

I lift my eyes up to the hills – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip – for He who watches over you will not slumber nor will He sleep. For the Lord watches over you – the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from harm – he will watch over you all the days of your life. The Lord will watch over your coming and going – both now and forevermore.

I am convinced that one of the worst situations you can ever find yourself in is the situation of navigating out of the storm of a seemingly hopeless situation only to find yourself headed right towards another one. And one of the worst feelings you can ever feel in life is the feeling of knowing that as you navigate to and through both storms, you can do absolutely, positively, and undoubtedly nothing to control the outcome of either of them. Like Gideon, you navigate through tempest of family trouble only to find yourself headed straight towards the storm of the Midianites. Like Hezekiah, you navigate through the storm of internal upheaval only to find yourself surrounded by the Assyrians at the northern, southern, eastern, and western gates of your city walls ready to storm your Jerusalem. Like Mary Magdalene, you escape the clouded shackles of foolish choices only to find yourself staring into a crowded line of stone throwers. Like Peter you navigate through the hurricane of a divine rebuke from a cloud one week only to find yourself in the Garden of Gethsemane pulling swords the next. And like Jesus, you navigate through a scourging on Thursday only to find yourself carrying your cross up a lonely hill on a Friday. And with each storm comes the heavy weight of knowing you can do absolutely, positively, and undoubtedly nothing to control them. The only thing you can do is to lift your eyes up to the hills and plead for divine help.

The disciples bore witness to those same situations and feelings quite often. As a matter of fact, if you read the Gospel of Mark straight through in one sitting, you'll notice four seemingly hopeless situations that occur back-to-back, to back, to back, all of which happen in Mark chs. 4-5. There's the seemingly hopeless situation of the storm on the Sea of Galilee that the disciples experienced first-hand. When they got out of that storm, they found the shoreline of the Gerasenes only immediately observed another tempest: a man shrieking and screaming all hours of the day because he was by the devil. After that storm came yet another: a preacher's daughter on her deathbed and a father who couldn't do anything about. And that one was followed by another: a woman in the seemingly hopeless situation of bleeding to death. All 4 of these stories have 2 things in common: (1) All of the characters involved in or witnessing the events were helpless to do anything about the seemingly hopeless situations and (2) the only thing they could do was lift their eyes to the hills and plead for help from the Lord God Almighty.

And, friends, I want to tell you today that lifting your eyes up to the hills and pleading for help from the Lord God Almighty is a good place to be. It's the only way to turn seemingly hopeless situations into miraculous interventions. And it's the only way remedy situations that you absolutely, positively, and undoubtedly do not control. To help you lift your eyes up to the hills in troublesome situations that seem to come in bunches, I'm going to share with you a familiar story through the lens of the disciples who witnessed it. It's the story of the Demoniac from the Gerasenes. Meeting him was to meet a living illustration of the wages of sin. Watching Jesus set him free was to witness the power of God up close and personal. Seeing him go from living among the tombstones to being in his right mind was to see the goal of the Gospel: restoration. And watching this former demoniac become a powerful witness for the Living God demonstrates that miraculous intervention doesn't just happen for the sake of making us well. It also happens for the sake of making others well. For this demoniac became a powerful courier for the mercies of God, new every morning. To see his story through the lens of the disciples, please turn with me to Mark 5:1-20. Since it's a narrative, we'll read along through each movement in the story.

The Story of the Demoniac through the lens of the Disciples:

1. We saw the wages of sin up close and personal (5:1-5)

- *They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. ² When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. ⁴ For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵ Night and day among the tombs and in the hills, he would cry out and cut himself with stones.*
- **Symbolism** – (1) If I said the name “Betsy Ross,” you would think of a flag. (2) If I said the word “liberty,” you might add the words “statue of” to go with it. (3) Should I say “Philadelphia,” you might be inclined to think of the Declaration of Independence. (4) And if I said the words “red” “white” and “blue,” you would think of the United States of America. (5) For in this great nation of ours we use symbols to represent an idea or an ideal.
- **Main Idea of the Point:** The demoniac of the Gerasenes is a symbol of the wages of our sin. He represents what he it means to live under the devil's spell. He represents where it gets us in this life.
- **The Narrative of the Demoniac and What It Says About the Wages of Sin:** (1) It greets divine goodness with hostility – “a man with an impure spirit came to meet him.” (2) It leads to being cut off from the land of the living – “This man lived among the tombs.” (3) It is a dominating force, powerless to contain – “no one could bind him...no one strong enough to subdue him.” (4) It leads to death from living even while still existing – “night and day he cried out and cut himself with stones.”
- **App:** Why do we our eyes up to the hills and plead for help from the Lord God Almighty in seemingly hopeless situations? We lift our eyes up to the hills because the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

