

LESSON FOUR

TITLE The Sovereign Power of the
Servant **SCRIPTURE** Mark 4:35-5:43

MEMORY VERSE

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45)

MAIN IDEA OF TEXT

King Jesus has power and control over the natural and supernatural world.

BEGIN this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of his Word, and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your study.

1 GRAB THEIR ATTENTION

TEACHER TIP

Start your lesson by telling a story that relates to the main idea of the lesson to grab the attention of your participants. In this section, we have provided you with two options, but feel free to develop your own.

OPTION 1: "BE STILL MY SOUL (IN YOU I REST)" BY KARI JOBE

The hymn "Be Still My Soul" was written in 1752 by German hymn writer Katharina Amalia Dorothea von Schlegel and later translated into English in 1855 by Jane Laurie Borthwick. The hymn's lyrics call the listener to find God's comfort and stillness in the midst of life's griefs, storms, and uncertainty.

Let's listen to a modern version of the hymn sung by Kari Jobe and pay close attention to the lyrics and how they implore us to find rest in the Lord for our souls.

*Be still, my soul, the Lord is on thy side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain.
Leave to thy God to order and provide;
In every change, He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul, thy best, thy heavenly friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.*

*Be still, my soul, thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as He has the past.
Thy hope, thy confidence, let nothing shake;
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul, the waves and winds still know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below*

*In You I rest, in You I found my hope;
In You I trust, You never let me go.
I place my life within Your hands alone;
Be still, my soul.*

*Be still, my soul, the hour is hastening on
When we shall be forever with the Lord;
When disappointed grief and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul, when change and tears are past
All safe and blessed, we shall meet at last*

*In You I rest, in You I found my hope;
In You I trust, You never let me go.
I place my life within Your hands alone;
Be still, my soul
In You I rest, in You I found my hope;
In You I trust, You never let me go.
I place my life within Your hands alone;
Be still, my soul;
Be still, my soul;
Be still, my soul.*

(Play the lyric video version of the song: <https://www.youtube.com/>)

watch?v=mq59iE3MhXM)

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *Which of the hymn's lyrics did you most resonate with? Explain why.*
2. *How have you recently found rest for your soul in Jesus?*
3. *What are things that can keep us from finding our rest in Jesus?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text: Perhaps the most powerful lyric of this highly revered hymn is “Be still, my soul, the waves and winds still know,” which reminds us that Jesus continues to sovereignly rule over his creation and our lives. We can find comfort and rest in Jesus because he reigns over all; and there is no place on this earth where he cannot say, “That’s mine.”

This week we are going to look at different stories in Mark’s gospel that show the supreme power and control of Jesus over the natural and supernatural world. We will also discuss the fact that, instead of living to be king over our little kingdom, there is a better way to live—in God’s kingdom under the control and rule of King Jesus.

OPTION 2: THE TRUMAN SHOW

Since his birth, Truman Burbank has been living a lie but not knowingly. Truman is unaware that he is the star of a television show and that everything in his life is a production, from the cast of characters acting as his family, friends, and neighbors to the tightly controlled community he has grown up in. Thousands of hidden cameras give the show’s audience a window into the life of Truman, who is oblivious to the fact that the perfectly manicured and controlled town he lives in is actually a state-of-the-art set run by the show’s producer, Christof, a seemingly all-powerful figure in Truman’s life.

Let’s watch a scene from this 1998 film when Truman begins to realize that things are not as they seem in his seemingly perfect world.

(Play scene and fade out at 5:03: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikVIGjzncDs>)

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *What are the differences between a life where you feel free to choose for yourself and a life where you feel trapped and unable to choose for yourself?*
2. *What makes our understanding of the character of God important when we think about his sovereign rule over his creation? Why does it matter whether he is all-powerful or all-good?*

3. *Where have you recently seen God show his sovereign control and care over the events of your life?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text: It is not difficult to see that the film is a commentary on the relationship between God and his creation. Free will and determinism are key themes in the film and the filmmakers challenge the viewer to consider what they would prefer—a life of freedom and choice or a life that is controlled by another and one in which we have no free will to choose our fate.

Where the film veers from a Christian worldview is in its depiction of the show's God-like producer, Christof. He is not God but is simply a man who thinks he knows what is best for Truman. He believes that he loves Truman but his actions show that he is misguided, that he is actually imprisoning Truman in a make-believe world.

As believers, we know that God rules his creation in a different way. Because he is God, we believe that he is all-wise and all-powerful; and everything he says and does is guided by his truth and love. Jesus came and lived within the reality of our broken and imperfect world to set us free from the prison that sin put us in.

