

Mark 5:1-20 (NLT) - So they arrived at the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gerasenes. ² When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil^[b] spirit came out from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a chain. ⁴ Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵ Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones.

⁶ When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him, ran to meet him, and bowed low before him. ⁷ With a shriek, he screamed, "Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, don't torture me!" ⁸ For Jesus had already said to the spirit, "Come out of the man, you evil spirit."

⁹ Then Jesus demanded, "What is your name?"

And he replied, "My name is Legion, because there are many of us inside this man." ¹⁰ Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place.

¹¹ There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. ¹² "Send us into those pigs," the spirits begged. "Let us enter them."

¹³ So Jesus gave them permission. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of about 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water.

¹⁴ The herdsmen fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened. ¹⁵ A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons. He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid. ¹⁶ Then those who had seen what happened told the others about the demon-possessed man and the pigs. ¹⁷ And the crowd began pleading with Jesus to go away and leave them alone.

¹⁸ As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹ But Jesus said, "No, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been." ²⁰ So the man started off to visit the Ten Towns^[c] of that region and began to proclaim the great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed at what he told them.

John 4: 39-42 (NLT) - Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, "He told me everything I ever did!" ⁴⁰ When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, ⁴¹ long enough for many more to hear his message and believe. ⁴² Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world."

You know who to trust, and people trust who they know.

Study Guide

This last week we wrapped up our series by talking about how you know who to trust, and people trust who they know. That we are called to share what we know about God to be true, and that those who know us will trust us more than those they do not know.

So, take a moment to share what you know about God. If possible, share what you know by connecting it to a story from your life.

Take some time together to read John 4:1-42, paying special attention to the response of the community to the woman after her time with Jesus. What stands out to you? Do you think the community would have responded to Jesus the same way otherwise? Why or why not?

It can tempt to pray that Jesus show up physically and speaks to our family, or that an angelic being or wandering prophet shows up at my local block party and tells everyone who God is, but the reality is that rarely happens. Not because God isn't able, but because we are already able and the people we know trust what we say! We are uniquely and specifically placed where we are, with the relationships and trust we have earned to share the greatest thing someone could ever hear: That Jesus is alive and loves them and wants to be reunited with them!

Take some time to pray for awareness and boldness to step into those conversations and opportunities when they come.