

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

For All People

PART

2

TITLE

Good News For Tormented People

SCRIPTURE

Mark 5:1-20



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The world is not the way it is supposed to be. Nations are divided. Groups contend for influence. Joy is an endless struggle. People continually seek satisfaction in religion, relationships, power or prestige, and a whole host of personal desires. We band together around ethnic, racial, political and other lines to find harmony in a world full of brokenness.

How rare would it be for anything to simultaneously be good and fulfilling for every person, group, or nation? What could possibly be good news for everyone? We don't have to imagine, for what the angel proclaimed all those years ago is still true today. Fear not for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. What was proclaimed at His birth, revealed in His life, and punctuated by His victory over death is available to us. Jesus is good news of great joy for all people.

Well, it's good to see your Providence family, and if you are a guest, we're really glad that you joined us. If you would, would you look with me at Mark chapter five if you have a Bible? If you don't, there's lots of Bibles in the chairs near you. And if you don't have one at home of your own, please take that as a gift. We would love for you to have it. But we're going to be in Mark chapter five as we keep going in a series called, For All People. On June 24th, the news headline read, "Supreme Court overturns Roe v. Wade." On November 12th, news headlines read, "Democrats to keep the Senate." On November 17th, it read, "Republicans to control the House." On November 25th, it said, "NC State 30, North Carolina 27." In each case, some people felt really happy, and in the very same headline, some people felt very sad. Some people felt relieved and other people felt furious.

It's interesting in the world that's broken as it is, we form groups and we typically form groups on the basis of commonalities that we see with other people with ourself. And so, groups are formed by ethnicity, race, religion, culture, language. They're formed institutional loyalties. They're formed around labor interests, political interests, special interests, and how rare it is for any piece of news to be considered good news by people in competing groups.

Now that said, just imagine just the depth of goodness that exists in the life of Jesus Christ for His birth to represent good news of great joy for all people who would look to Him. In this series we began last week, we're simply looking at not necessarily different people or different groups. What we're looking at is a few common struggles that we find in every group, and how Jesus is good news. And today I want to talk about a group of people, or a problem within every group, and that is being tormented by something, by some evil. Before we do that, I want to pray for us, and then we'll read.

Father in heaven, we ask for your grace. We ask, God, that as we prepare our hearts to take the Lord's supper to remember what you have made available, we ask that you would stir our heart with a sense of awe, and a sense of enthusiasm, a sense of appreciation for what you've made available to us, how you set us free, how you released us, how you came for us, how you reached us. And so I pray, God, that you would use your word to do all that you intend to do, not only to stoke and peak our curiosity and interest, but that you would use

it to transform our hearts today. I ask for help and I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Starting in verse one, "They came to the other side of the sea to the country of the Gerasenes. And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. He lived among the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. For ye had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles and pieces, and no one had the strength to subdue him.

Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains, he was always crying out, and cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran, and he fell down before him, and crying out with a loud voice, he said, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.' For He was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit." And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, 'My name is Legion, for we are many.' And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

Now, a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them.' So we gave them permission and the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd numbering about 2000, rushed down this steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea. And the herd's been fled and told it in the city, and in the country, and people came to see what it was that had happened. And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had the legion, sitting there, clothed in his right mind, and they were afraid.

And those who had seen it describe to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. And he did not permit, but said to him, 'Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.' And the man went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis,' that's 10 cities, 'how much Jesus had done for him and everyone marveled.'"

Christmas. Christmas is simply a time when we remember the mercy of God to send His Son and the remarkable love of Jesus Christ, the Son of God to come to the Earth to accomplish specific things. Some of the things that he accomplished, we only learned after He lived, and after He began to interact with people like this story here. What I want to do here this morning before we take the Lord's Supper is I want to show you sort of the three things, three big rocks of what Jesus came to do, but many of us are simply going to look.

