

# The Gadarene Demoniac

## Summary and Goal

Jesus Christ has power and authority over evil spirits. Jesus showed His care and concern for a man who was isolated from society and controlled by evil spirits. After delivering the man from his bondage, Jesus called him to testify to the goodness of God. As those who trust in the authority and power of Jesus and who have been delivered from our bondage to sin, we too are called to testify to the goodness of God.

### **Main Passage**

Mark 5:1-20

### **Session Outline**

1. Jesus cared about the demoniac who was isolated from society (Mark 5:1-8).
2. Jesus confronted the evil spirits in control of the demoniac (Mark 5:9-17).
3. Jesus called the man to testify to God's goodness toward him (Mark 5:18-20).

### **Theological Theme**

Jesus has power and authority over evil spirits.

### **Christ Connection**

In this account we see Jesus' compassion for those held captive to the Evil One as well as His confrontation with the dehumanizing powers of evil. With one word, Jesus delivered the demon-possessed man. This account points forward to the end of the Gospels when Jesus would give His life on the cross, appearing for a time to have lost His battle against evil only to rise triumphantly, having defeated sin, Satan, and the grave forever.

### **Missional Application**

God calls us to report, like the former demoniac, how much the Lord has done for us and how He has shown us mercy.

## Session Plan

# The Gadarene Demoniac

## Session 11

### Point 1 Option

Enlist the help of someone from your group/church or community who is a Christian and also serves in social or healthcare work or is involved with counseling in some way. Ask this person to share with the group how the Christian faith motivates him or her in this work and how social isolation can contribute to a troubled person's problems and situation. After a few minutes, ask the following questions:

- How have you found strength from other Christians for resistance against temptation and the will to obey God's commands?
- How can we as a group/church and as individuals make ourselves more readily available to help one another and other people who might be suffering in isolation?

### Pack Item 3: Jesus' Ministry Map

The region of the **Geraseses** and the **Decapolis** are highlighted on the map.

## Introduction

Start with the reality of jobs and someone always being a boss, but note that all earthly authority is limited (leader p. 130; PSG p. 101).

- ❓ What types of bosses (authoritarian, democratic, servant-like, etc.) have you experienced in your workplace?
- ❓ What was it like to work for different kinds of bosses?

Say that contrary to bosses, Jesus has *all* authority. Then summarize this session on Jesus authority over evil spirits (leader pp. 130-131; PSG pp. 101-102).

## 1. Jesus cared about the demoniac who was isolated from society (Mark 5:1-8).

Read Mark 5:1-8. Comment on the reasons people were afraid of this man and why he was isolated. Connect the status of this demoniac with people in your own city or area who are isolated, on the fringes of society, and who suffer under the power and reign of sin (leader pp. 131-132; PSG p. 102).

- ❓ What are some reasons we tend to shy away from serving people who may be labeled "hard cases"?
- ❓ How do Jesus' actions challenge that tendency?

Emphasize that Jesus engaged this man on the shore instead of shunning him because He cares for sinners, which should be true for His followers as well (leader pp. 132-133; PSG p. 103).

- ❓ When was the last time your heart broke over the consequences of sin? How did you respond?

## 2. Jesus confronted the evil spirits in control of the demoniac (Mark 5:9-17).

Read Mark 5:9-17. State that all demonic forces, including the Devil, are subject to the power of Christ, and highlight the evidence of this in this passage. Distinguish between demonic *possession* and demonic *oppression* as to how the Devil and his forces work today and attack believers (leader pp. 133-134; PSG pp. 104-105).

-  In your spiritual journey of following Jesus, what have you found helpful in resisting the schemes of the Devil?

Link Jesus' delivering the man of demonic spirits with the truth that the power of Jesus changes lives. Show the change in this man was radical and evident to others (leader pp. 134-135; PSG pp. 105-106). Be honest that life change as a result of Jesus' power will not always be met with approval, and in some cases, it may be met with hostility. Still, we should be resolved to take the gospel to hard places for God's glory (leader p. 135).

*Ask groups of 3-4 to answer the questions in the table in the PSG. After a few moments, call for some responses from each group (leader p. 135; PSG p. 106).*

## 3. Jesus called the man to testify to God's goodness toward him (Mark 5:18-20).

Ask a volunteer to read Mark 5:18-20. Using Jesus' command to the man who had been demon-possessed, clarify that all followers of Christ have a mandate—to tell those who don't know God about what He has done for them. Comment on how "ordinary" Christians can fulfill this mandate both locally and globally (leader pp. 136-137; PSG p. 107).

