



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. Mark

Chapter 5

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Introduction

- In chapter 5 we see a man released from demons
- And then we are introduced to a suffering woman and will witness the resurrection of a little girl
- We are introduced to a tale of three souls
- One is a man with unclean spirit; another is a woman who has an issue of blood; and another is a man whose precious daughter is moments from death
- The chapter speaks of sorrow and faith
- The stories have one powerful lesson; the servant Jesus has power over crushing sorrow



Introduction

Chapter Outline:

- A Demon-Possessed Man Healed 5:1-20
- A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

5:1-20



- The episode takes place on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, Mark 5:20
- It was a Gentile region but there were Jews living there, and Jesus has come to share His message of the Kingdom with the "lost sheep" of Israel on the east side of the Sea
- Jesus encounters a man possessed by demons who is living among the unclean tombs of the dead
- The Evangelist Matthew mentions that they were two demon possessed men, Matthew 8:28, while the Evangelists Mark and Luke mention only a single man

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

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- St. Augustine interprets this discrepancy, saying that the two evangelists mentioned only the famed one, for whose sake, the whole region was feeling sorry
- St. John Chrysostom believes that they mentioned only the one man who was suffering more, and, whoever heals one of them can also heal the other
- The whole idea was not a narration of a historical episode, but a proclamation of the possibility of healing

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

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- It was a common belief among the Jews that demons prefer three locations for their dwelling
- The wilderness, which is the deserted places; the depths of water; and the tombs
- The first one refers to the lust of the devil to take away from man all vitality, and every spiritual fruit to turn him into deserted wilderness

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

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- The second refers to the wish of the enemy to draw man into the whirlpool of life
- To take his mind away from his eternity and become as if he is in the deep waters, with no hope
- The third, namely the tombs, refers to the nature of the devil as a fighter against man, wishing his death
- Also to the devil's content in the corruption of the dead works

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

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- Mark's description of the demon possessed man's condition is a picture of despair and shows how demonic influence distorts and destroys the image of God in human beings
- Each Evangelist adds something to complete the picture of the visitation, under which the possessed labored
- Sin had turned him into a fierce beast, untamable by anyone
- St. Matthew said that he made the way impossible for travelers, 8:28
- St. Luke said that he was without clothing, 8:27

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

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- St. Mark said that he *crying out and cutting himself with stones*
- Trial to bound him had been made several times, to no purpose
- His arms had been bound with chains, and his feet with chains, which was very proper to prevent doing hurt to himself, and injury to others
- His strength, it appears was supernatural, no kind of chains being strong enough to confine him
- Terrible as he was to others, he himself endured untold misery, which sought relief in tears and self-inflicted torture

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

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- These words, "*from afar*," explain the fact of our Lord being immediately met by the man as soon as he left the boat
- Verses 3-5 inclusive must be regarded as parenthetical
- They describe the ordinary condition of the demoniac, and his sad wild life from day to day
- He bowed down before Jesus
- The precise attitude would be that of one who not only knelt but touched the ground with his forehead in token of his begging reverence

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

5:1-20



- The confrontation with the man possessed by a demon is similar to Jesus' first miracle to the Jews in Mark 1:21-27
- Once again the demons recognize Jesus' true identity, but He immediately subdues them and claims victory over Satan's influence
- *Son of the Most High God?*, This was an acknowledgment of His power, and of His control over fallen spirits
- The enemy realized that his kingdom is collapsing

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

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- His authority is coming to an end
- St. John Chrysostom says: “The demons realizing that their condemnation has drawn very close, they trembled as if it will happen on the spot.”
- By the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, the devil realized that the end drew near

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

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- *Come out of the man*, Ordinarily obedience to a command of this nature was immediate
- But here, a certain delay is permitted, the more signally to manifest the power of Christ and accomplish His purposes
- The Lord Jesus Christ intended to demonstrate the fierceness of the devil, so he asked the unclean spirit about his name
- Fr. Theophlactius says: “Indeed the Lord asked him not to get information from him, but to let those around realize that the man was possessed by many demons.”