When we're done with that, "Oh, that's what He did." I want to show you several things of how we can apply the truth that we learn here to the evil that sometimes afflicts and tempts us. So the first thing I want you to see about what Jesus did is that He came. Meaning, when He came, I'm talking Hee came to the Earth, He came to reach the unclean. He came to reach the unclean. Jesus not only came to the Earth, but He also came

to parts of the Earth that no one else wanted to approach.

You can't necessarily see all of it in just our story. If you go to the previous story, you get to Mark 4:35, and we learned there that it was Jesus' initiation of how they even ended up on this side of the lake. "He," that as Jesus said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." If you keep reading the story, there's a great big storm while they're on the boat, He's sleep, and He wakes up. When His 12 disciples say, "We're about to die. Aren't you going to help us?" He speaks to the storm, it calms, and they're terrified at how much authority He has to even be able to speak in the wind, and the waves obey Him.

Suddenly, we get the chapter five verse one and it says, "And they came to the other side of the sea." Now, where they were was the western side of the sea. It was populated by Jewish people. On the eastern side of the sea, there was 10 cities populated by Gentiles. Once Jesus' foot touched out of the boat onto the ground, you notice in verse two it says that, "Immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit." You notice the word unclean.

Unclean is a word you find many times in the Bible, and it's important for us to describe what's happening here. In the Old Testament, God Almighty, who was holy, loved people and wanted them to be able to relate to Him, but there's a recognition of His holiness and our sinfulness. And so He gave several laws and some of those laws, they're called ceremonial laws, intended to keep people ceremonially clean.

If, however; someone became ceremonially unclean, the minimum quarantine was seven days. So how would someone become unclean? Well, there's a number of ways. One is there were sins, there were sins you could commit to where for a time until there's repentance, you were considered unclean. There was also sickness. You could literally just physically get sick, and have to be separated from the community of people.

There's other things though. There were times to where it was literally no fault of you, and he had nothing to do with it. You could be walking down the road and if you had a friend that had a heart attack and he died, you would be ceremony unclean because you were around death. If you attended a funeral, or if you touched a casket or a gravestone, you were considered ceremony unclean, and seven days of quarantine was required. And then there were certain foods you couldn't eat or even touch, one of those foods was pork. And so if you can imagine what's happening is the word uncleanness. If you need a picture, this is the picture that I would give you. It literally means exclusion. It's to be excluded from the Lord's presence. It means to be excluded from His people in corporate worship. It means to be excluded from the marketplace, or excluded from social gatherings. It means you were with the people, and suddenly you became unclean, and now you were excluded from those people.

And you notice that this man in just the brief description that we get of him, his uncleanness was layered fourfold. The first thing we learn about him is he had a unclean spirit. Literally he had a demon, he had a personal supernatural evil inhabiting his own heart. Not only that he lived in the tombs. In other words, if you

touched the tombstone and you became ceremony unclean, you moved out of the cemetery, and the clock began seven days to start. But if you lived in the tombs, the clock never renewed.

This man was literally, his whole life was among the dead, he lived in a cemetery. He was living in a region full of Gentiles, and surrounding where he lived in the cemetery were pig farms. Everything about this man was excluded. And Jesus by His own initiative, traveled by boat, through a storm to go to this despised place to reach this one unclean, unreached man.

One of the things that this teaches is that you're simply not too far away, not for Him. He loves every one of us. And he knows right where you're at, you're not too far away from His hand. He can reach you. It's fascinating that it really was the only one we didn't reach on, but if you keep reading in chapter five, the very next verse, verse 21, it says they get back in the boat, and they leave the eastern side, and they go back to the western side.

In other words, Jesus endured all of this, His initiation to travel his group all the way over there, and all the way back impacted one life. I should say transformed one life, but from that one life He made a missionary. He made a missionary that would have influence among those 10 cities. And so the first thing we see is that He came to reach the unclean. And the second thing, He came to free the tormented.