-  How might God want to use you, based on your unique wiring as a Jesus follower, to accomplish the mission locally and globally?
-  How are you engaging right now in spreading the gospel in your community, city, and among the nations?

## Conclusion

Point out that deliverance from sin always—eventually—leads to a deployment into mission, even to the ends of the earth, and God's sovereignty and power over all things empowers this mission (leader p. 137; PSG p. 108). *Apply the truths of this session with "His Mission, Your Mission" (PSG p. 109).*

*Pass out bookmarks from Pack Item 8: Belong to God to help group members recall that Christians are free from the power of the Devil and can resist His schemes.*

### Point 2 Option

If necessary or helpful for your group, use the leader-only content (leader p. 134) and the Scripture passages referenced there to support the biblical truth that Christians cannot be possessed by demons, though they can be oppressed by them.

### ? For Further Discussion

How does Mark 5:19-20 subtly testify to Jesus' identity with Yahweh, the God of Israel? (See the "Voices from the Church" quote on leader p. 137; PSG p. 108.)

How does this reinforce that Jesus has power and authority over demons and the Devil?

**Christ Connection:** In this account we see Jesus' compassion for those held captive to the Evil One as well as His confrontation with the dehumanizing powers of evil. With one word, Jesus delivered the demon-possessed man. This account points forward to the end of the Gospels when Jesus would give His life on the cross, appearing for a time to have lost His battle against evil only to rise triumphantly, having defeated sin, Satan, and the grave forever.

**Missional Application:** God calls us to report, like the former demoniac, how much the Lord has done for us and how He has shown us mercy.

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## Session 11



### Voices from Church History

“We must wage war against this enemy with an understanding and application of Kingdom Authority... ‘For the battle is not yours, but God’s’ [2 Chron. 20:15].”<sup>1</sup>

—Adrian Rogers (1931-2005)

## Introduction

I’ve had several jobs over the years. Some jobs I loved. Others, not so much. But there is one thing all of these jobs had in common—there was always a boss. Either I had someone in authority over me or I was in authority over someone else.

While it may not seem like it when they are breathing down your neck for that report they needed an hour before they asked you for it, bosses have limited authority. No city council member has universal jurisdiction over all the cities in the state. A senator for the State of California is not responsible for citizens in the Midwest. Even the person who holds the powerful office of President of the United States cannot make decisions on behalf of just any other country, not to mention the system of checks and balances to limit the president’s power within this country. Authority exists, but authority is limited. There isn’t a single person on Planet Earth who possesses *all* authority.

- ? What types of bosses (authoritarian, democratic, servant-like, etc.) have you experienced in your workplace?
- ? What was it like to work for different kinds of bosses?

In contrast to bosses with limited authority, Jesus has *all* authority. He didn’t have an impressive appearance (Isa. 53:2). He didn’t have all the luxuries you’d expect to come with such authority (such as a corner office). Yet He had and still has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18).

Not only that, Jesus’ authority is universal and all-encompassing. Nothing compares to His power and authority. The extent of Jesus’ power and authority is too vast to comprehend. And here we will see how His sovereign control extends to the spiritual forces of evil that wage war in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12).

## Session Summary

In this session we witness the power and authority of Jesus Christ over evil spirits. Jesus showed His care and concern for a man who was isolated from society and controlled by evil spirits. After delivering the man from his bondage, Jesus called him to testify to the goodness of God. As those who trust in the authority and power of Jesus and who have been delivered from our bondage to sin, we too are called to testify to the goodness of God.

