

There are many needy people in the world. People can be in financial need, economically deprived and socially isolated. This will often lead to other problems or needs, such as health and education needs. Many other people are in physical need. They are suffering from poor health, or illness. They may possibly have been told that they have an illness that is terminal. Other people may be in emotional need. Through their upbringing that have been taught all sorts of confusing things about how they should think of themselves. They may have poor social skills and feel that they are always the victim in every situation and never the victor. They may be confused about themselves and have all sorts of trouble relating to other people in a friendly way.

There is only one thing that is worse than being a needy person. That is feeling as though you are not only needy, but that you have no hope in your situation. The passage before us tonight is Mark 5.

Here is the story of an extreme case of a man in need. He himself and most people would have thought that his situation was hopeless. In fact for many people the sooner he died the better, since he was such a threat to the people in that region. But that was before Jesus landed in that region, by boat. The presence of Jesus makes all the difference in the world. He brings hope where there is despair. He brings joy in the face of tragedy. He brings healing where there is sickness. He brings release from the captivity of demons. Even in an exceptional case the power of Jesus came bring restoration and wholeness.

As we look at the passage in Mark 5 we want to lay it out in its context.

The previous chapter is dominated by the parable of the sower. Four responses, three failures but one mighty harvest in the end. The kingdom of God will be successful, but not everybody will come on board with the mission of the Kingdom. There will be drop outs and opposition.

Therefore do not hide your own involvement. Do not be surprised by struggle and difficulties. Always remember that the growth of the kingdom is God's amazing and sometime secret work.

And always remember that Jesus is the King in God's kingdom.

He is not just the King of the Jews either. In Mark 4:35-41 he is the King of the wind and the waves. Even the chaos of the creation is under his control. He is the king of the uncontrollable.

When we come to look at the poor trouble man in Mark 5, he is not only a man out of control who others cannot contain, he is more particularly an Gentile.

When we say that Jesus is Lord of All, it means not just the Jews, but people of all nations, no matter what their colour or creed or culture.

1 A MAN IN GREAT NEED

Jesus crosses over the other side of Lark Galilee. He goes from the Jewish side, around Capernaum to the Gentile side, to the region of the Decapolis of the 10 cities. You know for sure that this is Gentile territory because would never eat pork or keep pigs.

- Among the tombs (verse 2-3)

Did your father ever drive through a county town on a journey and point out the cemetery and say to everyone in the car, hey look over there, that's the dead centre of town? I have heard that joke a number of times.

Cemeteries are not such creepy places for us these days. They are not shrouded in mist like they used to be in England. In fact there used to a regular train service from Central railway out to Rookwood and people would go there for picnics. But I do not think that anyone ever wanted to actually live there. In this cemetery, on the side of a cliff, possibly with a number of caves, both natural and carved out, this poor tormented soul lived. I wonder how he might have survived. I wonder if he might

have really come to the end of his tether like the prodigal son on Luke 15 and eaten some of the food that was put out for the pigs. He had obviously been a problem for the people of the surrounding villages. They had tried to tie him up. Maybe for his own protection. More likely for their own sense of safety. Anyone who is going to hurt themselves is just as likely to hurt you too. “No-one could bind him anymore” implies that there was a time when he was under control. Who knows how long this had been going on.

- Too strong to be bound

Even chains could not hold him down. Most of us would stop when the sharp unrelenting steel would cut into our wrists, but not this man. Breaking free was all part of his self destruction, his self mutilation.

- Self destructive (v5)

He hated himself. He loathed who he had become. He wanted to punish himself for what he had done, or perhaps thought he had done. He had no self respect, no self esteem. He did not see himself as one of God’s valued creatures.

And he would not take any notice of what anyone else said to him, except when Jesus came along, everything changed.

1. THE MAN WITH GREAT POWER

- Instant Recognition

As Jesus steps out of the boat, somehow and some distance, the poor demented man knows who Jesus is. Naked. Brusied, disheveled, dirty he comes to Jesus in a hurry. I wonder if the disciples who were with Jesus were concerned about whether this was an attack run or a welcome submission approach.

(v6) In the end, it was in fact instant recognition of the person of Jesus. He knows his name, he knows his title. He knows his work: to demolish the work of the Devil and to set the captives free.

- Instant authority

Jesus also knows the source of the man’s troubles: demon possession. He is not interested in how this man came to be in this situation. For Jesus history is a thing of the past. He is moved by compassion to action. This is one of the most extensive conversations that we have recorded between demons and Jesus. Remember that on Jewish territory Jesus mostly tells them to be silent. But here it is a question of introductions and explanations and then come level of presumed arbitration. As if the demons had anything to bargain with. (v8,10,11,12

- Instant removal (v13)

What we see here and what the man saw vividly was the instant dismissal of the demons from the man. Not only did he feel so much better, he could see the effects of the self destructive nature of the demons in the pigs. The toppled over the cliff into the sea and to their death.

2 THE MEN WITH GREAT FEAR

- They saw the power of Jesus (v14,15,16)
- They were pig farmers (v17)
- A story to tell (v18,19,20)

Jesus gives hope to the people who feel hopeless and helpless. He has the power over sickness and death and disease. Refer to Acts 10:34-43