



"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again." What an insightful parable for our generation. We live in a society in which everything we thought was nailed down is coming loose. Things that people said would never happen in our lifetime are happening. People from every walk of life ask, Where is the power to reassemble Humpty?

Sure our world continues to try. Man is almost insanelly committed to the proposition that he has all the answers. We think money. More money is the answer. "If we only spend more and more money to bring in more of the king's horses and more of the king's men we can certainly put Humpty together again." We think education. More education is the answer. "If we only educate ourselves more and more, and accumulate a little more knowledge, we will certainly put Humpty together again."

We try and try and Humpty remains broken. The next thing we do is blame others for Humpty's fall. I read a while back about a piece of graffiti found in the city of Philadelphia some time ago. Scratched on the wall were these words: Humpty Dumpty was pushed.

What did Humpty Dumpty truly need to be rebuilt? Power. What did Humpty need that all the king's horses and all the king's men didn't have? Power. What Humpty needed was a power outside of himself. Humpty didn't need more money, or education, or for the king's men to work harder. Humpty needed power that comes from something outside this world. Humpty needed God's power, God's power found in Jesus Christ.

In *The Story* we have read about Jesus' amazing birth: born of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit, a royal descendant of King David, anointed by his heavenly Father at his baptism, tempted in the wilderness by Satan, but unlike us, he remained untouched by sin. We read the teachings of Jesus. He starts out with a clear and direct teaching: Repent, The Kingdom of God is at Hand.

Jesus showed us he was a loving and humble man, but Jesus was no ordinary man. He was a powerful man. Every one of us will experience a Humpty Dumpty season, where all the king's horses and all the king's men can't put our lives back together again. Maybe we are in a Humpty Dumpty moment right now. What is it that we need in those Humpty Dumpty moments? We need the power of God, the power of God demonstrated through this extraordinary man.

The Gospel of Mark records a series of three amazing displays of power in chapters 4 and 5. At the end of chapter 4 we read where

Jesus was out with his disciples on the Sea of Galilee and there was a terrifying storm. Then Jesus spoke and the wind and the waves obeyed him and became still. In the latter part of chapter 5 we read that Jesus healed a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years. She simply believed and touched his clothes and the bleeding stopped. Then we read about a synagogue ruler who came to Jesus to see if he could do something for his very sick daughter. In fact before Jesus got to her she had died. Then Jesus, along with his disciples, entered her room and this extraordinary man raised her from the dead.

Here are three power encounters: Power over nature, power over disease, and power over death. But nestled between these power encounters is another incredible encounter. Let's look at how this extraordinary man exercises power over evil in Mark 5:1-20.

Jesus was crossing the Sea of Galilee, from the region of Galilee to the northwest when he and his disciples encountered the storm. After the storm they continued in a southeastern direction and came ashore in a place called the Gerasenes. The Gerasenes was a region on the Eastern Shore made up of 10 cities so it got the name Decapolis.

These cities were planted by the Greek Empire shortly after the death of Alexander the Great. It was a Gentile, not a Jewish area. It's always fascinated me to see that Jesus didn't live in just a sweet little Jewish enclave, but he lived in a very multicultural world surrounded by Greek and Roman influences. The region had money, its people were better educated than the rural areas around it, and if you didn't mind the pagan culture it might have been a great place to live and start a business. But if you went there by boat, your first impression might have been pretty creepy.

### **Jesus Encounters a Desperate (Humpty Dumpty) Place**

**They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones (verses 1–5).**

I think anyone in their right mind would call this a desperate place. The disciples were getting familiar with desperate places. They had probably just stopped hyperventilating after watching

Jesus calm a storm that almost killed them. So now they arrive at a beautiful shore, they jump off their boat and were likely kissing the sand and thanking God for saving them, when they looked up and saw a wild-eyed man possessed with an impure spirit as their welcoming committee. It was a desperate man in a desperate place. What a great reminder that God doesn't turn his back on us when we are in our own desperate places of fear, brokenness and evil.