### 1. Jesus cared about the demoniac who was isolated from society (Mark 5:1-8).

Christ demonstrated great power while He walked on earth, and He did so in many ways. Several stories in the Gospels depict Jesus encountering people who were demon-possessed, held captive by demonic forces inhabiting their bodies. Let's take a look at one of the most memorable exorcisms Jesus performed:

*<sup>1</sup> They came to the other side of the sea, to the region of the Gerasenes. <sup>2</sup> As soon as he got out of the boat, a man with an unclean spirit came out of the tombs and met him. <sup>3</sup> He lived in the tombs, and no one was able to restrain him anymore—not even with a chain— <sup>4</sup> because he often had been bound with shackles and chains, but had torn the chains apart and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. <sup>5</sup> Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains, he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.*

*<sup>6</sup> When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and knelt down before him. <sup>7</sup> And he cried out with a loud voice, “What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you before God, don't torment me!” <sup>8</sup> For he had told him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”*

Can you imagine running into this guy, or having this guy run into you? Scary! He was a man living among the dead! Although people had tried to bind him with chains, he broke out of them every time. He was what many people today would label a “crazy person,” which was one of the reasons he was isolated from society.

People were fearful of this man for obvious reasons. First, they were afraid because he had incredible strength. They tried everything they could to restrain him from harming others. They put chains around his hands and feet, but nothing they tried could overcome him. The shackles were no match for his strength.

## Further Commentary

“Jesus had expelled demons often before... But this particular demon-expulsion has several peculiar features, which merit its inclusion here. For this was a man long ‘under treatment’...It was in the failure of all human methods that Jesus acted decisively. The medical treatment given to this man was that commonly still used in many parts of the world today: he was loaded with chains, in a vain attempt to curb his inner turmoil by outward restraint. Not surprisingly, this proved quite futile (v. 4). It was also probably part of his ‘treatment’ to drive him away from inhabited areas, to find in graveyards on desolate hillsides his ‘isolation block.’ But isolation, whether self-chosen or enforced by others (as in the case of lepers), meant only that the destructive force of evil, instead of turning outwards in outbreaks of violence, vented itself on the patient, in acts of senseless self-torture, as stated here (v. 5). It is strange that the insight of evil into the nature of Jesus should be so clear and instantaneous, while ordinary people were so slow to see his godhead...The demons knew Jesus at once, for fear, as well as love, sharpens the eyes. They acknowledged the status of Jesus all unwillingly, confessing at once the vast gulf that existed between them, and showing the searing effect that good has on evil.”<sup>2</sup>

—R. Alan Cole

## Further Commentary

“If by ‘demon possessed’ they mean that a person’s will is completely dominated by a demon, so that a person has no power left to do right and obey God, then the answer to whether or not a Christian could be demon possessed would certainly be no, for Scripture guarantees that sin shall have no dominion over us since we have been raised with Christ (Rom. 6:14, see also vv. 4,11).”<sup>3</sup>

—Wayne Grudem

## Voices from the Church

“There is no reason to believe that demon possessions are restricted to the past. There are cases, especially but not exclusively in less developed cultures, which seem to be explainable only on this basis.”<sup>4</sup>

—Millard Erickson

## Voices from Church History

“Unbelief about the existence and personality of Satan has often proved the first step to unbelief about God.”<sup>5</sup>

—J. C. Ryle (1816-1900)

Second, they were afraid because of his self-mutilating behavior. He was an outcast. He didn’t fit in. And since they couldn’t control him, they banished him. He was completely ostracized from culture and society.

I know a man named Cody who serves the homeless population in the city of Las Vegas, Nevada, many of whom struggle with harmful vices similar to this demoniac in Mark 5. Cody supports these individuals by providing meals, hosting weekly Bible studies, and guiding them toward rehabilitation and reconciliation with family and friends. Many souls have been changed by the grace of Jesus because of this incredible ministry. Unfortunately, like the demoniac, the thousands of homeless living in Las Vegas are considered as outcasts by many and seen more as a nuisance than as human beings made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27).

Wherever you live, in whatever city or area God has placed you, there are people like this demoniac—men and women who are created to be in a loving and worshipful relationship with God but who suffer under the power and reign of sin. They are in desperate need of the healing power found only in the gospel. The demoniac serves as the embodiment of the damaging effects sin can cause, and this causes us to ask, “How can we who have experienced the gospel share it with those on the fringes of society?”

- ❓ What are some reasons we tend to shy away from serving people who may be labeled “hard cases”?
- ❓ How do Jesus’ actions challenge that tendency?

Unlike those who tried to bind the man and ultimately cast him out to live among the dead, Jesus met this man on the shore and engaged him. Jesus didn’t turn His back on this needy sinner. In fact, it was for people such as this that Jesus came in the first place.

