

"WHAT IS YOUR NAME?"

Mark 5:1-20

Key Verse: 5:9

"Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' 'My name is Legion,' he replied, 'for we are many.'"

In the previous passage Jesus gave his disciples a storm [training](#) during the time of their hilarious vacation. We learned that the disciples should not be fearful, even when they are in deep trouble because of a sudden storm. Fear paralyzed them. Fear made them helpless. Fear was like a big storm which was going to rise and fall with the boat and tear the boat into pieces together with them. At that time, Jesus was sleeping very peacefully, laying his head on a cushion in the stern. There is a big contrast between the disciples' fear and peaceful Jesus, sleeping in a storm. We live in a real world. If we do not overcome the storms that frequently confront us, we live in fear and in terrible troubles and torment, and [life](#) seems to be going nowhere. But Jesus showed us how to overcome storms. We must look up at Jesus in the midst of the storm. Then we will be saved and we will be happy all the time. Those who have not received any storm training and only lived peacefully cannot escape from the life storm. They must overcome storm training sooner or later. Indeed, Jesus is all the world to us; he is our salvation. He gives us victory every day in all the storms of life. In today's passage we hear a story about a young man who was possessed by demons. He suffered until he became useless, tormenting himself and screaming among the tombs. We learn how Jesus had mercy on him. Jesus healed him from his demon possession and gave him a holy mission. Let's learn Jesus' compassion in this passage. A man has to be a man of affection and by God's grace, a man of compassion. A man has to be like Jesus. A man should not [speak](#) or act like the devil. May God bless you to learn of Jesus' compassion for a helpless, useless person.

I. Jesus' second effort for a vacation (1-2)

Look at verse 1. "They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes." Jesus and his disciples wanted to have a vacation, eating and resting across the lake of Galilee. On the way, they enjoyed a vacation mood and they were full of expectation that on this vacation they might eat a lot and sleep enough. Moreover, their happiness was overflowing because they were with their Lord Jesus on the same boat. But on the way, suddenly the wind blew and a storm arose. Their boat was nearly sinking. They were at the brink of drowning. The waves broke over the boat so that it was nearly swamped. The vacation suddenly turned out to be an unexpected storm training. Life always seems to be momentary happiness; after that, one has to be in terrible storms and try to save his own life all the time. When the disciples were in the terrible storm and great fear, Jesus got up from his peaceful sleeping and rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. Jesus said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" (40) Jesus did not comfort them because they were attacked by a storm and suffered much because of their fear. Rather, Jesus rebuked them. In verse 40, he said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" When we are in deep fear, we must accept Jesus' rebuking, "Why are you so afraid? Do

you still have no faith?"

Look at verse 1. After the storm and after Jesus' rebuking, "Do you still have no faith?" they went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. Jesus and his disciples made a second effort for a retreat, even though they had faced an awful storm on the lake of Galilee. They kept on sailing across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. It was only six miles across the lake of Galilee. Gerasa was one of the cities of the Decapolis. "Decapolis" means ten cities. At that time, Greek immigrants colonized and lived in this area. And also, the 14th Roman Legion occupied and colonized this land. Jesus and his disciples had left the other side of the lake in the late afternoon and had spent a certain amount of time in the storm. It was already late night. So they arrived in the town of Gerasa in the late night or early the next morning. The disciples were eagerly waiting for the boat to touch the shore. Finally, they landed on the shore. They were happy that they were still alive. They were happy now that they could eat something and get some sleep since they had struggled in the stormy sea all night.

As soon as they put their feet on Gerasene soil, they heard a strange cry. It sounded like a wounded animal. The disciples became nervous and forgot about their hungry feeling. They were sleepy but suddenly fully awakened by the strange animal's voice. Soon they saw a man coming out of the tombs to meet Jesus. He was tottering and crying. The host of their vacation was not a good one, but a monstrous one. They never expected a host. They just wanted a quiet place to eat and get some sleep.

