

The University Heights Messenger

December 19, 2010

Two Responses To Jesus

John Thompson and I used the Tuesday evening streaming Bible study to talk about **Mark 5:1-20**. I would encourage you to take a moment to read those verses before continuing in this article.

What a horrible situation the demon possessed man found himself in. Friendless and alone, he was forced to live away from all human contact and completely under the influence of several evil spirits (Luke 8:2; Matthew 12:45), perhaps as many as 2000 considering that every pig on that hillside ran into the sea as demons possessed them.

With demonic strength, the man broke through every effort to bind him. His torment caused him to cry out night and day and the demons forced him to cut himself constantly. Just considering what he was experiencing is enough to make a person shudder.

Perhaps the man would have continued in that situation until his death had not Jesus stepped foot on the banks of the Decapolis. Immediately recognizing Him for what and who He was, the demons forced the man to run to Christ so they could beg the Lord not to cast them away but to allow them to enter the swine. Jesus gave His permission and the evil spirits entered the pigs. In moments all the pigs were drowning in the sea as the possession led to a stampede off a nearby cliff.

Several herdsmen were there to have seen all that took place. Wasting no time they fled into the nearest city to tell what had happened. We're also told that they spoke of it in the country which gives the impression that they were telling everyone they met on the way to the city and on the way back from it.

It is here that we must take note of two very different responses to Jesus and what He

had done. The first response comes from the people of the city and country who rushed out to see what all the fuss was about. The first thing they saw was the demon possessed man sitting at the feet of Jesus, docile and very much possessing his senses. Is it a stretch to imagine that some of that man's family and friends who had thought he was lost to them forever stood among that number?

Verse 17 is an amazing and tragic verse. **"And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region."** How they missed the mark in this place! There seems to be three reasons why Jesus, or those who had come in His name, are asked to depart in the Scriptures.

The first reason is shame and awareness of personal sin. Peter in Luke 5:8 shows us this example. Having doubted Jesus just moments before he was shocked at the result of doing exactly as the Lord instructed. Overcome by his own spiritual shortcomings Peter was ashamed to stand in the Lord's presence. I think that it is easy to see that it would have pained Peter even more had the Lord walked away from Him. Recognizing a wonderful heart in an earnest man, the Lord remained.

The second reason comes from Acts 19:24-31 where Demetrius the silversmith incited his brethren to rise up against Paul and his companions. The pure gospel truth was inhibiting his idol making business. Worldly things were far more important to him than hearing words of salvation. How often is Jesus sent away for that very reason today?

Finally, there is the situation here with the Gerasenes. What moved them to ask Jesus to leave? The answer is found in Luke's account of the events. **"Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes, asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into**

the boat and returned.” (Luke 8:37). They were afraid of Jesus and what He was able to do. Instead of recognizing the significance of His power over evil spirits, instead of exalting in His presence and delighting to hear Him, their fear was so great they could not see Him gone fast enough. How many have sent Christ away because of fear? How sad.

The healed man’s response could not have been more different. Verse 18 tells us that he begged to be allowed to continue with Jesus. Jesus refused, instructing him rather to stay in the Decapolis and spread what had been done for him. He did so with exemplary enthusiasm (verse 20).

What has been done for us as Christians? While this man received his old life back, we receive a *new* life, one of salvation and hope. While this man would have gone to family and friends to be reclothed and fed, we have bread the lost know nothing about and wait to be further clothed with the glory of resurrected bodies.

Of course, the lost need not continue in ignorance of these things. They *must* not where you and I dwell. Psalm 66:16 says, **“Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what he has done for my soul.”** There’s the proper response to our Lord and what He has done for *our* souls. Who can’t *you* wait to tell?

AL

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Jim Edwards continues recovering from his heart surgery.

Jeff Howerton continues his recovery in Cardinal Hill. He is also mourning the loss of his mother, **Vera Howerton**.

Tom Curtis (Jackie’s grandfather) will begin cancer treatments in the new year.

Joseph Miller (Jackie’s brother) is having his tonsils removed Wednesday and lasik surgery Friday.

Vina Krassow (friend of the Morelan’s) is suffering kidney difficulties.

Our members: **The Daniels’ family, Glenn Davis, Glenn Kimberlin, Janet Brundige, Harrod family.**

Others: **Robin Miller, Ann Sego, John Bennett, Dennis Brennan, Sara Phillips, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Kay Montgomery, Donald Dawson, Jean Gartland, Wes Kidd, Gail Stein, Shannon Gilbert, Chuck McDavitt**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Streaming Bible study every Tuesday at 7. Please remember to tell people about this effort.

Congregational meeting today at 5.

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

- Sun:** Ezek 4-6, Ps 119:81-88, Gal 5-6
- Mon:** Ezek 7-9, Ps 119:89-96, Eph 1
- Tue:** Ezek 10-11, Ps 119:97-104, Eph 2-3
- Wed:** Ezek 12-13, Ps 119:105-112, Eph 4
- Thu:** Ezek 14-15, Ps 119:113-120, Eph 5-6
- Fri:** Ezek 16, Ps 119:121-128, Phil 1-2
- Sat:** Ezek 17-18, Ps 119:129-136, Phil 3-4

SERMON TOPICS:

Sunday AM. Philippians: A Message Of Joy
Increasing Joy
(Philippians 1:3-11)

Sunday PM. Search For The Lies!
(John 8:44)