Earlier in his Gospel, Mark quoted Jesus as saying, “It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick. I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners” (2:17). Likewise, in Luke, Jesus said He came “to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). Jesus cared about this demoniac because he saw a sick man, not just the demonic spirit that ravaged him. No amount of medicine could have helped this man. No self-help book could have restored him. Jesus knew what we now know—that He alone had the power and authority to change this man’s life forever.

The Savior cares for sinners. Jesus was moved to the core when He saw the effects of sin on people (Matt. 9:36). If that was His heart attitude toward those trapped in the bondage of sin, then what should we feel toward those who are in the same condition today? Since we have the Spirit of Christ, shouldn't our hearts break over the sin that plagues our family, friends, and coworkers? Shouldn't we feel a deep anguish over the sin that ravages countries and the world at large? When what breaks the heart of Jesus doesn't break our hearts, there's a problem. An area of our heart that does not break over sin is an area of our heart that isn't conformed to Christ.

 When was the last time your heart broke over the consequences of sin? How did you respond?

## 2. Jesus confronted the evil spirits in control of the demoniac (Mark 5:9-17).

Jesus didn't just show compassion to the man in distress. He demonstrated His power over evil. Watch how He confronted the evil spirits:

<sup>9</sup> *“What is your name?” he asked him.*

*“My name is Legion,” he answered him, “because we are many.”*

<sup>10</sup> *And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the region.*

<sup>11</sup> *A large herd of pigs was there, feeding on the hillside.* <sup>12</sup> *The demons begged him, “Send us to the pigs, so that we may enter them.”* <sup>13</sup> *So he gave them permission, and the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs. The herd of about two thousand rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned there.*

<sup>14</sup> *The men who tended them ran off and reported it in the town and the countryside, and people went to see what had happened.* <sup>15</sup> *They came to Jesus and saw the man who had been demon-possessed, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.* <sup>16</sup> *Those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and told about the pigs.* <sup>17</sup> *Then they began to beg him to leave their region.*

One of the main truths we glean from this story is that all demonic forces, including the Devil, are subject to the power of Christ. No demonic spirit has the final word. The Devil and his demonic forces are subject to One who is much greater and much more powerful. Note the significance of these statements in verses 10 and 13: “And he begged him earnestly” and “he gave them permission.”

### Further Commentary

“‘My name is Legion’ indicated the strength of the demons. A Roman military legion consisted of about 6,000 soldiers (cp. the number of pigs in v. 13). The name ‘Legion’ thus serves to indicate a large number (‘because we are many’), explains the supernatural strength of the man, and magnifies the fact that Jesus was the ‘more powerful’ One (1:7) who could ‘enter a strong man’s house’ and tie him up (3:27)...‘Pigs’ were unclean to Jews. Herding them was forbidden (Lev. 11:7; Deut. 14:8). The ‘large herd’ reminds us that this event took place in a Gentile area...In verse 10 the unclean spirits begged Jesus not to send them out of the region. In this verse they ‘begged’ to be sent into unclean animals...‘Drowned’ refers to the ‘pigs,’ not the spirits (cp. Matt. 12:43–44). None of the Gospel authors comment on the loss of animal life or its economic impact. The action of the demon-possessed pigs reemphasizes the self-destructive impulse caused by demon possession (Mark 5:5)...‘Sitting...dressed...in his right mind’ proved the man’s healing. ‘They were afraid’ echoes the reaction of the disciples in 4:41. Ironically, the people were more afraid of the One who cast out demons than they were of the demoniac.”<sup>6</sup>

—Ross H. McLaren,  
*HCSB Study Bible*

## Further Commentary

“The Greek verb *daimonizomai* comes from the noun *daimonion*, meaning ‘demon,’ or ‘evil spirit.’ The verb literally means to ‘be demonized’ and refers to the activities of *demons* in harassing, oppressing, and even *possessing* people. Though possession is not always in view when the NT mentions demonic activity, this is the case in Mark 5 where a man is described with a ‘Legion’ of demons that Jesus cast into a herd of pigs. The loss of 2,000 pigs implies an incredibly high *demon possession* that explains the man’s bizarre behavior and astounding strength. The word *daimonion* was used in the ancient world to refer to pagan gods and lesser deities (such as stars), but the NT reveals that they are actually Satan’s followers. The verb is used only in the Gospels to demonstrate both the reality of the unseen world of spirit beings and Jesus’ absolute power over demons, regardless of the evil they cause.”<sup>7</sup>

—Ross H. McLaren,  
*HCSB Study Bible*

## Voices from Church History

“The helpfulness of Jesus is strikingly contrasted with the heartlessness of demons and men.”<sup>8</sup>

—William Hendriksen  
(1911-1982)

The Bible says that “even the demons believe [that God is one]—and they shudder” (Jas. 2:19). Thus, we know that evil spirits believe in the power of God and know that they are under His authority and are only permitted to do what He allows.