This week we are going to look at different stories in Mark's gospel that show the supreme power and control of Jesus over the natural and supernatural world. We will also discuss the truth that, instead of living to be king over our little kingdom, there's a better way to live—in God's kingdom under the control and rule of King Jesus.

2

SET THE STAGE

TEACHER TIP

In this section, you will find the historical, cultural, and literary context you need to properly interpret and apply the text.

OUTLINE

1. Jesus Displays Sovereign Power Over the Natural World (4:35–41)
 - A. Jesus's disciples encounter a storm at sea (vv. 35–38)
 - B. Jesus calms the storm (vv. 39–40)
 - C. The disciples are amazed by Jesus's power (v. 41)

2. Jesus Displays Sovereign Power Over the Supernatural World (5:1–20)
 - A. Description of the man possessed by an impure spirit who comes to Jesus (vv. 1–5)
 - B. Jesus interacts with the spirit possessing the man (vv. 6–10)
 - C. Jesus gives permission for the spirit to be transferred to a herd of pigs (vv. 11–13)
 - D. Those tending the pigs and townspeople are afraid of Jesus and his power (vv. 14–17)
 - E. Jesus commands the man healed of the impure spirit to testify to what had been done to him (vv. 18–20)

3. Jesus Displays Sovereign Power Over Death and Disease (5:21–43)
 - A. Jairus pleads with Jesus to come and heal his daughter who is dying (vv. 21–24)
 - B. A woman with a blood disorder is freed from her suffering by touching Jesus (vv. 25–29)
 - C. Jesus commends the woman who touched him for her faith (vv. 30–34)
 - D. Jesus goes to Jairus's home to bring his daughter back from the dead (vv. 35–40)
 - E. Jesus resurrects Jairus's daughter (vv. 41–43)

CONTEXT

Jesus appoints his twelve disciples for ministry, teaches about the nature of God's kingdom, and explains through parables what it means to follow him as a disciple. Already we have seen Jesus display great wisdom through the parables he taught others about God's kingdom. He had grown in popularity and had gained a large following. Word was getting around about this amazing man who is doing and saying things only God can do or say. Many come to Jesus for healing and restoration while others (the Pharisees) plot against him because he poses a threat to their power and rule.

FALLEN CONDITION FOCUS

We want to be sovereign over our lives. We want to control our lives and circumstances and will go to great lengths to try and maintain control.

GOSPEL RESPONSE

As the true king, Jesus is in sovereign control over all creation; and through faith, we can access his power to experience healing and new life.

TEACHER TIP

In this section, you will find exercises you can use to lead your class through the process of Observation, Interpretation, and Application. As the teacher, work through all the exercises below to ensure you gain a good understanding of the text.

In this section of Mark's gospel we see Jesus's sovereign power over the natural and supernatural world. We see that the winds and waves obey his command and cease when he says so. We see that demons are subject to his rule and command. We also see that even death and disease are under his sovereign control. All of this points the reader to the truth that Jesus is the true king who controls the domain of his kingdom which is all creation.

As we dive into this week's passage, let's focus on two aspects of Jesus that Mark draws out through these stories:

1. The *power* of Jesus
2. The *compassion* of Jesus.

With every encounter in every story this week, we see Jesus show great power along with compassion for those who are afraid and suffering. His displays of power to calm the violent storms, to heal, to free from oppression, and even to resurrect the dead are meant to point us to who Jesus truly is as God's Servant, sent on a mission to reverse the effects of sin in a broken world filled with chaos, evil, death, and disease.

35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

5 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. 2 When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. 3 This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. 4 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. 5 Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. 7 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!" 8 For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!"

9 Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." 10 And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

11 A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. 12 The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." 13 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.

14 Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. 15 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. 16 Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. 17 Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

18 As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. 19 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." 20 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.

21 When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. 22 Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. 23 He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." 24 So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. 25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26 She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." 29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

30 At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

31 "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

32 But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. 33 Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. 34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

35 While He was still speaking, people *came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, "Your daughter has died; why bother the Teacher further?" 36 But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, *said to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid, only [a]believe." 37 And He allowed no one to accompany Him except Peter, [b]James, and John the brother of [c]James.

38 They *came to the house of the synagogue official, and He *saw a commotion, and people loudly weeping and wailing. 39 And after entering, He *said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child has not died, but is asleep." 40 And they began laughing at Him. But putting them all outside, He *took along the child's father and mother and His own companions, and *entered the room where the child was in bed.