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

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- What happened to that poor individual is portraying man, when he becomes the victim of a particular sin, or of a particular devil
- One sin would deliver him to another, and one devil to another, until he becomes enslaved to a legion
- And as expressed by St. John Saba: “The passions (the sins) are interwoven with one another; if you come under one, you would, through necessity, be enslaved to all.”
- Some believe ‘legion’ to mean, originally (a soldier)
- It may also mean a Roman troop of 6000 soldiers

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- But the word is here used indefinitely for a large number
- St. Luke so explains it where he says, “*because many demons had entered him.*” Luke 8:30
- This revelation is doubtless designed to teach us how great is the number as well as the malignity of the evil spirits
- If one human being can be possessed by so many, how vast must be the host of those who are permitted to have access to the souls of men, and if possible lead them to destruction!
- *he begged Him earnestly*, The entreaty was made by one spirit, but in behalf of many

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- The demons begged him to send them to the swine, as they were sure that He would not allow them to enter into another man
- They also did not ask to enter into clean animals that could be used as animal sacrifices in the temple of the Lord, but sought permission to enter into unclean swine
- By this Christ shows of how little worth are earthly possessions when set in the balance with the souls of men
- The recovery of this demoniac was worth far more than the value of the two thousand swine

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

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- Jesus also may wanted to reveal clearly the evils of demons and their destructive nature even towards the animals
- And to reveal that they are unable to enter any creature without His permission
- Jesus Christ may have permitted the devil to destroy these swine, that from their destruction, the men of that country might take the alarm, and be converted

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

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- *in the city and in the country*, St. Matthew mentions only the city
- St. Mark's narrative is more full
- No doubt many of these who tended to the swine lived in the country districts; and so the fame of the miracle was spread far and wide
- These people wanted to make sure that the owners should understand that it was through no fault or carelessness on their part that the swine had perished; but that the destruction was caused by a power over which they had no control

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

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- Their first care was to see the extent of their loss; and this was soon revealed to them
- *sitting and clothed*, What a contrast to the previous description!
- *And they were afraid*, They dreaded Christ's power
- They saw that He was almighty; but they did not seek to know His love, and so to attain to that love which "*casts out fear*"

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

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- These people represent the view of many who may not be fit to care for one member of the congregation if his salvation and edification would cost some others a material loss
- These people do not appreciate the value of a human soul, whoever that soul might be
- St. Ambrose believes that (they represent teachers of Philosophy and leaders of the Jewish society. Weak souls, that could not stand the word of God or the impact of His wisdom.)

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- The eyewitnesses, in further explanations to their employers, now connect the two events together; the cure and the catastrophe
- *about the swine*, They could not get over that
- They thought far more of the worldly loss than of the spiritual gain
- They did not entreat Him to depart out of humility, as though they felt themselves unworthy of his presence
- But it was lack of interest and dignity fear, lest His continued presence among them might bring upon them still greater losses

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

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- There could be no doubt of the reality of this miracle
- The man had been well known
- He had long dwelt among the tombs, an object of terror and alarm
- To see him all at once peaceful, calm, and rational, was proof that it was the power of God only that had done it
- *they began to plead*, Was it the owners only of the valuable property now lost to them that did this?

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- No! For Luke 8:37 says, *Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them; for they were seized with great fear.*
- The people could not endure His presence; yet awe-struck, they dared not order Him off
- So they entreat Him to withdraw
- They feared that lest for their sins, some bad judgment should fall upon them

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

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- The Lord did not oppose them, but left and got into the boat
- He, who had been demon-possessed begged to stay with Him
- However Jesus instructed him to go home, and tell his friends what great things the Lord has done for him, and how He had compassion on him
- He departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis, all that Jesus had done for him, and all marveled
- *in Decapolis*, The whole district of the ten cities

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- The healing of the demon-possessed man of the country of the *Gadarenes* refers to the Gentiles receiving the work of the Lord Christ
- The attitude of the tenders of swine refers to the position of the Jewish society, rejecting the Savior
- The evangelist did not close the curtain at that stage, but presented to us the event of restoring to life of the daughter of Jairus, one of the rulers of the Synagogue, interwoven with that of healing the woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- He proclaimed that, after healing the Gentiles (the woman with the flow of blood), the Jews would, at the fulfillment of time, enjoy salvation
- When they receive the Lord, whom they have rejected before, they are restored to life like that little girl
- *Jesus had crossed over again by boat*, Jesus now crosses over the sea again, and apparently in the same boat, to the other side, the opposite shore, near to Capernaum
- St. Matthew, 4:13 distinctly tells us that He had left Nazareth, and was now dwelling at Capernaum