While we don’t often see today the same kind of demonic possession witnessed in the New Testament, we still believe that Satan opposes our mission in every way He can—including through demon possession. Because evil stems from the heart (Mark 7:20-23), we should take care not to give too much credit to demonic work, but neither should we rule out demonic influence in all circumstances.

When addressing this issue in the Bible, often the question arises: If demon possession still takes place today, am I as a Christian susceptible to demon possession? Those who find their identity in Christ have been adopted into the family of God and sealed with the promised Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:3-14). As a result, as John wrote in his first epistle, “the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Demonic spirits have no hope of ever possessing a person who is already possessed by an even greater Spirit—the Spirit of Christ.

The Bible also clearly delineates the difference, however, between demonic *possession* and demonic *oppression*. While a believer cannot be controlled by a demon to the point that they are unable to obey God, we are still encouraged to resist the Devil because our “adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour” (1 Pet. 5:8; cf. Jas. 4:7).

From time to time, believers can be susceptible to demonic oppression (cf. Luke 13:16). By this I mean that there are seasons of heightened spiritual attack that challenge our faith in God. These seasons are often characterized by a lack of faith in the truth revealed to us in God’s Word. The key to fighting this spiritual battle is to expose the lies of the enemy to the truth of God and by faith believe and act on the truth.



In your spiritual journey of following Jesus, what have you found helpful in resisting the schemes of the Devil?

The man in Mark 5 wasn’t merely a maniac but a demoniac. He was possessed by devilish, demonic spirits—a legion of them, in fact. But by the power and authority of His word, Jesus delivered this man from all the torment and destructive behavior that once characterized his life. Therefore, we learn this powerful truth: The power of Jesus Christ changes lives.

There are a few things to notice about this change. First, it was radical. The text says that the man was “sitting there, dressed and in his right mind” (Mark 5:15). His life had completely changed when he met Jesus. He did a complete 180-degree turn. What once marked his life—demonic possession, hostility, and rage—was all gone, and his life was completely different because of Jesus.

When a person realizes his or her inadequacy apart from Christ and then repents and trusts in Christ, that person is given new life in Christ that is remarkably different than the old life. That doesn’t mean that past struggles or even consequences of past sins go away. But a new heart changes the way a person thinks and behaves.

Second, this change was evident to others. When you and I gave our lives to Christ, something changed inside us. This change inside of us also changes us on the outside. What Christ has done on the inside of my life begins to spill out of my life on the outside. And when it does, people notice. When fellow believers begin to see our walk with Jesus change the way we live, they rejoice!

However, as in the case of this miracle, change is not always met with the “hallelujah chorus.” Jesus forever changed this man’s life, immediately apparent in the former demoniac’s decent appearance and calm disposition, but many around him completely missed it, choosing instead to be afraid rather than wowed.

I have heard many stories of Jesus’ followers experiencing similar opposition because they gave their lives to Christ. Sometimes people no longer want to associate with the believer. Sometimes the believer experiences hostility. Maybe you have experienced that yourself. If so, you are not alone. Christians are slowly becoming the minority in Western culture, an increasingly unfriendly culture to those of the Christian faith. This fact, however, shouldn’t cause us to retreat. Rather, let us be resolved to take the gospel to hard places so that God may get the glory.

<p>What are some radical changes you’ve seen in the lives of people who trust in Christ?</p>	<p>What changes would you point to in your own life since you became a follower of Jesus?</p>

## Voices from Church History

“The devil’s legion would not have had power over the heard of swine unless they had gotten it from God. Thus they are far from having power over the sheep of God. Even the bristles of the swine were counted by God, just as were the hairs of the heads of the just. The devil, it must be admitted, seems to have power—in this case really his own—over those who do not belong to God... But the devil has no power over those who belong to the household of God, and cannot treat them as if they were his own.”<sup>9</sup>

—Tertullian (circa 160-225)

## 99 Essential Christian Doctrines

### 33. Demons

Demons are angelic beings who sinned against God and now continually work evil in the world today (Job 1:6; Zech. 3:1; Luke 10:18). Demons oppose God and seek to destroy His work, as seen in the Bible’s description of Satan, the head of demons, who seeks to “steal, kill, and destroy.” Though demons have power, they are limited by God’s control and can only act within the constraints of what God permits. In the end, all of the demons will be cast into the lake of fire, for which it was originally created.

