wilberforce. It's right next to Cedarville. Nobody that I know that doesn't live right there knows what Wilberforce is. It's probably, it's barely on the map.

But if you say, oh, I live in Cedarville or I live in Xenia, those are the two towns right next to it. So you might say that. Now, the other thing is sometimes there are copy mistakes that have been made over the years when translating or making copies of the Bible in the original language.

When you look at the Greek of these three words, there's just one or maybe two letters that are different between these three places. It is a possibility that somebody, as they were copying, were not familiar with that location, and made a mistake in how they copied that word.

And so, the thing that I kind of walk away with when it comes to doubts and skeptics is if somebody was, if Mark was trying to tell stories to make people believe an untruth, and he was familiar, obviously, with the location, would he have used a city that was 35 miles away from the shore and then gotten all that confused?

It seems that that wouldn't be the case. So, anyway, many times when we see what looks like mistakes in the Bible, I think when we take a closer look, we'll find that it's not really that simple.

[25 : 06] Verse 2, And when he had come out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. An unclean spirit. You know, God has created us to be spirit. We are different from animals, and we are not the only spiritual beings.

The Bible says that God is spirit. The Bible says that God created us as spirit. There are other beings that are also spirit beings. One would be the angels.

But these are unclean spirits. Not just any spirit, but an unclean spirit. And it's just one of the words or terms used to describe what we would call today demons or evil spirits, or sometimes in the King James, devils.

The other thing to mention here is that it mentions that there is a, it only mentions one man. If you go to the book of Matthew, there's actually the same account.

At least it seems the same account. And it mentions there were two men who came out who were demon-possessed. Now what's going on there? Is that another mistake?

[26 : 17] In fact, there's a commentator, his name is E.W. Bollinger, who he makes a claim, and he says, well, this is actually two different stories.

One is about a single man who was demon-possessed, and the other is about two men. But as you read the accounts, the one in Matthew and the one in Mark, the details are almost exactly the same, except one mentions one, and one mentions two.

So what's going on there? Well, I think the easiest explanation is when you tell a story about something, you don't have to always include all the details, right?

In fact, we see that throughout the Bible. Some authors will add an additional fact that another one omits, and that's okay. In fact, that's really a sign of real eyewitness testimony, right?

That's what you'll find with eyewitness testimony. Some people seem to remember and recall certain things, and others, they just either don't remember them or don't find them as relevant. And so that's certainly a possibility today.

[27 : 22] Mark, he just remembers or considers important the one man. He doesn't say there weren't two. He doesn't say there was only one. And Matthew finds it relevant to mention that there were two there.

I would imagine that that being the case, there was probably one who was the one that Jesus addressed and was the most kind of pronounced. He had the legion of demons.

Maybe the other one was not as in a severe case. But I think this all shows us the reality of eyewitness testimonies, which the gospel writers are eyewitnesses to what they saw.

It says that he had, this is verse three, 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. The chains had been pulled apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces.

Neither could anyone tame him. He was living in caves or tombs. Back then, that's where you put dead bodies, in caves, at least some of the time.

[28 : 29] And then we see this reference to what appears to be like a supernatural strength. There's another character in the Bible that we see breaking chains. Who was that in the Old Testament?

Samson, right? Breaking chains. And that was a supernatural act of God. And so, a question here is, is these evil spirits that were tormenting this man, were they able to give him supernatural physical strength?

It's hard for me to believe that a demon spirit like this would have the ability to give someone supernatural power. And I don't think that's the case at all. But I do think that demon spirits, especially in this case, had an impact on him and on his mind.

There's a phenomenon you can look up if you just Google this called hysterical strength phenomenon. Hysterical strength. And we've seen it over and over in stories about people in situations where there's somebody pinned underneath a vehicle, for example, where people are able to, people who are not huge, hulking people, are able to lift up a vehicle to save someone because of, and you know, we attribute it to adrenaline and all kinds of other factors.

But it seems actually that our bodies were created in most circumstances to actually regulate and limit the amount of strength that we actually use. We actually have pain receptors.

[30 : 00] Anybody know when you lift something heavy, you start to feel it. And the heavier it is, the more painful it becomes. And so our mind, our brain, if you will, has a regulator that says, okay, that's enough.

And so scientists actually will say that we only use about 65% of the capacity of our muscles. But there are certain situations where our body is able to maximize the actual physical strength that we have.

Of course, that puts our own body in danger. In fact, I'm going to tell a quick story here. This is back, this is from 2006. There's a man named Tom Boyle. This is in Tucson, Arizona. He was driving with his wife.