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- St. Luke says that the people welcomed Him, for they were waiting for Him
- Again He placed Himself by the sea, probably for the conveniences of addressing a multitude, and of relieving Himself of the pressure, as before, by taking refuge in a boat
- *one of the rulers of the synagogue*, An official of the local Synagogue has faith that Jesus can heal his daughter
- He is a very important man in the community but notice how reverently he approaches Jesus *he fell at His feet*

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- St. Matthew says, *has just died*; St. Luke says, *she was dying*
- The broken sentences of the father are very true to nature
- All the expressions point to the same conclusion, that she was about to die
- In each narrative the ruler is represented as asking that Christ would hasten to his house
- He had not reached the higher faith of the Gentile centurion, *say the word, and my servant will be healed*, Luke 7:7

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- Jairus asks Jesus to *lay Your hands* on his daughter
- This was a practice that reflected the belief that God's spirit of healing could be transmitted by the power of touch
- The "laying on of hands" was a practice recorded in the Bible
- In the essence of the offerer to the life of an animal offered in sacrifice, Leviticus 1:4
- In communicating the power of a spiritual gift in the act of a blessing, Genesis 48:13-14; Matthew 19:13-15
- In communicating the Holy Spirit, Acts 8:17

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- In the act of consecration to a theological or ecclesiastical office, Numbers 27:18; Deuteronomy 34:9; Acts 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:22
- In healing by Jesus and the Apostles, Matthew 9:18; Mark 6:5; Luke 13:13; Acts 9:12,17
- In the selection of a substitute or successor, Numbers 8:10, 27:18; Deuteronomy 34:9
- *a great multitude followed Him*, Literally, pressed close upon Him, compressed Him
- This is mentioned purposely by St. Mark, on account of what follows

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- All the synoptic Gospels mention the length of time during which she had been suffering
- Eusebius records a tradition that she was a Gentile, a native of Caesarea Philippi
- This disease was a chronic hemorrhage, for which she had found no relief from the physicians
- St. Luke, himself a physician, says that she, *had spent all her livelihood on physicians, and could not be healed by any.* Luke 8:34

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- St. Augustine sees that the physicians on whom the woman spent all what she had, referred to the teachings of philosophers, saying: “The teachings of philosophers have actually kindled the hunger to the truth, without satisfying it... But, as to a touch of the tassels of His cloak; it is the scream of the believing heart.”
- *came behind Him*, In the crowd that pressed upon him
- This was done to avoid being noticed
- It was an act of faith
- She was full of confidence that Jesus was able to heal

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- But she trembled on account of her conscious unworthiness, thus illustrating the humility and confidence of a sinner coming to God for pardon and life
- According to the Law, the touch of anyone having the disease which this woman had would have defiled the person touched
- Some think that the recollection of this may account for her quietly approaching Him in the crowd behind, and touching but the hem of His garment

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- Not only was her issue of blood stopped, Luke 8:44, but the cause of it was thoroughly removed, insomuch that by her bodily sensations she immediately knew herself perfectly cured
- It was not a mere touch of the tassels of His cloak, but *power had gone out of Him*
- He who with the eye of His Spirit saw Nathanael under the fig tree, John 1:47-48, recognized at once the undeniable touch of faith however weak and trembling, Luke 8:46
- “Many throng Him, but only one touches Him.” says St. Augustine

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- The disciples seem astonished at His question
- There was such a crowd about Him, pressing Him on every side, He could not but be touched by many; and therefore to ask who touched Him, when this was the case, they thought was a very strange and unnecessary question
- *see her who had done this thing*, This be said, not to obtain information, for He had healed her, and must have known on whom the blessing was conferred
- But He did it that the woman might herself make a confession of the whole matter, so that the power of her faith and the greatness of the miracle might be manifested to the praise of God