II. He lived among the tombs (3-5)

Look at verse 3. "This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain." What had caused this young man to become like this? Maybe he was a very cute young boy who had studied very well, and in the classroom many girls touched his face, saying, "You are a cute boy." He had studied very well. When he became a junior high school boy, he was very handsome and many girls wanted to make him their boyfriend. But he kept his heart pure and studied hard and he became the valedictorian at his graduation from high school. He was proud of himself that he was a valedictorian. He encouraged other students to live a pure life during Junior and Senior High and become a valedictorian like him. He also urged them that man has to be pure and noble. That night, they had a big graduation party. For the first time, he drank a cup of J.B. and another cup of Scotch. When alcohol circulated in his body, suddenly he relaxed from his tension and he made another valedictory speech. Many girls asked his hand to dance. At first, he refused; then he accepted a foxy girl's dancing invitation. He danced. He felt strange. The next morning he found that he had made a mistake with the girl when he saw that she was on the same bed. From that time on, his sense of purity and his desire to become a noble man and a man of integrity all disappeared. In the past, he had spent all his time studying. He never watched sports games and never had a desire for a girl, because his ambition to be a pure and noble man upheld him highly. But after the bad influence of a bad girl, he began to be unhappy. He began to enjoy all kinds of parties. He began to drink. He began to enjoy girlfriends. Finally, he felt that he had lost himself. What was more, he felt he was not himself, but he was beside himself. There were two himselfs. One was continuously tormented by the prick of conscience. The

other was living like other ordinary young people.

He was very miserable. He didn't eat regularly or sleep regularly. He turned on loud rock music and felt crazy with the music and annoyed his family members. For around three months his parents and family members bore with him. But they became helpless and called 911. So he was arrested and put in jail. During the time he was in jail, he despaired. At the moment he despaired, demons crept in one by one, saying, "You are very sweet and nice and very handsome." Maybe more female demons than male demons crept in. Male demons might have said, "You are obnoxious and you are more handsome than us. So I am going to give you a hard time."

After he was free from jail, he unintentionally began shoplifting and striking people on the street or in the alley. He was arrested again and sent to the police station and kept in jail. After several days, in light of his past achievement and humanity, the townspeople got him out of jail. When he got out of jail, nobody wanted to be with him. He became a loner. He also became a lonely man. So he did more wicked things. Again he was arrested and put in jail at the police station of Gerasa. But he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. Perhaps he also pulled out the iron bars of the jail. He came out, took several policemen and threw them away outside the police station. He was the agony of the town. Even the policemen were afraid that he would throw them to the ground and break their hip bones or their legs.

In the best analysis, he was a good boy. But he made one mistake. Because of a foxy girl, he lost the sense of honoring himself. Then demons crept in one by one up to 6,000. Six thousand is the number of soldiers in one Roman Legion. His power to break the chains and pull out the prison bars was not his own strength; it was the power of the demons. His power of running was indeed great. He began to climb up one mountain to another mountain and crossed one river to another river. He came to a graveyard of Gerasa and lived among the tombs where nobody bothered him. His body was almost bare and he cried with a loud voice. His shouting voice echoed through the mountains that surrounded the town of Gerasa. He began to torture himself, cutting his body with sharp stones and shouting all night. He was virtually perishing. One mistake had made him beside himself, a man of demon-possession.

Let's think about Jesus' disciples. Their vacation plan did not go as they wanted. First, they were almost melted by fear because of the huge storm. This time, unfortunately, their boat landed at the graveyard of Gerasa. A man with a monstrous figure frightened them to death. So the disciples buried their heads in the crevices of rocks or buried their noses in the dirt.

III. Jesus healed a demon-possessed man (6-20)

When the demon-possessed man saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" (6-7) His personality was split into two. He knew that Jesus is the Son of the Most High God. He petitioned Jesus not to torture him. He was terribly afraid of Jesus' presence with the Holy Spirit. At the same time, he was speaking, not knowing whether he was speaking or someone else was speaking.