I know that it's not a whole lot that's listed here, but we should lean on the words that are listed here to imagine this man's misery. In verse three and four it says that, "No one could bind him anymore." I just want you to look at these words bind and anymore. To be bound is dehumanizing, it's to have culture who has excluded you, look at you, and say, "You are not trustworthy. Those hands are not trustworthy around other people." It was degrading, it still is to be bound. And notice the word anymore, it means more than once. He was bound, and at one time he could be bound, but now when they try to bind him, meaning it's a continued process, but his strength is growing under this evil influence. And so now he's not bound anymore. And says that his strength is growing remarkably. It says that they used to put him, "He often been bound in shackles and chains, but then he became so strong that he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces." And in this last sentence, it really describes almost in metaphor language how intense this actually became. No one had the strength to subdue him. You go, "What's so big about that?" Well, the word subdue, the same word is found in James chapter three when he is talking about the restless evil that can come out of our tongue. And he says, "You know what? People have looked at these wild beasts, and all kinds of animals, and have learned the ability to be able to tame them." But he says, but no one can tame the tongue. The word subdue and the word tame are the exact same word.

In other words, this man became like a wild animal that no one could tame. He couldn't be subdued. And sometimes because we watch too many movies, we see people with superhuman strength, and we imagine that they can feel no pain. They can be thrown from building to building, break down the entire building, and they just stand up. And we're like, "Well, this guy who can wrench chains apart, shackles off of him,

there's no way that he felt any pain," and yet that's not what the text says.

In verse five. It says, "Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains, he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones, increasing misery upon misery." And then Jesus came. The boat scrubs up upon the sand. In verse two, I just love the picture of what verse two says. He says, "And when Jesus stepped out of the boat." I mean, I can even see the movies like the superhero movies. He steps out, you can just see the ripples, they're not there and all of a sudden this man who's populated with demons, it says that he sees them, and he runs, and then he says he falls down.

Think about this. It is the picture that I can imagine this chessboard is that upon seeing Jesus, this untamable man inhabited by a legion of demons, suddenly falls down before Christ without a fight. There's no tears, there's no screaming, there's no sweat, there's no blood, there's no nothing. They recognized in Jesus an authority that was utterly futile to fight, and they fall.

For those of you who think and study the Book of Revelation, when basically we read, and it says that for a time literally all hell is going to break loose on the Earth. Like literally hell is going to break loose upon the Earth. Do you remember what it says there that ends the war, that ends the struggle? It says Jesus talks. That's all it takes. That's the authority of Christ.

And so you notice what it says, it says that they say to Jesus, "What have you to do with me? Jesus Son of the Most High God?" They knew who he was. "I adjure you by God, do not torment me." This is really interesting. When he says, "Do not torment me," this story is found in more than Mark. It's also found in Luke and Matthew and in Matthew's version right here where it says, "Do not torment me," Matthew adds words that he remembered, and it was this: before the time. "Do not torment me before the time."

You see, the population of evil knows that there is an appointed day of their destruction, and these demons on this day knew that this was not the day. Jesus was simply saying to them, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit." And you notice that Jesus doesn't appeal to a higher power. If you read anything about exorcisms that is worth reading, one of the suggestions is never try to do something like this if you ever come across this evil in your own authority. "By the power of Brian, I tell you to go out." No, because you have no authority.

And even the demons knew this about themselves. You notice that they adjure you by God. They didn't say by our authority, they're trying to exercise Jesus from the cemetery. We want you to get out of here. And they appeal to a higher power as well, the Most High God. Jesus throughout His life and ministry, He was just remarkable at this. All the prophets they said, "Thus says the Lord," and Jesus never said thus says the Lord. He says, "Thus say, I tell you. Truly, truly I say unto you."

