



Sermon Series: *The Story of My Life*
Christ First Church
Pastor Wayne Chasteen
5-28-23

Sermon 2: THIS IS HOW I THANK
THE LORD

Mark 5:18-20

INTRO: Turn your Bibles, or turn them on, to Mark chapter 5. There is a lot going on today. This is, of course, Memorial Day weekend. We recognize the enormity of the sacrifice that so many have given to protect our still great country. And thank you Lord for your protection. This is also Pentecost Sunday. In the Old Testament, Pentecost was known as the Feast of Weeks, or the Feast of Harvest. It was observed 50 days after the start of the Feast of Firstfruits. Today, Christians observe Pentecost 50 days after Easter Sunday. It was on the day of Pentecost, after the resurrection of the Christ, when the promised Holy Spirit fell from Heaven upon those early believers. The Bible says in **Acts 2:1-12**, *"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like a mighty rushing wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw tongues like flames of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound rang out, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking his own language. 7 Astounded and amazed, they asked, 'Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? 8 How is it then that each of us hears them in his own native language?'... 12 Astounded and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?'"

The Bible goes on to tell us that 3000 people were saved that day, and many others were added to the church daily, as more and more were saved. That was the beginning of the New Testament church as we know it. And that's why we celebrate Pentecost Sunday.

And of course, today is Graduation Sunday at C1C. There is a lot to celebrate today. But mostly, we celebrate what God is doing in the lives of those who are coming to know Christ through the ministry of Christ First Church. One such person is Dustin Parrish. Dustin, will you join me on stage please?

Last week I started a sermon series titled, THE STORY OF MY LIFE. Over the next few weeks, I will be joined here on stage by several in our church. Together, we will tell their stories of heartbreak and hardships, and ultimately, God's redemption and restoration.

Some of you may not know Dustin by name. You know that guy with the tattoo of a scorpion on his head, but you don't know his name. Well, let me introduce you to Dustin Parrish.

(CONVERSATION)

Wow, how crazy is that? How good is God?

Let's read together from Mark chapter 5, and listen to another man's story for just a moment.

Mark 5:18-20 *"As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by the demons begged to go with Him. 19 But Jesus would not allow him. 'Go home to your own people,' He said, 'and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy He has shown you.' 20 So the man went away and began to proclaim throughout the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And everyone was amazed."*

Let me give you the backstory to these verses. Jesus is in the early stages of His ministry. He has healed some people, He's telling parables, and people are talking about Him. He had just left a large group of people to whom, he had shared some stories, when He told the disciples He wanted to cross over the Sea of Galilee. It was late in the evening and His disciples, in more than one boat, set sail. The Bible tells us that Jesus quickly fell asleep in the stern of the boat that He was in, and sometime after that, a great and violent storm rose out on the sea. These disciples, many of whom were seasoned sailors, became so fearful that they woke up Jesus, they had to wake Him up, and they said, "Don't you even care that we are about to drown?" Jesus stood up and called out to the wind and waves to be still, and God's Word says that everything became perfectly calm. Then Jesus asked those with Him, Why were you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?

Well, that's a bad enough experience for one day you would think, but then we come to **Mark 5**. And the Bible reads, **vv 1-6** *"On the other side of the sea, they arrived in the region of the Gerasenes. 2 As soon as Jesus got out of the boat, He was met by a man with an unclean spirit, who was coming from the tombs. 3 This man had been living in the tombs and could no longer be restrained, even with chains. 4 Though he was often bound with chains and shackles, he had broken the chains and shattered the shackles. Now there was no one with the strength to subdue him. 5 Night and day in the tombs and in the mountains he kept crying out and cutting himself with stones."*

Oh, that's just great! Can't you imagine how Peter responded to this guy? This man was a maniac, worse, a demoniac! But Jesus made an appointment to meet him.

Let me tell you the rest of the story. This man possessed by demons sees Jesus get out of the boat, and immediately, Mark says, he runs out of the graveyard toward Jesus screaming and calling out. Luke's gospel makes the point to tell us that he was naked and hadn't worn clothes in a long time. So, here's this guy, naked, filthy, cut and bleeding, hardly recognizable as a human, running to Jesus, and when he gets to Him, he falls down at His feet and calls Jesus by name. *"What do You want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?"* This was a divine appointment, not a chance meeting. Jesus then asked him his name. You can be sure Jesus already knew, but we needed to know so He asked him. *"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many."* Many what? Demons! A legion was a Roman military unit of up to 6,000 soldiers. Now, we don't know for sure how many demons were in this man, but when Jesus told them to come out of the man, they begged Jesus not to send them back into the abyss, back into hell, There was a herd of pigs close by and the demons asked to be sent into them, and Jesus gave them the order to do so. There were 2000 pigs. We don't know how many demons, but at least 2000, and they went into the pigs that then lost their minds and ran down a hill into the sea and drowned. The Bible then says in **vv 14-15** *"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, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid."*

Afraid of what? They were afraid of Jesus!

John MacArthur, There's not a word of thanks, They see Jesus as a greater danger than that man. They would rather have a maniac than the Son of God. They would rather be terrified by Satan than terrified by God. They would rather endure the presence of demonic danger than the presence of divine deliverance. They preferred the unholy to the holy. They preferred a tomb dweller over the Lord of life... You know, the world is really comfortable with pigs and maniacs, but it's not comfortable with Jesus Christ, is it?

David Gooding writes, What a sad comment on man's fallen and unregenerate state it is that man should feel more at home with demons than with the Christ who has the power to cast them out.

They were afraid of Jesus. They had the giver of life in their presence. The Great Physician, the hope of all mankind, was standing in front of them. He was there to help them, to save them. And instead of thanking Him for His kindness, and falling at His feet, they asked Him, all of them did, to leave.

There was only one man in all of Decapolis, that 10 city region, who knew who Jesus really was, it was that man who had been delivered from the power of Hell by the greater power found in Jesus. Let's read it again and let the power of God's Word speak...

Mark 5:18-20 *"As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by the demons begged to go with Him. 19 But Jesus would not allow him. 'Go home to your own people,' He said, 'and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy He has shown you.' 20 So the man went away and began to proclaim throughout the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And everyone was amazed."*

And everyone was amazed! The word translated here as "amazed" is the Greek word, Thaumazo. It means, to wonder, marvel, be struck with admiration or astonishment. To be surprised or flabbergasted! That's always the human response when confronted with the DIVINE.

The exorcism that Jesus performed on this man did not amaze his neighbors, but his testimony, his story, of the redemptive power of Jesus, did! This man still bore the bodily scars of his demonic state. And when he spoke about Jesus, people listened. The most powerful testimony is a changed life—the greater the transformation, the greater the testimony. The man's desire to follow Jesus was noble, but "true missionary work begins at home".

CONCLUSION: Was his story effective? We can certainly assume that it was. He became a radical witness. He covered some territory talking about Jesus. OH, WHAT IF we would be so bold? What if we went about telling and showing people the difference in our lives instead of trying to constantly act like the world?

From this point on in the ministry of Jesus, everywhere He went, multitudes of people flocked to Him. Was this because of the witness of Legion? We can certainly say it didn't hurt.

What's your story? What could you share with people about what Christ has done for you? Are you telling your story, or are you carefully concealing the very thing that would bring multitudes to Christ?

DO YOU HAVE A STORY? Have you ever let Jesus touch you?