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- Every word in this verse is expressive
- It was her own act
- She seemed to herself as though without permission she had stolen a blessing from Christ; and so she could hardly venture to hope that the faith which had prompted her would be accepted
- Hence her fear and terror, and her free and full confession
- We thus see the gentleness of Christ in His dealings with us
- Perhaps the woman had intended to escape, satisfied with a temporal benefit, which would hardly have been a blessing at all, if she had been suffered to carry it away without acknowledgment

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- But this her loving Savior would not permit her to do
- It was the crisis of her spiritual life
- It was necessary that all around should know of the gift which she had endeavored to snatch in secret
- Our Lord might have demanded from her this public confession of her faith beforehand
- But, in His mercy, He made the way easy to her

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- Our Lord had lingered on the way to the house of Jairus, perhaps, as has already been suggested, that the crisis might first come, and that so there might be full evidence of His resurrection power
- The ruler must have been agonized with the thought that, while our Lord lingered, the life of his dying child was fast diminishing away
- And now comes the fatal message to him, *Your daughter is dead.*

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- The messengers from the ruler's house had evidently abandoned all hope, and so probably would Jairus
- It seems that the people had not yet confidence that Jesus could raise the dead
- He had not yet done it
- The very instant the Lord heard the message, He hastens to reassure the ruler with a word of confidence and encouragement
- Jesus asked him to not be discouraged at these news, or distrust
- He needs to only believe in His power to help him
- He is able to raise her, even from the dead

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- Here we have the first occasion of the selection of three of the apostles to be witnesses of things not permitted to be seen by the rest
- The other two occasions are those of the Transfiguration, and of the agony in the garden
- The Lord did not go to the little girl accompanied by a great crowd
- The restoration of the little girl to life was not a show of an amazing miraculous act, but it was rather a revelation that the Lord Christ is the grantor of resurrection, to those who attach themselves to Him and become His disciples

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- According to those people who could not restore her to life, she was dead
- But to Him she was just sleeping, to be awakened at any time He wants
- He let them laugh at Him, to scorn, and turn their laughing into a testimony of truth, that she was actually dead
- *He had put them all outside*, The common crowd were not worthy to see that in which they would not believe
- They were unworthy to witness the great reality of the resurrection; *they ridiculed Him.*

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- The house was now set free from the noisy crowd
- He goes up to the dead child, and takes her by the hand and says, *Talitha cumi*; literally Little maid, arise
- The evangelist gives the words in the very language used by our Lord
- *Immediately the girl arose and walked*, Here, as in other miracles, the restoration was immediate and complete
- The parents of the child, and the disciples of Christ were exceedingly amazed at such a signal instance of the power of our Lord

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- *He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, That He might avoid every appearance of vain-glory, might prevent too great a concourse of people, and might not further enrage the scribes and Pharisees against Him*
- *The time for His death, and for the full manifestation of His glory, not being yet come*
- *He commanded that something should be given her to eat, So that when either natural or spiritual life is restored, even by immediate miracle, all proper means are to be used in order to preserve it*

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed 5:21-43



- Many of the Church Fathers concentrated on the phrase: “*Something should be given to her to eat*”, considering it a confirmation that her resurrection had been, not a matter of ‘make believe,’ but an actual fact
- St. Ambrose, also says: “The funeral procedure was completed, to confirm death, then the spirit came back by the word of the Lord, and the body was raised up fresh, and given food to confirm the testimony of life.”



Discussion

- Why does Jesus ask the demoniac his name?
- Why does Jesus send the demons into the swine?
- What does the man want? Why doesn't Jesus let him?
- What does it mean to be a witness? How did the demoniac do at this task?



Discussion

- What do you think made the citizens of *the Gadarenes* afraid when they saw the former demoniac clothed and in his right mind? What has God done in your life or that of your family that has inspired a similar fear?
- What attitude to Jesus' power does the woman with the flow of blood have, despite her experience with doctors? What can that attitude teach you about faith?



Discussion

- Compare and contrast the way Jairus and the woman approach Jesus for healing in the midst of their desperate situations. Why the difference?
- Why did Jesus tell Jairus not to tell others about his daughter's miracle, yet wanted the woman to publicly acknowledge that she had been healed by touching Jesus?
- Why was Jesus unconcerned about the delay?