And here He says it again. He doesn't say by the authority of, He just says, "I'm telling you," because he has

the authority. Jesus never appeals to a higher authority because He is the higher authority. And then all of a sudden we get this really strange negotiation. I admit it's strange. They beg Him, "Hey, send us to the pigs, let us enter them," and He gave them permission. The pigs, these demons, they come out of the man, they go into the pigs, 2000 of them rush down the hill, and they all drown.

And if you're like me, you ask the question, "All right, what's up with the pigs?" I figured someone would ask me about the pigs, and so I spent probably an inordinate amount of time trying to figure out what's up with this part of the story? Why the pigs? Literally, if Matthew didn't include it, he'd just say, "It's just freedom," and he got back in the boat and he left, we wouldn't ask, "Hey, add the pigs." No, it's there, but why is it there? And so I just looked, not only at people today, but even historically, what is Christian thought surmised as to what is the reason for this?

And what I can tell you is there's very little consensus. It's not necessarily clear, but what's interesting is century by century what you find is at least three commonalities of what people are looking at and go, "That has to be important of why that's there." Let me tell you what they are. First of all, there's credibility. You only write these details if they happen. You don't come up with this on your own. And not only credibility of writing, but if you think about it, because the story was as it was, there was a greater audience to serve as eyewitnesses when Mark was written.

You see, one of the things that sometimes we all forget because it was written so long ago is that when it was written, there were actual still people, eyewitnesses of these accounts who could actually explain, "I was there, I saw it." And so when he was set free, the pigs died, the herdsman go back into town, and suddenly more witnesses come out. What that means is that somebody who was reading Mark in the early days, they literally could have gotten on a boat, and gone to the other side to say, "Can someone verify the details of this account?" And there would be people that would say, "I saw with my own eyes."

But not only is there credibility, there's also authority. Jesus did have the power and the authority to be able to do this, and historically that's one of the big things. It's like, "Man, He had the power." But then there's one of the thing, there's one thing that sometimes modern minds and eyes were like, "Hey, what about the pigs?" There's whole organizations that don't like this passage.

And it comes down to priority. Jesus prioritizes image bearers over pigs, people over animals. If these parasitic demons needed a host before the day of their destruction, then Jesus said, "Pigs will die before people." And the third thing I want you to see is that Jesus came to send the redeemed. The herdsman, they run back into the city proclaiming all they saw, and returned with others. Verse 15 says, "They came to Jesus and they saw the man who had been possessed by this, he was clothed and in his right mind." And then they had a response. We all have a response. You're there, you respond in some way.

And their response was not, "Wow. It was amazing." It was fear. And this really reminds me of a story in Luke



chapter five, Peter, who's a professional fisherman who had been fishing all night, he caught nothing. I'd be like, you going to work all day yesterday only creating more problems. And so your supervisor says, "For today, you don't get any money." This was his livelihood and he caught nothing, he's washing out the nets, and Jesus comes up to him, and He says, "There's so many people. Can I get in your boat? We go up and I need to teach." He finishes His sermon to the people and He goes, "Hey Peter, throw the net." And he goes, "Jesus, look man, I'm a professional. You're really good at teaching, I'll give you that. But I'm a professional fisherman and I can tell you, this is not the time to catch fish."

"Peter, throw out your net." He throws it out and suddenly it's the greatest fishing day in his entire life. He's like, "Hey, I need help to lug all these fish." And they're working. I mean, Peter, he's laughing probably. He's just like, "Can you believe all these fish?" And I can just see Jesus at the front of the boat because that's where he says He was. He's just sitting there watching. He's not helping him blow it up fish, He's just watching. He's just like, "That's so cool." It's like one day in just a minute, 1, 3, 2, 1, and all of a sudden Peter goes, "Oh no, somebody's still in this boat."