He saw an accident. There was a bicyclist that got hit by a Camaro. He was sucked under the car and pinned underneath. Tom Boyle rushes over and finds him pinned underneath this car.

He's not able to get out. I think it was a mesh of the bicycle and him and compressing him underneath that vehicle. Well, after not being able to pull him out, he starts to try to lift this vehicle.

[31 : 11] And inch by inch by inch is able to lift up this 3,000 pound Camaro off of the ground.

But you can imagine, well, his two arms are occupied. Now what? Well, he finds somebody, I think it was the driver of the car, and says, pull him out! And the guy finally grabs him and pulls him out.

They estimated that he held up that vehicle, at least part of it. It wasn't the full vehicle, right? It's not like he lifted like Superman the whole 3,000 pound vehicle over his head. But he was able to lift something that in normal circumstances he would not be able to get off the ground.

He was able to get it up off the ground. They accounted for about 45 seconds. 45 seconds he had that vehicle lifted up off the ground to save that man. Interestingly, later on, when Tom went home, he realized that he had three broken teeth in his mouth.

What happened? Well, in that moment of, they call it hysterical strength, in a moment of hysteria, in a moment of excitement, in a moment of pure adrenaline, he went and his mind or his brain, maybe we'll call it, which would usually regulate the amount of strength that he would use to keep him safe, went into action and shut off that regulator and allowed him to use all of the strength that he otherwise would not be able to use.

[32 : 49] That strength was good, but it was also bad in that he crushed his own teeth because that regulator was turned off. And I can imagine when you have demons, like this man had, were disassociating his brain regulation, whatever, from his physical body and so he would be able to have what seemed like superhuman strength and breaking chains.

Verse 5, and always night and day he was in the mountains and in the tombs crying out and cutting himself with stones. This man was mad.

We might call him crazy or use a term like mental illness. He was acting like a wild animal. In fact, it makes me think of, there's a story in the Old Testament about a man who through God's judgment became mad.

That was King Nebuchadnezzar. Remember, he was told by Daniel, you will eat grass like an ox for seven years and he did. He acted like a wild animal eating the grass running around naked.

And that's what was going on with this man. You know, we have all kinds of examples in the Bible of the effects or the manifestations, if you will, of a demonic influence.

[34 : 12] And this is just one of them. Acting mad, acting crazy. In other cases, we see actual physical illnesses.

You know, there are examples in the Bible where Jesus healed someone by casting out an evil spirit. They had some kind of illness. And when the spirit was cast out, they were whole.

They were healed. I think that points to the impact that our minds can have on our physical wellness.

In other cases, it seems like the manifestation of demonic influence just provided some kind of supernatural power. It didn't seem like there was any kind of illness madness that came along with it.

For example, we see people who are mediums or fortune tellers. And they use those quote gifts to make money or whatever it might be. So why did this specific demonic influence cause madness in this man?

[35 : 20] Well, this is just a guess, but I can imagine that maybe he had invited demonic influence in his life through fortune telling or being a medium.

We see that in the Bible several times. Those who invited spirits into their body to be able to try to speak for the dead, for example, or tell some kind of secret knowledge that maybe only demons might know.

And so that spirit would enter and cause a little bit of skill, we might call it, a little bit of knowledge to know things that otherwise wouldn't know.

But then we find out that this man doesn't just have one, he has many. And I can imagine that these many spirits, these are real beings, real beings that are able to think and strategize and talk, speak, like we see here.

But you can imagine if there's a legion, how that might cause chaos and confusion. And so I can imagine that all these demons inhabiting this man would just cause chaos and confusion.

[36 : 35] Him screaming and yelling all over the place and just being completely out of his mind. One question I think is important to ask is whenever you see this kind of behavior, mental illness of some kind, does that mean that there's demons involved?

And I don't think we should always assume that that's the case. Though we shouldn't discount it either. A lot of times mental illness is just caused by physical abnormalities in our bodies or in our brains.

And so that's and sometimes just for example people who have experienced debilitating kinds of illnesses whether mental type things or physical type things just change their diet sometimes or find other kind of physical even things like acupuncture or other things where we're able to massage sometimes.

I think it was your daughter that found a bunch of relief just through massage. It was having this horrible was it migraines or something it was something in the head but it was through some kind of physical thing that found finally found relief.

And so a question to ask is because we have you know this kind of madness that the Bible describes it as is actually common throughout the world.

[38 : 12] We don't see it as much depends on where you are in the world. Today those who experience mental illness we put in institutions we don't see them they're hidden from the world through most of the history of the world these kinds of things were not always hidden they're out there it was something that but I'm sure many of us have experienced people who seem to be out of their minds could be in today's age something just physical but it also could be something definitely demonic.