This passage is a case study for spiritual warfare. It gives us a glimpse into the invisible spirit world that is revealed in God's Word. If you doubt the reality of the devil, you might identify with these two boys walking home from Sunday School. After hearing a strong sermon on the devil, one said to the other, "What do you think about all this Satan stuff?" The other boy replied, "Well, you know how Santa Claus turned out. It's probably your dad."

Well, the devil isn't your dad! It describes a scene more likely imagined by the creators of a horror movie. But what makes it so unsettling to us is that this isn't Hollywood. This is a real and desperate place. Humpty is really broken. Notice how the scene was described.

**Unclean.** Evil and filth went together. He lived in an old graveyard, surrounded by dirt, decay and death. The presence of demons is often revealed in places of spiritual filth, places where there is drug abuse, physical abuse, pornography and perversion, as well as trash and squalor and stench.

**Isolation.** Living among the tombs he was separated from his community, cut off physically and emotionally from others. Withdrawal or separation from people and community can trigger more and more demonic activity.

**Super beyond human strength.** It says no one could bind him. People tried but couldn't do it, not even with a chain. He tore the chains apart and broke open the irons on his feet.

**Self destruction.** Night and day he cried out among the tombs and hills. He cut himself with sharp stones. He tried to injure himself, or take his own life, or somehow cut the demons out of him. It's a desperate place. It's full blown demonic control or possession.

It's important that we step back at this moment before we continue our story and remember that when we find ourselves in desperate places it isn't always because of demonic attack. There are three public enemies each of us face in spiritual warfare, and demonic attack can be the rarest of them all. But be encouraged. All three can be disarmed, neutralized and destroyed by the power of God.

### **Three Enemies in Spiritual Warfare**

#### **The World**

*"For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but*

*from the world"* (1 John 2:16). Remember that our world is a desperate place because for all intents and purposes it is opposed to God. The enemy can use the world to draw us away from God. We are constantly bombarded from the outside with things that feed our flesh, our eyes and our pride. But the war doesn't wage only outside of us, there is also a war inside of us. The Bible specifically refers to this as the battle of our flesh, or the battle within our own sin nature. The Bible says to guard our hearts from the things that we know do not come from God.

#### **The Flesh**

*"The acts of the flesh are obvious: Sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions..."* (Gal. 5:19a). Here is the lie we believe that hurts us every time. "I believe I can live my life and experience pleasure and deep connection and peace in my soul without God. If I only gratify the flesh I am whole, I am sufficient. I don't need to depend on God or other believers. I'm right. I know I'm right. If you disagree, you're just plain wrong." The flesh brings to the surface these attitudes. I don't need the devil to trigger these things. I am perfectly capable to act out of the flesh on my own through my own sinful broken nature.

Any of you still struggle with these things in Galatians 5? Of course you do. Are demons involved when I am discontented and envious? I don't know. It really doesn't matter because whether it is warfare against Satan or warfare against my flesh it is still warfare and victory is still achieved through trusting in the power of Christ.

Sometimes the flesh battle, the sin nature, the curse of a broken world, can even look like demonic attack. Speaking from experience as a pastor, it can be hard to tell the difference between a psychiatric or physiological condition and a demonic attack. I have run into bi-polar episodes or people suffering from PTSD that would look sadly similar to what Jesus and his disciples encountered on the beach that day. But we do know that demonic attack is not treated with meds. Demonic attack is cured by the power of God.

#### **The Devil**

*"We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one"* (1 John 5:19). The Bible tells us that the devil is a tempter and a deceiver. He is powerful. But not all-powerful. His goal is to lure us into sin, to imitate what is real, and lure us in to take the fake and be deceived into sin. He wins when we take the fake and place it on the throne of our lives.