And Peter looks up, and what would you do if you were Peter? Some of us would go, "Man, thank you for such a great fishing experience, it really was amazing. This offshore fishing is incredible." You know what he said to Him? "I need you to get out of my boat, depart from me because you have a holiness that I don't have. I'm a sinful person. You have an authority that I don't have, and you frighten me. You have the authority to tell me how to live my life. You have the authority to call the shots over all things, and that frightens me. Sometimes in the face of holiness and authority, we would just assume the source go away as opposed to our problem. And amazingly, Jesus, after they begged for Him to leave, He says, "Okay, I'll leave." Verse 18, "As He was getting into the boat to leave, the men who had been possessed with demons begged Him that he might go with Him, be with Him." This is amazing. This is the fourth time if you're actually counting, four times that someone's begging Jesus to do something.

The demons twice, the people in the cities that come out once, and he agrees to all of their requests. "Pigs, fine permission granted. Get out of here, permission granted." Last time, the guy who's been healed, he begs, "Can I please go with you?" No. Why? And it's because Jesus cared deeply about the people who were sending Him away. And so he made a missionary out of a man and He says, "I want you to go into the cities, the 10 cities and proclaim all that you have received, all that I've done in your life."

So what do we do with something like this? How do we live? Like, "Well, that's fascinating. That happened a long time ago, but what about us?" And so let me give you just a few applications that are all based upon what we had just seen in Mark five. The first thing is very difficult for modern hearers. Some of you, the only form of evil you've ever seen is on a movie, and so you don't even believe this kind of story, or this kind of thing can exist.

And so the first thing, let me encourage us all to do is to believe in the reality of evil. Some of you say, "Well,



this is irrational, this is so primitive. We know better than this now. I believe in God, but I don't believe in demons." But let me tell you something, or ask you something ,or say something, if personal, supernatural good, that's God, personal, supernatural good. If that can exist, then it's irrational to think that supernatural, personal evil cannot exist.

And Jesus Himself believed that it exists. When Jesus on the Earth in Luke, Luke 10:18, you know what He said? Jesus said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." You can read some of the accounts in Revelation 12, Isaiah 14, where one of the archangels who was given such superior beauty in heaven to worship God wasn't content with a throne, under gods. And so he made a play on heaven, a bunch of the angels that said, "Maybe he's a superior Lord."

It was quickly put to rest and suddenly he was thrown out of heaven with all who had followed him, creating principalities and authorities, levels of evil. And Jesus said, "I saw it with my own eyes when the archangel fell out of heaven." And the rest of the Bible is built on the back of this truth that there is evil, real evil in the world. In Ephesians chapter six, the very end of the book, telling Christians how to live their life in response to what Jesus did, and dying for our sin, and rising from the dead. He says, "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood." That's against human beings, "But against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

Paul had scars from head to toe as evidence that evil could come from flesh and blood. People hit him, and stone him, and beat him, and all kinds of things to him. So how could he say this? And what he's saying is this, anytime you see evil visibly, whether someone insults you at one level, or you scale it all the way up to like Holocaust. Anytime evil is visible, there is an invisible evil. There is a war that is taking place that our eyes simply cannot see.

I realize that some here will not believe this, but if we fail to believe what is real, we will fail to account for the source of not all of our problems, but some of them. The Bible tells us of three different kinds of influence that this evil can have upon people. We can all be tempted. Believers and unbelievers can be tempted of sin. Believers and unbelievers can be afflicted.

The Apostle Paul actually said three times, "I pray that a thorn in my side," he calls it a messenger from Satan, "Would be removed from me." We don't even know what it was. Was it physical, spiritual? We don't know. It's simply rose above the level of that nagging temptation to do what we don't want to do. And some of us we're all tempted and we go, "I'm tempted in a lot of those things," but there is perhaps one area of our life where we think, "Boy, if there is one, I'm a believer, I put my faith in trust in Jesus Christ, and yet in that area, I just feel like there is constantly this war. I feel afflicted."

