

Discussion Guide for Mark 5:1-43

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The Gerasene Demoniac (Mark 5:1–20)

Jesus demonstrates His power over evil spirits and restores a man pushed to the fringes of society.

1. **Observation:** Read verses 1–5. How does Mark describe the physical, social, and emotional condition of this man? What does this reveal about the ultimate intent of evil forces?
2. **Interpretation:** When the townspeople see the man completely healed, clothed, and in his right mind, they beg Jesus to leave (v. 15–17). Why do you think they reacted with fear instead of celebration?
3. **Application:** Jesus didn't allow the healed man to travel with Him; instead, He told him to *"Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you"* (v. 19). If He asked this of you...*and He is...* How would you summarize your own "testimony" of what Jesus has done for you in one or two sentences?

Part 2: The Bleeding Woman (Mark 5:21–34)

Jesus stops in a pressing crowd to notice, heal, and publicly restore a woman who has suffered for twelve years.

4. **Observation:** Consider the woman's situation in verses 25–26. She had suffered for 12 years, spent all her money on doctors, and only grew worse. What kind of emotional, social, and spiritual burdens would this cause? *(Note: Culturally, her condition made her ritually unclean and socially isolated.)*

5. **Interpretation:** The crowd was pressing heavily against Jesus, yet He stopped and asked, *“Who touched my clothes?”* (v. 30). Why do you think Jesus insisted on identifying her publicly rather than letting her slip away quietly with her physical healing?
 6. **Application:** Jesus tells her, *“Daughter, your faith has healed you”* (v. 34). What does true, active faith look like when you feel desperate or feel like you've run out of options?
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Part 3: Jairus's Daughter (Mark 5:21–24, 35–43)

A high-status synagogue leader watches his worst nightmare come true, only to witness Jesus conquer death.

7. **Observation & Contrast:** Compare and contrast Jairus and the bleeding woman. One is a wealthy, respected religious leader; the other is an impoverished, isolated outcast. What does their equal access to Jesus tell us about His kingdom?
 8. **Interpretation:** While Jesus was delayed by the woman, word came that Jairus's daughter had died. Jesus immediately told him, *“Don't be afraid; just believe”* (v. 36). How do fear and faith struggle against each other when circumstances seem entirely hopeless?
 9. **Application:** When Jesus raised the little girl, He tenderly used her native language (*“Talitha koum”*) and immediately told the parents to feed her (v. 41–43). What do these specific, small details teach us about the personal, practical compassion of Jesus?
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Big Picture Reflection Questions

10. **The Theme of Cleanness:** In Jewish law, tombs, pigs, chronic blood, and dead bodies all caused ritual uncleanness. Instead of becoming "contaminated" by

touching these things, Jesus makes *them* clean. What does this tell us about Jesus's ability to handle our messy, broken, or "unclean" realities?

11. **The Sovereignty of Christ:** Mark 5 shows Jesus conquering three major human anxieties: evil/chaos, physical suffering, and death. Which of these three areas do you personally struggle to trust Jesus with the most right now?

I. The Gadarene Demoniac Healed (5:1–20)

5:1–5 The country of the **Gadarenes** was on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. There Jesus met an unusually violent, demon-possessed man, a terror to society. Every effort to restrain him had failed. He lived among **the tombs** and on the mountains, yelling continually and gashing **himself with sharp stones**.

5:6–13 When the demoniac **saw Jesus**, he first acted respectfully, then complained bitterly. “How true and terrible a picture is this—a man bowed in adoration, petition and faith, and yet hating, defiant and fearing; a double personality, longing for liberty and yet clinging to passion” (Scripture Union Notes).

The exact order of events is unclear, but may have been as follows:

1. The demoniac performed an act of reverence to the Lord Jesus (v. 6).
2. Jesus ordered the **unclean spirit** to **come out** of him (v. 8).
3. The spirit, speaking through the man, acknowledged who Jesus was, challenged His right to interfere, and begged Jesus with an oath to stop tormenting him (v. 7).
4. Jesus **asked** the man's **name**. It was **Legion**, signifying he was indwelt by many demons (v. 9). This apparently does not contradict verse 2 where it says he had an unclean spirit (singular).
5. Perhaps it was the spokesman for the demons who begged permission to **enter a herd of swine** (vv. 10–12).

6. Permission was granted with the result that **two thousand** pigs raced down the mountainside **and drowned in the sea** (v. 13).

The Lord has often been criticized for causing the destruction of these pigs. Several points should be noted:

1. He did not cause this destruction; He permitted it. It was Satan's destructive power that destroyed the pigs.
2. There is no record of the owners finding fault. Perhaps they were Jews for whom the raising of pigs was forbidden.
3. The soul of the man was worth more than all the pigs in the world.
4. If we knew as much as Jesus knew, we would have acted exactly the same way He did.