So it's really a triple team. The flesh provides the means, using our physical bodies as the tool to act out the sin through what we see, hear, taste, smell, touch and feel. The Devil provides the motive. How? By lying to us, making us think that sin is a good thing. It's deception. People don't smoke meth because they think it

will be a bad thing for them. They smoke it because they think it will fill them up with good feelings and then become a good thing. He also lies to us by accusing us of things that are not true. Some of us believe the lies such as “I’m ugly” or “I won’t ever amount to anything” or “no one could ever love a person like me” or “I deserve to be treated like trash by a boyfriend.”

Finally, The world provides the opportunity. These spiritual battles we face are fought through people, places and things around us in this fallen and cursed world.

My advice is to not try to distinguish which enemy is which. I can’t distinguish where my flesh stops or Satan starts, or at what point exactly the world invades my thinking. We need the theological wisdom and honesty of the little girl who had a terrific fight with her brother. When her mother came in and pulled her off, she said to her daughter, “Why did you let the Devil put it into your heart to pull your brother’s hair and kick him in the shins?” The little girl thought for a moment and said, “Well, maybe the Devil put it into my head to pull my brother’s hair, but kicking his shins was my own idea.”

I just know that the battle rages and I am triple-teamed, and there is no hope of victory, no hope of displaying God’s glory unless he shows up with the power we are about to see demonstrated in our story.

### **Jesus Encounters a Demon-Possessed Man**

What do we mean by demon possessed? The term suggests that a person is under such strong influence by an evil spirit that the person is unable to exercise his or her own will. That is the case here, because we will see that he will, after his power encounter with Jesus, be back in his right mind, at peace.

Can a Christian become demon possessed? If the question is, “can a Christian’s will be completely dominated by a demon or demons so that that Christian has no power left to choose to do right and obey God?”, then the answer to the question of whether or not a Christian can become demon possessed is no.

Can a Christian come under demonic attack to varying degrees? Yes. Even with the full power of the Holy Spirit to enable full triumph over demonic attacks, Christians can still give in to demonic attacks in the same way we give in to sin to various degrees and become pestered, beaten down and discouraged.

But be encouraged. If we are Christians we are must remember that we are forever linked to him. Romans 6:4 says, *“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the father, we too may live a new life.”* Christ’s life and Christ’s power is linked to us.

So sin has no mastery over us, so too the devil has no authority or mastery over us because we are linked to the one who overcame the devil. If we were not given that authority and the power of God in us how could we take seriously when Paul says

in Ephesians 4:27, *“Christian, do not give the devil a foothold in your life,”* or when James says in James 4:7, *“Resist the Devil and he will flee.”* These aren’t empty commands.

**When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God’s name don’t torture me!” For Jesus had said to him, “Come out of this man, you impure spirit!” (verses 6–8).**

So this demon-possessed man in a desperate place fell down before Jesus. He knew exactly who Jesus was. Highly educated and inquisitive people don’t recognize God when they see him, but these demons knew exactly who he was and what he was capable of by the divine title he gave Jesus. Then it says, “He shouted at the top of his voice.” It was a common tactic to call someone out by their exact name in order to try to get the upper hand and intimidate. This was the demon’s attempt to get ahead of Jesus.

When that didn’t work, the demon tied another tactic. He pleaded for leniency. Swear you won’t torture me. Demons are terrified of their final and certain doom. They want to put off their final destination for as long as possible.

**Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “My name is Legion,” he replied, “for we are many.” And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area (verses 9–10).**

A legion was a Roman army regiment of about 6000 men, 1200 horsemen and officers. Notice the multiple personalities—verse 7 singular “me” and then verse 9 plural “we.” Who is talking? Is it the man? Is it one demon? Is it more than one demon? Why did the demons beg to remain in the area? This was a pagan place and their targets must have been rich for possessing and tormenting. One might think that demons can be territorial and like to set up residence in certain locations for a long amount of time.

