

THE WORLD'S GREATEST NEED

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“When He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him” (Mark 5:2-4).

As we rode home from the hospital, she chattered constantly, exhibiting her paranoia by saying: “Watch out, there’s a car up there; I don’t think it’s going to stop.” Or: “I’m not used to riding in cars, but don’t worry, I won’t jump out.”

The closer we got to her home, the more anxious she became. Crying softly, she said: “My husband hasn’t called me in three days, I know he’s left me for his ex-wife. He’s done that before.”

As the tears streamed down her cheeks, rocking back and forth in the back seat of the car, she moaned: “I just know he’s dead. He attempted to kill himself several times. He drinks himself stupid when I’m in the hospital. No one has seen him in several days; I know he’s dead.”

“And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones” (Mark 5:5).

The world is full of hurting people, people who have been abused and tormented by those they

thought they could trust. Uncertainty fills their lives because so many people have failed them. Their minds are whirling with real and imagined thoughts which prevent any rest or peace.

“When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, ‘What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me’” (vss. 6, 7).

Because of our misunderstanding of God’s character, we fear Him as a “tormentor.” God’s enemy has done a thorough job of misrepresenting His character to the world. Even as we see our need of a Savior, we fear Him. This manifests itself in various ways. Some say, “I can’t even read the Bible because I have too many problems. When I get some things solved; then I’ll study.”

What is Jesus’ answer? “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). Jesus is the answer to all our problems.

God didn’t wait for us to “solve some things” first before He loved us. “The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: ‘Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness I have drawn you’” (Jer. 31:3). We don’t need to “clean up our act” before we turn to Him for forgiveness. Forgiveness has already been freely given to everyone. “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. 5:10). Salvation is already given to us! Jesus died to pay the price for

our sins; He lives that we might live eternally. He is our best friend. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13). "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

Even though his mind was controlled by a "legion" of demons, the demoniac recognized his great need. In Jesus he saw the only solution to his long-standing psychological problems, and "he ran and worshiped Him" (Mark 5:6).

With a single command, Jesus cast out the demons that for years had been tormenting the poor man. "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!" (vs. 8). Mark goes on to say in verse 9 that there were "many" demons inhabiting the mind and body of the man. One command from Jesus removed them all.

The Good News is that Jesus has power over everything that torments us. If we are willing, He is able to remove them all and leave us clean and "in our right minds." And the process does not have to be long and drawn out. When Jesus "speaks the word only," healing comes in like a flood. All it takes is a willingness on our part to submit to the Great Physician's hand, to give up control of our life to His will.

When the village people heard the commotion made by the pigs running off the cliff; they "went out to see what it was that had happened" (vss. 13, 14). "Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion,

sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid" (vs. 15).

Instead of praising the power of God for healing this man, for removing the terror which had been in their midst for so many years, "they were afraid." The demonic man was now "sitting and clothed and in his right mind." Why were they afraid?

Where the demoniac saw a Savior, these men saw destruction. Their livelihood had just run off the cliff into the sea and drowned. Furious, they turned on Jesus and demanded that He "depart from their region" (vs. 17).

These men needed a Savior just as much as the demon-possessed man, but they were unwilling to face the truth of their need. Hardening their hearts, they sent Jesus away. Self-centeredness controlled them.

Jesus crossed over the sea that day specifically to heal the demoniac. After preaching in parables all day to the multitude beside the sea, He said to His disciples, "Let us cross over to the other side" (Mark 4:35). He went out of His way to reach this tormented man.

Satan tried to destroy Jesus and prevent His mission to the Gadarenes by stirring up a terrible storm on the sea that night. That was turned into a lesson for the disciples and all who read this story on the power of God over His creation. The disciples wondered, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!" (Mark 4:41).

The same power which stilled the raging sea brought peace to the storm raging inside the demon-possessed man's mind. Jesus said: "All

authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18).

Have you been hurt, lied to? Do you feel that there is no one you can trust? Have those you loved and trusted abused and laughed at you?

Jesus is the Divine Psychiatrist. He is listening 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Tell Him what is troubling you. He will take your burden. He loves you with an “everlasting love” that exceeds your wildest imagination. Jesus will never leave you stranded on the roadside or forsake you when the chips are down. He is always there. If you will let Him, He will pick up the pieces of your life, rearrange them, and put them in perfect order. All you have to do is recognize your need and believe that “He is able!”

There is no greater joy or peace than falling into the arms of our Redeemer. To the devil-possessed Jesus said: “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace” (Luke 7:50). To the woman tormented 18 years He said: “Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace” (Luke 8:48). To all of us Jesus says: “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Is there healing for painful childhood memories? Is there healing for abused women and men?

Yes, the Lord “has a desire” to free you from the painful burden of those memories. But to make you a mental zombie with no memory and no susceptibility to pain would not enhance your personality. Happiness is not a mindless, vacuous

euphoria. A grand piano makes beautiful music because its strings are under constant tension. The Lord does not propose to remove your memory tensions, but to give you strength from Christ to bear them in such a way that your life makes music by triumphing over the pain.

He may permit you to carry painful memories for the purpose of enabling you to comfort others. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-6.

Think of the painful memories Christ must carry of the sufferings of His cross—the cruel rejection, the heartless scourgings, the mockery, the abuse, the pain, the horror of that great darkness, the guilt He felt as He was “made to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” Does He forget all that? No, He remembers it but also triumphs over it. Thus He can “succor” [help] others (Hebrews 2:18).

Hold your head high, for you are a partaker of Christ in His sufferings. Accept the comfort for you in Colossians 1:24. “Of all the gifts that Heaven can bestow upon men [and women], fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor” (Desire of Ages, p. 225).

How can you “give something so deeply ingrained in your psyche to Him”? As your High Priest, Christ is your divine Psychiatrist. You could go to an ordinary psychiatrist and pay over a \$100 an hour. He would listen as you verbally articulate all your fears, horrors and resentments. Such therapy would run into weeks and months. But Christ charges you nothing, and He does a better job. On your knees, verbalize and articulate these memories and fears. Learn from Job, David and Jeremiah, how to pray.

Out with everything before Him alone! Guard against the tendency to lay the burdens on other people—they can't endure them. Unload all the evil onto the divine Sin-bearer. I guarantee that He will listen and He will respond. He will give you peace of heart, but with it He will give something vastly more precious—compassion and understanding of how to comfort other people. (1 Peter 5:7-10; Psalm 37.)

Someone who loves you more than life itself is waiting for you with open arms.