Look at verse 9. "Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?'" Jesus asked his name in order to let him come back to himself. Here we learn that if we are not sure about ourselves we can become demon possessed. If we have no commitment to God, there is a great possibility to be possessed by demons and become a slave to the power of demons. These days the commitment problem is a serious problem. Young people cannot commit themselves to God, not because they are not sincere, but because demons hinder them. The demons catch them and make them their prisoners. Why did Jesus ask the man's name? As I said before, Jesus wanted to bring this man back to himself. These days people ignore the meaning of their existence. These days people are too practical. They are buying and selling, drinking and indulging, and more, not knowing who they are. But if we look back in history, from 300 B.C. to A.D. 1700, we find that many outstanding scholars and philosophers and those who wanted to be good men thought about the meaning of man's existence. We call this epistemology and ontology. Right before the Industrial Revolution, this study and research about the meaning of human existence was a most important study. But since the Industrial Revolution, people have ignored the meaning of man's existence. They gave up knowing the meaning of man's existence because it required life-giving effort, and no one gave them even one dollar for their effort. They have become crazy for technological development so as to make more money. Through technological development they made many machines and tools which give people a little comfort and a little convenience. But people lost the meaning of their existence. Moreover, they forgot about their relationship with God and their relationships with others. Sartre's (1905-1980) work "Nausea" expressed human existence with the word "Nausea." People look at each other and they feel nauseous. It is because they gave up epistemology and ontology and only thought about their human existence in man, not in God. Existentialists arose and thought only about man's inner problems. They were not happy when they thought about man's inner problems. Then they naturally could not but think about human fear, anxiety, death, fear of death, where to be buried, and how to die a little more comfortably. There are so many people who die in an easy way by the help of many physicians. Because of the Industrial Revolution, they enjoy a little comfort and a little convenience. But they lost the meaning of their existence and their meaning of life. This man among the tombs, shouting and torturing himself and cutting his legs, is the exact picture of modern people. How foolish it is to think about the meaning of human existence for such a long time, over 2,000 years, and still not find the meaning of human existence. But the Bible answers all of man's questions simply and persuasively. The Bible is the answer to human life. These days people are lost. They are beside themselves. In one man, two personalities split from each other so painfully day and night.

"What is your name?" Jesus' question is indeed marvelous. Jesus wanted to help him discover himself all over again. God, in his eternal power and divine nature, endowed man with the image of God. Ordinary people want to forget that they are made in the image of God. They suppress the truth. Soon they become wicked and do what they really don't want to do because of demon possession. How wonderful is Jesus' healing of the demon-possessed man. "What is your name?" Jesus asked his name because this man had lost himself. Jesus asked his name because this man was beside himself. Jesus asked his name because this man was possessed by demons. Jesus asked his name so that this man might come

back to himself and be a normal man.

What was the man's answer? "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many" (9). Here we clearly see his split personality. He said, "My name" first. But later he said, "For we are many." Do you know what is the most unhappy and self-torturing thing in this hard world? It is to live with a split personality. Those who have split personalities look very proud and act very proudly. But they never recognize themselves as normal human beings. They despise themselves as dogs or crocodiles. The man said, "My name is Legion." Probably he saw Roman regiments marching with elegant Roman soldiers' uniforms, their helmets shining and their spears and swords flashing. But the true meaning is, as he replied, "For we are many." How many? The demons that crept into him were 6,000, equivalent to the number of a Roman legion. He could not be the object of compassion to anybody. He now came to himself. But he was in the control of demons. Verse 10 says, "And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area." He was like a U.S. POW in Cambodia. In the movie, "Uncommon Valor," courageous discharged soldiers went to Cambodia to rescue U.S. POWs. But the U.S. POWs did not trust their valiant rescuers and didn't want to follow them. It was because they did not trust anybody out of their fear.