And then there's a third level that can only happen to people without the Holy Spirit living in their heart. When we put our faith in Jesus Christ, His Spirit comes to dwell in our heart, he puts a stake in the ground, and He says, "This is all mine." He owns all of it. He's the resident of all of it. He shares none of it with this

kind of evil. But for people like this man in Mark chapter five or like Judas when it says, “And Satan went and filled his heart.” When someone is not inhabited by the Spirit of God, and they grow agreeable to evil, it can happen today.

And so I encourage you to believe in the reality. And second is to recognize the complexity of evil. Because it's the source of some, but not all of our problems. There's some in the room I know. I know we live in a city, and you all went to these universities, and you're like, “This is primitive thinking.” People saw epilepsy, or seizures, or disease, and because they weren't enlightened, their mind wasn't taught, they just assumed that all of these things, it was all because of demons. And they were just naive in their thinking, and we simply know better than that.”

And yet the Bible actually presents to us a more complex view of reality than anything that has ever been written ever. In Matthew chapter four, notice what it says. In Matthew chapter four it says, “They brought Him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures and paralytics, and He healed them.” In other words, the Bible differentiates between mental illness, physical illness, and spiritual illness.

Most of our worldviews, we all have one, and most of them, they're top-heavy with something, they're not balanced. Some of us, we have a worldview that's primarily materialistic, the material world. In other words, you got a problem, you take a pill. That's the solution. And yet, we find that some of our problems are simply deeper than a pill. Some of us our worldview is top-heavy with moral, you just got to be moral. In other words, we're like Job's friends. Someone has a problem, we're like, “All right, what'd you do? You did something wrong. If you just repent of what you did, things will all be better.” And sometimes we repent of sin, and we're walking with the Lord, and we still battle anxiety, we still battle something else.

Other people's worldview is primarily superstitious. Every problem in the world is just, “Demons everywhere. There's a demon everywhere. I got pulled over speeding, there's a demon.” You just slow down. Every view outside of the Bible is typically too simplistic or more simplistic than the Bible itself. But the Bible sees all of these worlds as interwoven, meaning that many of our problems are multi-locked. We're like a door, we have a problem, and there's not simply one lock that solves all our problems.

You simply look at the world of anxiety and depression from the pages of scripture, and you can actually find passages of the Bible that says that some of it, there's physical causes where we need rest, and exercise, and food, and sometimes medicine. Sometimes it's moral. Sometimes like David, we're unrepentant in this sin and it says that, “God's hand was heavy upon me and I felt just depressed and low for a period of time until I repented of my sin.”

Other passages speak about the fact that there's a psychological problem and that we need friends. Some of us, we're anxious because we're lonely. And yet people being in our life, and reminding us of the truth can

be therapeutic to us. And for many others versus in the Bible that is, there's this spiritual reality that by that praying, and by taking our thoughts captive, and making obedient to the scriptures, that becomes therapeutic.

And so we need to recognize the complexity of evil and that gets to the third, which is so you're going to go, "All right, that's that's where I'm at." Let's recognize the pattern of evil. You notice in verse three it says, "That no one can bind them anymore," which means that evil controls gradually, it intensifies gradually. And what you need to understand is that Satan takes ground that is camouflaged in culturally acceptable forms.

You can go to parts of the world where witchcraft is utterly culturally acceptable and Satan says, "I'll use that." And so there are parts of the world where this kind of thing, in Mark five is seen much more frequently than in Raleigh, but there's other cultural forms here such as greed. We think, "Well, that's not possession, that's not affliction. That's just we want more stuff." And Satan will take ground that's camouflaged in any culturally acceptable form, so long as that form will annihilate life."

How does it work? James 1:14 says, "Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own evil desire." In other words, Satan learns. He learns what gives each of us more self-worth than our creator because that becomes our little L, lured. And then as the slander of all things, he lies to feed this functional lure in a life. And so let me give you an example of a culturally acceptable form here in America, and it's called career advancement.