### **Jesus Encounters the Pigs**

**A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, “Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.” He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned (verses 11–13).**

You can’t make this stuff up! There were enough demons to fill a herd of 2000 pigs. Some of us may react to this and say, Why? Why innocent pigs? Remember it was the demons that caused the pigs to rush into the lake and drown. It might sadden you but to Jews who read this story, they would cheer. Pigs were unclean. Jews were forbidden to raise, sell or eat pork. In fact the Roman General Titus sacrificed a pig on the altar in the temple and forced the priests to eat it when the Roman army

captured Jerusalem in 70 AD, just to rub their noses in it before executing them.

Finally, notice this: Jesus is always in control. Don't forget it. Someday you may need to remember this story in your desperate time. Remember Jesus is in control. He can put Humpty Dumpty together again. May these verses encourage you.

### **Jesus' Power and Authority Over Evil Spirits**

*"Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits" (Mk. 6:7). "They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them" (Mk. 6:12-13). "The seventy-two returned with joy and said, 'Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name'" (Luke 10:17). So what happens next? Did the townspeople come out to express their gratitude that this man, their nutty neighbor, was back in his right mind?*

### **Jesus Encounters the Townspeople**

**When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region (verses 14–17).**

It wasn't praise the Lord, thank you Jesus. It was, I am afraid. I am afraid for my lifestyle. Those 2000 pigs off to hog heaven cost these guys a lot of money. You see, Jesus' action revealed the materialism that dominated their pagan culture. They cared more about pigs than people.

### **Jesus Instructs the Restored Man**

**As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you" (verses 18–19).**

Wouldn't you want to go with Jesus too? Jesus, take me on the boat. Let me become your 13th disciple. Instead Jesus told him to go back home into the Decapolis and show and tell them God was merciful to me and he will be merciful to you too. Jesus told him to say, "Look at me. Believe in Jesus. He is the real deal. Our gods cannot even be mentioned in the same breath. Evil runs from this Jesus." So this man became the first missionary of the church to the Greeks on the east side of the sea of Galilee.

**So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed (v. 20).**

We can find God and defeat our enemies in desperate places. As we bring this revelation about the power of Jesus to a conclusion, I want to address you who feel like you are in a desperate place. Someone once told me that their heart hurt. The enemy wants our hearts to hurt. Satan wants us to believe that we are on our own, that God can't be trusted, and any limits God places on you are not for your own good but to make you miserable. And he wants you to give up hope and believe that you are destined for a hopeless future just like the Gerasenes man before he encountered Jesus.

If you are in a desperate place this morning, you are terrified. Your flesh is burning, you feel dirty and isolated. You feel triple-teamed by the world, your flesh, and the devil. Remember your weapons.

**Truth.** Here is the truth. God's righteousness was placed in you when you trusted Christ as your Lord and Savior. The power of God to transform lives, to grow your faith, to assure us of our salvation, to give us strength over temptations is available to every believer. That's the truth. Do we still sin? Of course. But we are no longer needing to live controlled by sin. We will discover that we can sin less. We will find new power in Christ over sin. We have hope.

**Prayer.** Every sin that controls us is fueled by a lie. Through prayer we cut the legs out from under the lie by confessing our sin to God. Then we can actually turn away from the lie by renouncing it (dismissing or giving up) by the authority and power of Jesus. That is when freedom comes. Remember when Jesus spoke the demons left the man. Pray in the name and power and authority of Jesus. In John 15:5 Jesus says, *"Apart from me, you can do nothing."* Which says to us today, "There is no other way except through Jesus that we can be saved from a desperate place."

**Community.** If you are feeling triple-teamed, look for an open man to help you. If you see someone triple-teamed, why not run over and help them? True freedom and true life change always comes in the context of Christian Community. The devil uses guilt, shame and fear of being judged and then condemned by the church to keep people trapped in isolation in their secret world of bondage.

All the king's horses and all the king's men cannot put us back together again, but our extraordinary all-powerful Jesus can!

*This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.*

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