2. We saw the power of God up close and personal (5:6-13)

- *⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. ⁷ He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" ⁸ For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!" ⁹ Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." ¹⁰ And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. ¹¹ A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. ¹² The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." ¹³ He gave them permission, and the impure 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.*
- **The Sun** — (1) When God first spoke and caused the light to shine out of darkness, he chose to make it shine brightest in the form of a star that is more than 330,000 times the mass of the earth. (2) He chose to make it shine by taking hydrogen, helium, oxygen, carbon, neon, and iron and fusing them together. (3) And he chose to make it shine at the temperature of 5,778 degrees. (5) For its during vast darkness that the sun radiates the brightest.
- **Main Idea of the Point:** The darkness in this man's soil was so complete that this man lived among the tombs. The wages of sin were so immense that it produced death even though he still existed. There was no hope. At all. Zero. None. Until the "son" came to the Garasenes and began to shine. When it did, darkness fled. Immediately.
- **How the Power of God Works in Darkness** — (1) It's personal — "when he saw Jesus from a distance." Jesus came to the Garasenes, a Gentile, to seek him out. (2) It's authoritative — "what do want from me, Jesus, Son of the Most High?" Demons know who Jesus is and they tremble. (3) It's direct, fearless and operates from a platform of victory — "what is your name?" (4) It causes darkness to scatter, submit, obey, and go where it belongs — "send us among the pigs." Pigs were the lowest animal on earth.
- **App:** Why do we lift our eyes up to the hills and plead for help from the Lord God Almighty in seemingly hopeless situations? We lift our eyes up to the hills because he has the power over sin and darkness. The king of glory. The king above all kings.

3. We saw the goal of the gospel up close and personal (5:14-17)

- *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. ¹⁵ When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ¹⁶ Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. ¹⁷ Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.*
- **Phrases We Say About the Mind** — (1) Have you lost your mind? (2) Are you out of your mind? (3) Have you gone bananas? (4) Have you lost your marbles? (5) Have you gone mad? (6) All of these imply that our minds aren't working the way God intended them to work. They must be reset and restored to their original condition.
- **Main Idea of the Point:** Jesus didn't just come into this world to deliver us. He also came to restore what was/has been broken. Unfortunately, not all will celebrate.
- **The Goals of the Gospel in these verses:** (1) Restoration — "they saw the man sitting there, dressed and in his right mind." (2) Revelation — "Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region." Not all will celebrate the work of God. That's by designed, for it reveals the darkness still exists. But thanks be to God it doesn't for those who've had their minds restored.
- **App:** Why do we lift our eyes up to the hills and plead for help from the Lord Almighty in seemingly hopeless situations? We lift our eyes up to the hills because the goal of the gospel is the restoration of power, love, discipline, and a sound mind (2 Tim 1:7).

4. We saw the couriers of the gospel up close and personal (5:18-20)

- *¹⁸ As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹ Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." ²⁰ So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis^[2] how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.*
- **The Unlikely Couriers of the Mercies of God** — The Bible is full of unlikely couriers of the mercies of God. (1) He took Jacob, the schemer and made him Israel, prince with God. (2) He took Simon, the cursing fisherman, and made him Peter, a mighty preacher. (3) He took Saul, the persecutor and made him Paul, the missionary. (4) And he took the Demoniac of the Gerasenes and made him a Gospel courier.
- **Main Idea of the Point:** The most beautiful aspect of the Gospel is how God goes about accomplishing his work. He takes people who live among the tombstones and makes the ambassadors and couriers of mercy. That's the final chapter in the life of the demoniac.
- **A Walking Miracle** — (1) From begging Jesus to flee to begging Jesus to go with Him — "the man who had been demon-possessed begged." It's the idea of standing at the dock and pleading. (2) From living among the tombstones to living among his people as his ambassador — "go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you." (3) From the people trying to shackle him to being amazed — "So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis" (front and center in the capital). And the people were amazed.
- Why do we lift our eyes up to the hills and plead for help from the Lord God Almighty in seemingly hopeless situations? We lift our eyes up to the hills because Jesus has moved us from walking among the tombstones to couriers of his gospel. We go but for the grace of God