Many people in our culture say, "You know what? My self-worth is based on how high I can climb." Whatever you put is the source of your joy, the source of your self-worth, that can become, that becomes the tool in his hand. Now, how does it work? Just like this man in Mark chapter five, the Lord begins to empower. You want to climb and all of a sudden you can become energized. Some of us, we work mad numbers of hours, and we find it acceptable, and the reason is because we have to get there. And it makes us stronger and stronger and stronger and stronger, and as it's empowering, it's enslaving.

Just like the man, Satan comes to us and says, "It's okay if you exploit weak people in order to climb the ladder." It's okay to set aside your moral convictions in order to climb the ladder. It's okay to exhaust your body to the point of it breaking in order to climb the ladder. It is okay to abandon your family in order to climb the ladder. And suddenly that which is empowering us is now enslaving us. And then third, it begins to take over our sense of self and identity. You start asking people, "Hey, who are you? I'm a business owner, that's who I am."

I didn't ask you what you did, I asked you who you are, but that's who we are. And certainly we have a legion telling us who we are, empowering our steps, and enslaving us all the deeper every day. It doesn't have to be career, it can be anything. The fact is that we end up in the tombs by believing a string of lies that each require

a tad more compromise than the last to feed the lure that's going to give us self-worth.

And that gets us the last and we'll take the Lord's supper, let's look to Christ to deliver us from evil. Isn't it beautiful that at the end of Mark chapter five, what we find is this really, really miserable man. He's clothed, he's in his right mind, he's out of the tombs, and he's in community. Now, how did he get there? Paul said, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us." What does that mean? Well, if you turn, you don't have to do it now, but you read Mark chapter 15, just 10 chapters later, you know what you find? Jesus is not clothed, He's naked on a cross. And Jesus is not in His right mind entirely. He's crying out in torment. And Jesus is not out of the tombs, He's about to go into one. And Jesus is not in great community, He's crying out about being forsaken by everyone. This is how He rescues us, He takes our place. He becomes the curse for us. You see, only when we see what it costs Jesus to set us free, can we see how deeply we are loved. And only when we see how deeply we are loved can we say, "I don't need anything else to tell me I have self-worth." And only when we identify that we don't need anything other than Christ to tell us we have self-worth will the power of these functional lures be broken in our life, and only then can we go into the other cities and say, "Christ has set me free. He is good news of great joy for all people."

We'll rather take the Lord's supper, and as we do, the Bible tells me to tell those of you who've never put your faith in trust not to take it, but is there any reason that you wouldn't put your faith in trust in this Christ right now? If you believe that you're a sinner and you need Christ, stop listening to me and just start talking to Him saying, "I believe and I need Christ. I believe in Him." For those of us who have put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, let me encourage you to do just what the Bible says, and that is not to take the elements until you've confessed your sin. So let me give you a moment right now to do that. Just the time of quiet before the Lord, just you and Him. Ask Him to examine your heart, and ask Him to forgive you of your sin.

So on the night that Jesus was betrayed, He was with His disciples, He took bread, He broke it, and He gave thanks. And then He began talking about how His body was going to be broken the next day that would allow us to have a relationship with Him. So if you have been set free, if you are the one who was unclean, and He's made you clean, and the only way it's possible is because of Jesus' willingness to come in our place, then take and eat in remembrance of what He did.

And then Jesus took a cup and the cup it had wine in it, it looked like blood. And as He talked about how His body would be broken, He talked about how it would be broken so badly it would bleed, but that blood wouldn't be wasted. That blood would be the very instrument that would begin a new covenant or instead of our sins simply being covered, they would be completely taken from us. And so if you know what it's like to be made clean forever because of Jesus, you take a drink in remembrance of Him.

Father in heaven, we bow before you, our maker. Thank you that you have the power over all things, and thank you for sending Jesus to us. Jesus, thank you for coming. Thank you that there is no authority higher

than your authority. There is no name above your name. You have no equals, no rivals, and we praise you with all that we have. We ask now that you would help us to respond in faith as we sing of this, and we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.



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