



***YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!***  
**Winter 2017-18 Leader Commentary**

**Unit 2: Spiritual Checkup**

**Session 4: Don't Keep It to Yourself** (see pp. 136-139)

**The Question:** What can I do so others will know Jesus?

**The Point:** Healthy Christians share their transformed life in Christ.

**Background Passage:** Mark 5:1-20

**Focal Passage:** Mark 5:1-4,6-8,18-20

This commentary is designed to help you think about the question, "What can I do so others will know Jesus?" and drive home this one truth: Healthy Christians share their transformed life in Christ.

**Focus on These Points**

***Go Because Jesus Came to You***  
***(Mark 5:1-4)***

Mark presented miracles in 4:35–5:20 to show Jesus' ability to do mighty works beyond the capability of a mere human being. The present instance of demon possession stresses the overwhelming power at Jesus' disposal in His contest with demonic powers.

Much effort has been made to identify the country of the Gerasenes. Under the best of conditions, the area was an unpleasant place. No sooner had Jesus set His foot on shore than a demoniac greeted Him. Mark stressed the man's dwelling in the tombs and the inability of chains and shackles to hold him (v. 4). Tombs were cave-like rooms cut out of limestone hills for burials. Considered ritually unclean, they were appropriate dwellings for demons and the possessed. This particular demoniac lived among the tombs because society had driven him there due to his violence and their inability to control him. This showed how hopeless the man's situation was.

The Talmud (an historical collection of Jewish traditions) gives four tests for madness: spending the night on a grave, tearing one's clothes, walking around at night, and destroying anything one was given. All four signs are found with this man.

The man was often "bound with shackles and chains" (v. 4). Some of the binding may have been intended to control the inner man by controlling the outer man, yet he continued to tear "the chains apart" and "smashed the shackles." No one was able to "subdue" him, a term that was often applied to the taming of wild animals.

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The man did not go to Jesus; Jesus came to the man. In the same way, Jesus meets us in the place of our greatest need and in the place where our lives are in chaos.

### ***Go Because Jesus Changed You (Mark 5:6-8)***

The demoniac's screaming was silenced, and his self-destruction ceased. "When he saw Jesus from a distance" indicates that this place was not frequented by a lot of people, for good reason. But something about Jesus approaching caught the man's eye.

The demon was fully aware of Jesus' divinity as seen in his use of "Son of the Most High God," a divine designation (v. 7). The demoniac used the strongest language possible in addressing Jesus because he knew he was in a desperate situation. By uttering the words, "Don't torment me," the demoniac expressed a fear that he was to be punished in some manner in addition to chains and shackles.

Verse 8 seems to be an editorial comment by Mark to explain the frantic behavior of the man. There are two ways of looking at the imperfect verb tense used here. The repeated nature of the command for the unclean spirit to come out of the man suggests that this demonic possession was no ordinary one and that repeated commands were necessary to cast out the demon. Another way of looking at the verse is to minimize the command by emphasizing that the demon realized he was no match for Jesus and left the man with a whimper. All Jesus did was to casually command, and the unclean spirit came out.

Jesus changed the man in an instant. His command for the demon to leave the man left him at once clean and restored.

### ***Go Because Jesus Can Change Others Too (Mark 5:18-20)***

The reaction of the people to the man's healing was mixed. The herdsmen were upset over the loss of their swine. The general population seems to have been shocked and afraid when they heard what had happened. Because of their superstitious nature, the people were scared of anyone who had such enormous power as Jesus; so they begged Him to go away.

Jesus' "getting into the boat," indicates that He was heading back across the Sea of Galilee (v. 18). This drives home the point that healing the demoniac was the reason Jesus and the disciples had crossed the sea in the first place.

The healed man requested that he "might remain" with Jesus. This was a striking contrast from the attitude of the local citizens. The citizens had begged Jesus to go, and He did; the demoniac begged to accompany Jesus, and Jesus would not permit it. Instead, Jesus gave the healed man instructions to return home and bear witness to Him. Previously healed persons had been instructed to tell no one about their healings; but not the demoniac. Jesus did not let the man follow Him because He wanted the man to witness in his homeland where his witness would be most effective and was probably most needed. "Go home to your own people" (v. 19) indicates

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the man was no longer ostracized from his family. His healing was complete. His family was to be the primary target of his evangelism. The man was not to proclaim Jesus directly, but he was to proclaim what great things the Lord had done for him.

In obedience to Jesus' command, the man's witness spread through the Decapolis and prepared the way for Jesus' later visit there (v. 20). The word Decapolis means "(a league of) ten cities" and referred to a group of cities lying for the most part east of the Jordan. The cities were founded originally to preserve and spread Greco-Roman culture, and the citizens had no great love for the Jews. The population of the area was primarily Gentile.

Everyone was "amazed," not because of the healing but because of the man's powerful testimony. Though the man's understanding of the gospel was minimal, he had recognized who Christ was and had experienced His saving and cleansing work. That was enough to give him something to share with others.