## Further Commentary

“The story concludes with the former demoniac asking to be ‘with him.’ The request is worded in the vocabulary of discipleship of 3:14, indicating his wish to join Jesus. Jesus forbids him, however, probably because a Gentile would have been a stumbling block in his mission to Israel (Matt. 10:5-6). The mission and call of Jesus are owing to his will alone. Curiously, however, Jesus does not swear the man to silence as he has heretofore. It may be supposed that the command to silence is unnecessary in Gentile territory where there is no fear of false messianic expectations...‘Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you,’ Jesus commands. Their banishment of Jesus does not rid them of Jesus, for Jesus is present in the message of the gospel proclaimed by his followers...In the Gospel of Mark, the healed demoniac becomes the first missionary-preacher sent out by Jesus. Remarkably, he is a Gentile sent to Gentiles.”<sup>10</sup>

—James R. Edwards

### 3. Jesus called the man to testify to God’s goodness toward him (Mark 5:18-20).

When Jesus delivered this man, He had a much bigger plan for the man’s life than for him just to live out the rest of his days in peace. This man was commanded to testify to the goodness of God that he had experienced firsthand. Here we learn that the gospel that saves is the gospel that sends. When God redeems you, He gives you a mandate and a mission.

*<sup>18</sup> As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged him earnestly that he might remain with him. <sup>19</sup> Jesus did not let him but told him, “Go home to your own people, and report to them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you.” <sup>20</sup> So he went out and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and they were all amazed.*

All followers of Christ have a mandate—to tell those who don’t know God about what He has done for them. Jesus said, “Go home to your own people, and report to them.” Therein lies the power of a personal testimony. While God does use seminary-trained preachers who proclaim the Word of God to see people come to faith in Christ, the Great Commission is not reserved for preachers alone. Rather, the Great Commission is for all Christians to take the good news of Jesus to new people and places.

With access restricted for pastors and ministry professionals in many countries around the world, it is even more imperative today that we heed Scripture and unleash people like teachers, businessmen, medical professionals, and construction workers. When all disciples of Jesus grab hold of the mandate—to report what God has done—the mission of God is advanced to unreached peoples and places in powerful ways (Rom. 15:20-21). Is your “yes” on the table?

As Jesus followers, we have a mission. This mission is local, but at the same time it is also global. Jesus wanted this man to share what the Lord had done for him at home but also throughout the cities of the Decapolis, which was a conglomeration of cities largely under Greek influence. So this former demoniac did just that, going about the region telling people about Jesus had done in His life by showing him mercy and freeing him from his demonic possession.

Isn't it amazing that God invites us into His mission of seeing His kingdom expand to the ends of the earth? God doesn't need us, but He invites us to share in accomplishing His global mission. Each member of His body has certain jobs, skills, and passions that He desires to be used as platforms to engage the culture and the world with the gospel of Christ.

- ❓ How might God want to use you, based on your unique wiring as a Jesus follower, to accomplish the mission locally and globally?
- ❓ How are you engaging right now in spreading the gospel in your community, city, and among the nations?

## Conclusion

Deliverance from sin always—eventually—leads to a deployment into mission. Jesus calls us to leave the wrappings of sin to pursue the worship of Him among people who don't know God at all. Through our own salvation, we come to realize that forgiveness leads to freedom. And freedom leads disciples of Jesus to go to the ends of the earth so that all people may know and fear Him. The reason why we can fearlessly forge ahead in the mission is because He has sovereign power and authority over all things, including evil spirits. God's sovereignty doesn't negate our going—it empowers it!

**CHRIST CONNECTION:** In this account we see Jesus' compassion for those held captive to the Evil One as well as His confrontation with the dehumanizing powers of evil. With one word, Jesus delivered the demon-possessed man. This account points forward to the end of the Gospels when Jesus would give His life on the cross, appearing for a time to have lost His battle against evil only to rise triumphantly, having defeated sin, Satan, and the grave forever.