5:14–17 Those who witnessed the swine's destruction ran back to **the city** with the news. A crowd returned to find the ex-demoniac **sitting** at Jesus' feet **clothed and in his right mind**. The people **were afraid**. Someone has said, "They were afraid when He stilled the tempest on the sea, and now in a human soul." The witnesses recounted the whole story to the newcomers. It was too much for the populace; they pleaded with Jesus **to depart from the region**. This and not the destruction of the pigs is the shocking part of the incident. Christ was too costly a guest!

"Countless multitudes still wish Christ far from them for fear His fellowship may occasion some social or financial or personal loss. Seeking to save their possessions, they lose their souls" (Selected).

5:18–20 As Jesus was about to leave by **boat**, the healed man **begged** to accompany Him. It was a worthy request, evidencing his new life, but Jesus sent him **home** as a living witness of God's great power and mercy. The man obeyed, carrying the good news to **Decapolis**, an area embracing ten cities.

This is a standing order for all who have experienced the saving grace of God: **"Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."** Evangelism begins at home!

J. Curing the Incurable and Raising the Dead (5:21–43)

5:21–23 Back on the western shore of blue Galilee, the Lord Jesus was soon in the center of **a great multitude**. A frenzied father came running up to Him. It was **Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue**. His **little daughter** was dying. Would Jesus please go and **lay His hands on her so that she might be healed?**

5:24 The Lord responded and started for the home. A crowd **followed**, thronging **Him**. It is interesting that immediately following the statement of the crowd's *thronging* Him, we have an account of faith *touching* Him for healing.

5:25–29 A distracted **woman** intercepted Jesus on the way to Jairus' home. Our Lord was neither annoyed nor ruffled by this seeming interruption. How do we react to interruptions?

I think I find most help in trying to look on all interruptions and hindrances to work that one has planned out for oneself as discipline, trials sent by God to help one against getting selfish over one's work.... It is not waste of time, as one is tempted to think, it is the most important part of the work of the day—the part one can best offer to God. (Choice Gleanings Calendar)

This woman had suffered with chronic bleeding **for twelve years**. The **many physicians** she went to had apparently used some drastic forms of treatment, drained her finances, and left her **worse** rather than better. When hope of recovery was all but gone, someone told her about Jesus. She lost no time in finding Him. Easing her way through the crowd, she **touched** the border of **His garment**. Immediately the bleeding stopped and she felt completely well.

5:30 Her plan was to slip away quietly, but the Lord would not let her miss the blessing of publicly acknowledging her Savior. He had been aware of an outflow of divine **power** when she touched Him; it cost Him something to heal her. So He asked, **“Who touched My clothes?”** He knew the answer, but asked in order to bring her forward in the crowd.

5:31 His disciples thought the question was silly. Many people were jostling Him continually. Why ask **“Who touched Me?”** But there is a difference between the touch of physical nearness, and the touch of desperate faith. It is possible to be ever so near Him without trusting Him, but impossible to touch Him by faith without His knowing it and without being healed.

5:32, 33 The woman came forward, **fearing and trembling**; she **fell down before Him** and made her first public confession of Jesus.

5:34 Then He spoke words of assurance to her soul. Open confession of Christ is of tremendous importance. Without it there can be little growth in the Christian life. As we take our stand boldly for Him, He floods our souls with full assurance of faith. The words of the Lord Jesus not only confirmed her physical healing, but also no doubt included the great blessing of soul salvation as well.

5:35–38 By this time, messengers had arrived with the news that Jairus' **daughter** had died. There was no need to bring **the Teacher**. The Lord graciously reassured Jairus, then took

Peter, James, and John to the house. They were met by the unrestrained weeping characteristic of eastern homes in times of sorrow, some of it done by hired mourners.

5:39–42 When Jesus assured them that **the child** was **not dead but sleeping**, their tears turned to scorn. Undaunted, He took the immediate family to the motionless child, and taking her **by the hand, said** in Aramaic, **“Little girl, I say to you, arise.”** Immediately the twelve-year-old **girl** got up **and walked**. The relatives were stunned, and doubtless delirious with joy.

5:43 The Lord forbade their publicizing the miracle. He was not interested in the popular acclaim of the masses. He must resolutely press on to the cross.

If the girl had actually died, then this chapter illustrates the power of Jesus over demons, disease, and death. Not all Bible scholars agree that she was dead. Jesus said she was not dead but sleeping. Perhaps she was in a deep coma. He could just as easily have raised her from the dead, but He would not take credit for doing so if she were only unconscious.

We should not overlook the closing words of the chapter: **“He ... said that something should be given her to eat.”** In spiritual ministry, this would be known as “follow-up work.” Souls that have known the throb of new life need to be fed. One way a disciple can manifest his love for the Savior is by feeding His sheep.