Verse 6 when he saw Jesus from afar off he ran and he worshipped him. My question is was this because as he speaks who's speaking is it the man?

No we find out as he's speaking it's actually the demon and ultimately many of them that are speaking is it the man who's worshipping and bowing down or is it the demon spirit? I'm not sure but the demon spirit is the one who speaks and he says and he cried out with a loud voice and says 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.

So again this is clear this is not the man speaking this is that spirit talking that man would not have known who Jesus was just by seeing him. then Jesus said verse 8 for he said to him come out of the man unclean spirit Jesus had authority over demons he had authority to tell them when to go where to go to leave at his word the interesting thing here and there's not really many instances of that in fact I think this is the only instance where Jesus has somewhat of a conversation with an evil spirit the only other instance I can think of is when he had a conversation with the with Satan himself with the head of all the evil spirits when he was tempted in the wilderness but he asked him this interesting question what is your name and the man replies the spirit replies legion for we are many a legion is a description of a

Roman legion a subsection of the military and legion was a large group of soldiers it was about 5,000 and so does that mean that there were 5,000 demons in the man who knows not likely I think just like today we would use the word legion to mean do we always mean 5,000 when we say legion no we mean a lot right a legion of whatever and so I imagine this was just used also as a kind of figure of speech to mean many so we don't know was it tens of demons was it hundreds was it thousands who knows some people have pointed to the fact that there were 2,000 pigs that ran off the cliff and so maybe there were 2,000 but I don't really put a lot of weight in that right all you have to do is have one demon possessed pig and the rest will follow right I don't know how smart pigs are but the

[41 : 36] Bible actually does speak to this concept of there being many evil spirits in a person in the book of Matthew chapter 12 verse 43 Jesus says this when an unclean spirit goes out of a man he goes through dry places seeking rest and finds none then he says I will return to my house from which I came and when he comes he finds it empty swept and put in order then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself and they enter and dwell there and the last state of that man is worse than the first so shall it also be with he's using it to explain this current generation what it's like but he's using a real life thing that happens so he's saying there are times when a spirit leaves a man and it's kind of hard to discern exactly what he means by sweeping out the house and all that but evidently there is room for this demon to come back and he brings more with him and so

I think verse 10 also he begged him earnestly that he would not send them out of the country now this is curious why would they want to stay in that particular area the country doesn't mean the country of Israel it's just talking about this area this region don't make us leave this region why not my best guess is maybe they decided hey they were having a good time there the people maybe were it was a great playground for them in that area whereas another region might not be as accessible to their devices but then it says in verse 11 now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains another question that comes up here is this is Israel what are their pigs doing why are there people raising pigs if you're familiar with the law of Moses Israelites are not supposed to eat the flesh of pigs now the law of

Moses doesn't say anything about raising them and so some people have conjectured well these could be Israelites that were just raising the pigs just not eating them and they sell them to the Gentiles and it seems from the law of Moses that was fine I think when you look at some of the extra biblical texts from the Jewish leaders of the day they also they liked to add rules around the rules you'll see that a lot among the Jewish leaders of the day God had a rule and they would wrap rules around it because they figured if you don't break my rule then you never break God's rule that's not a good idea by the way so but this is actually an area with a lot of Gentiles as well in fact there were more Gentiles in this region than there were Jews and so maybe these were Gentile herdsmen that were raising pigs the third option is it could have been Jews who were raising pigs and eating them and they were just despising God's law that's certainly the case it's not like that hasn't happened before in the nation of Israel in fact there was a lot of that kind of thing going on so who knows but in verse 12 it says 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 2,000 and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea and drowned in the sea you notice the shift here originally it was talking about one spirit and he said and using the singular and all of a sudden it switches and it changes to the plural they the other thing I think interesting to note here is that these spirits seem really interested they don't want to just go out disembodied they have this need or desire to enter into some kind of physical body if not a person will at least these pigs and I think that kind of indicates very possibly how these spirits were designed our spirits as human beings

God created us to have bodies and so when we don't when we're not in our bodies for example at death I'm sure that there is a same kind you kind of I would imagine feel somewhat naked like you don't have this covering that God intended that we have the Bible talks about in the future when we die that we don't just go to heaven and live as ghosts as it were just spirits in heaven though some people might think that but God has an intention for us that we will receive new physical bodies they'll be similar to these bodies except for one primary thing it will be immortal it cannot die that will be amazing won't it that's God's plan and intention for us but it seemed like these spirits really wanted some kind of body to enter into and then they all rushed into the sea so