## Voices from the Church

“‘Tell them how much the Lord has done for you,’ commands Jesus. The man then went out and told ‘how much Jesus had done for him.’ For this man, the Lord and Jesus are one and the same.”<sup>11</sup>

—James R. Edwards

## Additional Resources

# The Gadarene Demoniac

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11. *Ibid.*
12. Adapted from “5 Keys to Becoming a More Caring Group,” by Mark Howell, *Bible Studies for Life* blog [online], 12 April 2013 [cited 14 September 2015]. Available from the Internet: [blog.lifeway.com/biblestudiesforlife](http://blog.lifeway.com/biblestudiesforlife).



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## Study Material

- “Evil Angels”—Pages 257-260 by Peter R. Schemm Jr. in *A Theology for the Church*, edited by Daniel L. Akin
- “A Collision of Worlds: Evil Spirits Then and Now”—Article by Clinton E. Arnold; find a link to this article at [GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources](http://GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources)
- Previous *Biblical Illustrator* articles, including “What Was the Decapolis?” can be purchased, along with other articles for this quarter, at [LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator](http://LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator). Look for Bundles: The Gospel Project.

## Sermon Podcast

Kent Hughes: “Lord of the Spirits”

Find a link to this at [GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources](http://GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources)

## Tip of the Week

### Four Keys to Becoming a More Caring Group

How deeply do your group members care for and support each other? Developing a caring group is countercultural in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but it must happen! Here are four keys to becoming a more caring group:

1. **Caring for each other is modeled by leaders.** Are you modeling a genuine caring attitude?
2. **Healthy transparency and vulnerability is modeled by leaders.** If you want your group members to be open about their needs, you’ll often have to go first.
3. **Establish commitments, values, and expectations using a small group agreement.** Remember, genuine caring is countercultural and not on the radar of many group members.
4. **Make heroes out of group members who go out of their way to be caring.**<sup>12</sup>

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**Eric Geiger**  
Vice President, LifeWay Resources

**Ed Stetzer**  
General Editor

**Trevin Wax**  
Managing Editor

**Daniel Davis**  
Content Editor

**Josh Hayes**  
Content and Production Editor

**Ken Braddy**  
Manager, Adult Ongoing Bible Studies

**Michael Kelley**  
Director, Groups Ministry

**Send questions/comments to:**  
Managing Editor,  
*The Gospel Project: Adult Leader Guide*,  
One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0102;  
or make comments on the Web at  
[www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com).

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**Unit 1:**



**Ed Stetzer** (sessions 1-2) holds the Billy Graham Distinguished Chair of Church, Mission, and Evangelism and is the Executive Director of the Billy Graham Center for Evangelism at Wheaton College. He serves as the general editor for *The Gospel Project* and is the author of numerous books, including *Transformational Groups* and *Compelled*.



**Trevin Wax** (sessions 3-6) is managing editor for *The Gospel Project* and author of several books, including *Gospel-Centered Teaching* and *This Is Our Time: Everyday Myths in Light of the Gospel*. He has served in pastoral roles in churches in the United States and Romania. He and his wife, Corina, have three children.



**Unit 2:**

**Leslie Hudson** (sessions 7-8) is living her life calling to let others know the full riches of Jesus Christ (Col. 2:2-3) by teaching, speaking, and writing about God's Word and its power. She and her husband, David, live with their children in White Bluff, Tennessee, where she works with Youth and Women's ministries at First Baptist Church, Dickson.



**D. A. Horton** (sessions 9-10) currently serves as a pastor at Reach Fellowship, a church plant in North Long Beach, California, and as the Chief Evangelist for UYWI. He is also working toward his PhD in Applied Theology at Southeastern Seminary. He and his wife, Elicia, have three children, Izabelle, Lola, and Damon Jr (aka Duce).



**Vance Pitman** (sessions 11-13) is senior pastor of Hope Church in Las Vegas, Nevada. He also serves with the North American Mission Board as a national mobilizer, engaging and mobilizing pastors to plant more churches. He and his wife, Kristie, have four children and one son-in-law. Fellow pastors **Jordan Smith** and **Tom McCormick** assisted in writing these sessions.