

3/8 Mark 5-7

Chapter 5

Vs. 1-20, Gerasa was a small city with mixed Jewish and Gentile population –thus the swine farmers. The man with the legion of unclean spirits is utterly abandoned by society. They've tried chaining him up, nothing can seem to keep him from injuring himself, so they've left him for as good as dead. Legion recognized the divinity of Christ, and ran to bow the man before him. Jesus first and foremost commanded the unclean spirits to leave the man, and they responded by begging Jesus not to torment them (ironic, for the Legion's sole purpose seemed to be tormenting the poor man they had possessed). Jesus sent the Legion into the swine herd, which then ran into the sea and drowned. Jesus healed the man, but in so doing messed with the swine farmer's economic resources in a major way. These 2000 swine would have been worth a large sum of money. Through this healing, Jesus showed that this 1 man was worth more than a great fortune to God. The citizens were afraid and asked Jesus to leave their neighborhood, while the healed man asked to follow Jesus. Instead of adopting him as a disciple, Jesus sent him out as an apostle to tell his story. He travelled around the 10 cities of the Decapolis telling everyone about what Jesus had done for him!

Vs. 21- 43, This section frames the story of the woman with the 12 year hemorrhage with the story of Jairus' 12 year old daughter. This is an example of intercalation and the stories are meant to inform one another. Jairus was a leader of the synagogue, and fully believed that Jesus could heal his daughter –even though she was on the verge of death. Though he held a prestigious position, he humbled himself before Jesus and begged for healing on behalf of his daughter. While Jesus and the crowd were walking toward Jairus' house, an unnamed woman sees Jesus and perhaps regarded Jesus as a magician “if I but touch his clothes I will be made well.” She had endured much suffering and spent all she had and had not been made well –how many women even today experience the same! Unlike Jairus (who was prestigious), this woman was broke, sick, and ritually unclean –meaning she was not allowed to be part of the community. Even though she had the wrong idea about who Jesus was and even though Jesus himself did not know what she was up to, she was immediately healed of her affliction. Jesus could sense that some of his healing power had left him when she touched him, and he sought to find her. She was afraid, but faced him and also fell down at his feet (like Jairus). Instead of being angry, Jesus

had compassion on the woman, calling her “Daughter.” “Made you well” is the same Greek word as “saved.”

Jesus and Jairus are then told that there’s no point to continuing their travels because the young girl has died. None of them expect Jesus to be able to raise the dead, because faith healers and magicians were known to heal the sick, but not to raise the dead. Jesus told Jairus, “Do not fear, only believe” even when one would have thought all hope was lost. Instead of allowing the whole crowd to witness the miracle he’s about to perform, Jesus only allows his inner circle of disciples to follow him to Jairus’ house. Jesus is scoffed at when he tries to tell the mourning crowd that the child is only sleeping, not dead. It’s possible that these were “professional mourners,” people who expected to be paid for their services of adding extra honor to the deceased by mourning extra loudly. Jesus put everyone outside except for his disciples and the child’s parents. He took her by the hand, meaning he made himself ritually unclean by touching a dead person, and told her “Little girl, get up.” Jairus’ daughter was 12 years old, the same length of time that the unnamed woman was bleeding for. The unnamed woman was now healed and perhaps able to bear children because of Jesus’ healing, and Jairus’ daughter was at the age of transition between childhood and adulthood at this time and culture.

Chapter 6

Finally, we’re told in verse 6 that Jesus himself was amazed.... At the unbelief of those who knew him growing up. “Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.” This is a much different response to his teaching than he received in chapter 1, in the synagogue in Capernaum. We’re told the names of Jesus’ brothers, that Jesus was a carpenter, like his father Joseph. “Tekton” could have been carpenter, mason, or some other kind of artisan. He worked with his hands... perhaps meaning that he had not received a formal education like the scribes or Pharisees. Jesus’ hometown is Nazareth, although the disciples and Jesus seem to be headquartered in Capernaum.

Jesus sends his disciples out into the mission field, two by two. They are to be completely dependent upon those who receive them. Their mission is to preach repentance, to cast out unclean spirits, and to heal.... Just like Jesus! By weaving together this section with the fate of John the Baptist, Mark is helping us to see the very real danger that Jesus’ followers faced.

The events of John the Baptist's death are recorded as a flashback in Mark's gospel. King Herod is paranoid that Jesus is John the Baptist's ghost, come back to haunt and torment him. Herod believes that Jesus has such incredible powers because John the Baptist has been raised as Jesus, this functions as foreshadowing of the resurrection. Herod is cast in a somewhat charitable light (believing John was a holy man, protecting him, liked to listen to him). He was actually a tyrannical despot, like his father before him. Unlike his father, Herod Antipas was tetrarch rather than king. Herod is a fool to make such a bold oath to a child. Herodias' daughter is contrasted with Jairus' daughter who is likely about the same age.... Jairus' daughter receives life, Herodias' daughter brings death. More foreshadowing of Good Friday as John's disciples lay his body in a tomb.

The apostle's return from their mission work and continue to be sought out for their ministry. Jesus urges them to take the rest they need. Sabbath is part of the God and Christ ordained pattern of life (work/ rest). Even though they tried to get away, they were followed by the crowds. Instead of being angry, Jesus had compassion on them because "they were like sheep without a shepherd." This suggests both John the Baptist's death and Herod's ineptitude (shepherd meant either prophet, priest, or king by Old Testament standards). His disciples questioned how they would feed everyone and Jesus said, "You give them something to eat." Jesus blessed the food and the disciples handed out the meal. This is a model for Holy Communion, Jesus is the host who blesses the meal, and the meal is handed out by the church.

The disciples fear that Jesus is a ghost, and he again tells them "do not be afraid." The disciples were astounded and did not understand, this is a common theme in Mark's gospel.

Chapter 7

Jesus faces off with the Pharisees again who criticize his disciples for not washing their hands before they eat. Jesus accuses them of hypocrisy because of their preoccupation with human doctrine over God's 10 Commandments. According to Jesus, the Pharisees would tell their parents that what they would have used to support them in their old age was instead given as offering to God. This is the only place this practice comes up. Jesus says it's foolish to think that what we put in our bodies can spiritually contaminate us, but rather what we say and do effects our spiritual condition. Sin starts in the heart.

The Syrophenician woman is likely a woman of high status because of her detailed description. She is a gentile, and Jesus' mission is portrayed in this account to the children of Israel, but Jesus has healed in Gentile territory before (the Gerasene Demoniac). The woman is persistent and won't take no for an answer, and Jesus is impressed by her persistence and cleverness. He heals her daughter –even though he says it's not his mission.

He is even able to make the deaf hear and the mute speak.... There's seemingly nothing that Jesus can't do.