[47 : 08] I don't know did they stay inside the drowned pigs bodies probably not so who knows what's going on but were they trying to maybe cause Jesus trouble right by causing these pigs I mean there were 2,000 of them that's a lot of pigs that would probably ruin somebody financially right to lose that many pigs so maybe trying to cause Jesus to get into trouble who knows but ultimately what did it do well everybody around came to see what happened and they found out about Jesus and then they heard the story about this man who they knew is the nutjob out you know on the shore in the tombs and now he is clothed he's in his right mind wow that really tells them something about who who is this man who is this man Jesus he even has authority over the demon spirits finally at the end the man and we'll just kind of go through here verse 14 so those who fed the swine fled and they told everybody verse 15 they came to

Jesus and they saw the man who was demon possessed he was clothed in his right mind and they were afraid and those who saw it told them how it happened so they shared the testimony of what they saw about the swine and they began to depart with them to plead from their region why is that this is kind of we're not comfortable with all this stuff going on and then the man as Jesus was going to leave the man said can I come with you Jesus says no I don't want you to come with me preach the gospel of the kingdom to others but in this case he said no I want you to go back I want you to tell people about what I did for you but did he say what I did for you I want you to tell them what the Lord did for you this speaks to who Jesus was and is tell them what great things the

Lord has done for you Decapolis just by the way is not a single place Decapolis is actually the name of a region and if you can see the Greek or Latin roots there deca meaning ten there's actually ten cities that made up a region and so he went out throughout all that region and told his story about what Jesus did one I think a big thing to point out here is what Jesus told him tell your friends what great things the Lord has done for you that's something all of us should do right has the Lord ever done anything good for you amen and when he does whether it's saving our soul or all the other things that the Bible brings up or individual testimonies that we have of God's blessing in our life you can tell somebody tell our friends tell our family whether it's our believing family or maybe our unbelieving let them know maybe they've heard it so many times about this

Jesus guy and I should do this and da da da da hey did you know what Jesus did for me last week make them listen now I want to end with this talking about Jesus authority over evil spirits and how we should think about this today there is demonic activity in the world we don't necessarily always see it a lot here in this country though it is all around us people who are involved in the occult people who are specifically inviting spirits to talk to them into their body to do things with them and demons are at play all over the world so do do we have the same authority as Jesus over evil spirits

I want to ask that question Jesus in his obviously did in fact this is what amazed people whatever he told these spirits to do they did and I think this was something that was meant to be unique for Jesus ministry we actually see a few references to demonic activity in the Old Testament in fact there was a story of Saul where it says that the spirit of God left him and an evil spirit came and entered into it and it says it tormented him and he actually was told about David and David came and he played the harp remember and it actually eased his torment but there was an evil spirit that was tormenting Saul and the only relief he got was this harp being played that would provide him some relief from the torment of that spirit but this is something that was unheard of unseen that demons would just obey a man whatever he said then we also see that Jesus gave authority to his disciples later on over spirits in fact

[52 : 33] I'll read this Luke 10 verse 17 you don't have to turn there for time sake but in Luke 10 verse 17 it says this they were amazed that they had this authority Jesus specifically gave them authority not just over spirits but over sickness as well he said I want you to I give you authority you to go preach the kingdom and do all these things and it will give you it will provide veracity to the thing that you're saying people will be convinced that what you're saying is true because you have authority over these demons Paul we see had special authority over diseases and evil spirits miracles not just everyday miracles unusual miracles by the hand of

Paul so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them but right after this just a couple of verses later it talks about those who didn't have this same authority then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits saying we exercise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches and also there were seven sons of Sceva a Jewish chief priest who did so and the evil spirit answered and said well Jesus I know and Paul I know but who are you they didn't have that authority then the man in whom the evil spirit was leapt on them and overpowered them and prevailed against them so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded they assumed that they could have that same authority but they assumed wrongly I don't think it's wise that we should assume that we have authority over every evil spirit that is out there that if there's somebody who is a fortune teller or a medium or something we can just go up and talk to that spirit and tell it that person

I don't think that we should assume that we have that authority but what we do have authority over is when it comes to evil spirits and our own lives as Christian believers in Jesus Christ the Bible says that our bodies are the temple of God as believers we are temples of the Holy Spirit in 1st Corinthians chapter 3 verse 16 Paul says do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you evil spirits can't inhabit our bodies that's where God lives it reminds me of Saul that story that I just told of Saul an evil spirit entered but what had to happen first it says there 1st Samuel 16 14 says this but the spirit of the