Look at verses 11-12. "A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, 'Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.'" It was not a small deal. Gerasa was prosperous with a pig industry for the Gentiles. But the demons wanted all the pigs in Gerasa, as pay for releasing the demon-possessed man. Jesus gave them permission and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. Jesus is indeed the marvelous God. The pigs were not his own pigs. It was the industry of Gerasa. In order to save a demon-possessed man he ruined the pig industry of Gerasa and annoyed the people of Gerasa. Verse 13 says, "He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned." 6,000 demons went into the pigs. Then the pigs lost their joy of life, eating. Their pride was hurt because they were possessed by demons. Pigs never do anything wicked; they only eat day and night. They really enjoy their lives. But even pigs don't like to be possessed by evil spirits. So the pigs rushed down the steep bank and all fell into the lake and were drowned. It is indeed a tragic story. Two thousand pigs committed mass suicide by drowning (13).

Look at verse 14. "Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened." There were some hirelings tending the pigs. They saw with their eyes 2,000 pigs committing mass suicide, falling down from the steep bank of the lake, and drowning. Then the pig-tending hirelings felt responsible. So they ran to their owners and reported what had happened. What had happened was indeed terrible to the owner of the pig industry. When the people of the country came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons sitting there, well-dressed, and in his right mind. He looked like a handsome and brilliant young man. And they were greatly afraid. Why were they afraid? It is because Jesus ruined their pig industry in order to save a demon-possessed man. In this way, Jesus helped him come back to his right mind and once again become a handsome and brilliant young man. They were really angry in their minds. They thought that even one pig was very

precious because it was their money. They thought that the demon-possessed man should have rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned instead of their pigs. They valued money more than a demon-possessed man. What a surprising reaction! Suppose one company which was prosperous because of their Internet business was completely ruined by one employee with a split personality who was doing many terrible things in the company. The man who caused the trouble would be sued and sent to prison for several years. But the pig industry people in Gerasa were overwhelmed by Jesus' spiritual authority. So they did not arrest Jesus or the man; instead, they begged Jesus to leave. Look at verse 17. "Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region."

Look at verse 18. "As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him." He was a man who had been possessed by 6,000 demons. He had become a monster among the tombs of Gerasa who tortured himself with sharp stones. He had been bleeding all over his body. But now, he was healed. He came back to himself and became a normal man when Jesus drove out the demons by sacrificing 2,000 pigs. He was in his right mind. A desire to become a noble man and a useful man to God arose in his heart. Look at verse 19. "Jesus did not let him, but said, 'Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.'" So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and all the people were amazed.

Jesus and his disciples were rejected by the people of Gerasa. It was because Jesus ruined their pig industry simply for the sake of that monstrous animal. Since Jesus was rejected he could not rest or eat something there. Now Jesus and his disciples had to get into the boat and leave. In this way, the vacation was over. However, Jesus saved one demon-possessed man at the cost of 2,000 pigs.

An important lesson here is that Jesus gave this man a mission. Jesus did not choose him as one of his disciples, though he really wanted to be one. Jesus said, "Go home to your family and tell them what the Lord has done for you." It meant to tell his family members how much Jesus had done for him. In other words, he must remember the grace of Jesus and he must live only by Jesus' grace. Not only so, Jesus told him to spread the news of Jesus in the Decapolis, that Jesus healed him when he was a demon-possessed man.

In this way, a demon-possessed man who had once tortured himself and lived among the tombs became the UBF Director of Decapolis-Ten Cities. In Chicago UBF even to become a fellowship leader is competitive. But this man suddenly became the Director of Decapolis-Ten Cities. Here we learn that Jesus healed him in order to give him a mission. Romans 1:5 says, "Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith." Those who have received the grace of Jesus must be men of a holy mission. Thank God that Jesus healed a demon-possessed man. We see here the affection of Jesus Christ. We see here the compassion of God in Jesus. We see here how we have to see those who are in trouble. The name of Jesus be praised!