Lord departed from Saul and a distressing spirit troubled him God's spirit left and an evil spirit entered our bodies are the temple of the living God and the Bible says that we have been delivered from the power of darkness and transferred or conveyed into the kingdom of the son of his love in whom we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins that's Colossians 1 13 some people might read these accounts in fact especially if you're a new Christian or younger Christian you might read these accounts about demon spirits and how they tormented people and might think well what if an evil spirit does that to me but as a child of God we have nothing to fear we have no reason to fear evil spirits entering into our bodies or tormenting us in that way however evil spirits are still part of the battle aren't they and

Paul talks about that in 2nd Corinthians chapter 10 verse 3 Paul says this for though we walk in the flesh we do not war according to the flesh for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ there is still a battle that we are waging that we're fighting the devil and his minions these evil spirits still have some kind of influence that they can have even on believers but notice how Paul talks here what is he talking about when he talks about the influence of these spiritual strongholds we'll read another passage Ephesians chapter 6 says this for finally this is

[58 : 14] Ephesians 6 10 finally my brethren be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities against powers against the rulers of the darkness of this age against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day having done all to stand the devil is still at work these evil spirits are still at work even among the church in verse 13 therefore take up the whole armor of God sorry verse 14 stand therefore having girded your waist with truth having put on the breastplate of righteousness and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace above all taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one the weapons that we have against

Satan it's not holy water it's not a crucifix that we hold up it's not any of those things the power the authority that we have against the devil and his schemes and his scheme is to influence what our minds against the truth of God's word and that is what we need to stand up against we see temptation from the devil and we see lies deception from the devil and that is how the devil and all of his minions that's how they wield their influence against us and we need to stand against those things what are the things that we put on as the armor of God we put on the belt of truth we need to know what the truth is we need to open up our Bibles and read it know what God has accomplished for us righteousness says the breastplate living righteously though that is good but it's knowing that

God has made us righteous through his work on the cross he has made us righteous standing in that righteousness is a way that we fight against the devil the gospel of peace our feet shod with the gospel of peace knowing the gospel that Christ died for our sins and everything that was accomplished for us through that and then the shield of faith our faith in God's word not just reading God's word but believing what it says regardless of what's going on around us evil spirits can tempt us Bible says very explicitly that it does we even see it in the life of Jesus the devil came Satan himself tempted Jesus he can torment us in our minds James says this

James 4 7 says this therefore submit to God resist the devil and he will what he will flee from you resist him Jesus resisted the devil remember and what did he use to resist the devil the word of God there were lies that were given to Jesus and he came back with the scriptures last verse here 1st Peter 5 verse 8 says this be sober be vigilant because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking who may devour resist him steadfast in the faith knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world we're all in this battle together and so our battle is a battle of the mind and fighting Satan and his demons against their influence over our minds we need to renew our minds with

God's word knowing the truth of what God has accomplished in us I have been saved from judgment I have peace with God you know the devil will tell lies demons will tell lies you know God he's really angry with you and you know what God should be angry with us most of the time he should be so it seems like a realistic truth but God's word said you have as a believer trusting in Christ you have peace with him the peace that passes all understanding we are children of the living God the Bible calls you a child of the living God I am sealed with the Holy Spirit God has put his seal on me to keep me to preserve me our bodies are the temple of God temples of the

[63 : 28] Holy Spirit God the Bible says you are seated with Christ in heavenly places that you're a new creation in Christ Jesus that we have been made alive together with Jesus we once were dead and now we've been made alive we have a life in God that we didn't have before and not just a temporary life but an eternal one with him in the heavens he's forgiven us of all trespasses and sins and he says that he has made us the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus sometimes that's hard to believe ever looked in the mirror you don't see righteousness so that's an easy one for the devil right you're not righteous look at you you're a mess but we can look at the scriptures and respond to the devil respond to that spirit here's what

God says about me that I am God's righteousness not a righteousness of my own but a righteousness that he gave me as a free gift and then this last verse he has his divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness there isn't anything that God has withheld from us you know he's really good to us isn't he he is so so good if can we can we end with that song that we sang earlier about the Lord is beautiful as we were singing that song you know Isaiah 53 talks about Jesus coming and it says this in fact let me turn there Isaiah 53 get your singing voices ready Isaiah 53 who has believed our report and to whom has the arm of the

Lord been revealed for he shall grow up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of dry ground he has no form or comeliness and when we see him there is no beauty that we should desire him it says that he was despised and rejected by men Jesus wasn't beautiful but we sing about his beauty because of what he did for us what he accomplished for us so let's sing this together just the first verse I can't remember the number 643 if you don't know the word 643 we'll just sing an acapella together oh your beautiful your face is all I see and when your eyes are on this child your grace abounds in me amen don't forget this week to tell the

Lord that you love him and you're so grateful for all he's done for you amen thanks