41 And taking the child by the hand, He *said to her, "Talitha, kum!" (which translated means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). 42 And immediately the girl got up and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely astonished. 43 And He gave them strict orders that no one was to know about this, and He told them to have something given her to eat.

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 1: FOLLOWING THE PLOT

Read the passage again and write down who are the main characters and what key actions move the plot of the story forward. Look for repetitions in plot with each miracle.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 2: UNDERLINE THE VERBS

As we travel further in Mark's gospel we see Jesus in action, especially in this week's passage. Read through the passage three times. On the third reading, circle the verbs and note who or what they are associated with.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 3: IDENTIFYING KEY THEMES

Read the passage and write down as single words or short phrases what you think are the key themes. Remember that identifying key themes will help you develop a good overall grasp of the passage.

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 1: FROM PLOT TO EMPHASIS

Based on your reading of the passage, what do you think is the author's emphasis in these stories of Jesus displaying his power over the natural and supernatural world?

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 2: FROM VERBS TO ACTIONS

What do the verbs associated with Jesus reveal about who he is and what he is capable of doing?

Why does this type of authority matter when we talk about who Jesus is?

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 3: AMPLIFY THE KEY THEMES

Refer back to what you wrote down as key themes in the passage.

What do these key themes reveal about Jesus as the Son of God and God's Servant?

How does the theme develop with each miracle?

TEACHER TIP

In this section, you will find questions to choose from that will help your group consider how God is calling them to respond to the text. Help your group set measurable action steps.

APPLICATION: HOW DO I RESPOND?

QUESTION 1: Where in your life do you find it difficult to give up control? What makes it difficult for you to relinquish control to God? What might you gain by giving up control to God?

QUESTION 2: Throughout this week's passage, Jesus shows us that he is in complete control over his creation. How would you live differently if you believed that everything you encounter in life is within the domain of King Jesus?

QUESTION 3: Where do you want to experience more of Jesus's power to heal and give new life? Share and take a moment to pray for Jesus to show his power and compassion in your life (or in the life of someone else).

QUESTION 4: Read Romans 8:28-32. What does this passage say about God's sovereign control over your life? What does it reveal about the purposes of God for you? How might this passage give you comfort and hope in whatever difficult trial or suffering you are facing currently?

QUESTION 5: What is one practical thing you can start doing to give up control to Jesus this week?

4

CHALLENGE

TEACHER TIP

End your time of study with one final challenge and prayer. Your final challenge should pull together everything you covered in this lesson and call your participants to action.

Sin makes us want to be king over our little kingdom. We strive to rule and control our everyday lives, believing that we have the power to maintain order and keep the storms of life at bay. However, that is not the way that life works. Sooner or later we find ourselves in the middle of one of life's storms, and we are reminded that our control over our lives is elusive at most.

Jesus offers us an alternative way, a better way—life in his kingdom under his sovereign control and rule. He continues to rule over his creation—both the natural and supernatural world—with complete power. There is nothing that happens in our lives that would cause Jesus to say, “Oh, my! That was unexpected!” or “How am I going to get out of this mess?” No, everything we encounter in this life is within the domain of King Jesus and his rule.

Through faith we can access Jesus's power to experience healing and new life. Yes, we will continue to be reminded that this world is not as it will one day be, free of all the effects of sin like suffering, death, and disease. That is because we live between the now and the not yet. In this in-between place, we can have faith that Jesus continues to rule as our sovereign king, be the peace in our storm, heal the sick, restore what's been broken, liberate the captive, and bring new life out of death.

LET'S PRAY

COMMENTARY

MARK 4:35-37

John D. Grassmick sets the stage for Jesus's miraculous calming of the storm in his commentary in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* by giving us background information on the characters and setting of the story.

The vivid details indicate that Mark recorded an eyewitness report, probably from Peter. On the **evening of that day** of teaching by the lake (cf. v. 1), Jesus took the initiative and decided to cross over **to the other** (east) **side** of the Sea of Galilee with **His 12 disciples**. Though not stated, He probably desired relief from the crowds and rest. Perhaps also He sought a new sphere of ministry (cf. 1:38). Even so, **other boats**, carrying those who wanted to remain with Jesus, tagged along.

His disciples, several of them experienced fishermen, took charge of the voyage. The words, **just as He was**, refer back to 4:1 and link Jesus' teaching in a boat with His miracle-work in a boat (cf. the disciples' address, "Teacher," v. 38).

The journey was interrupted by a sudden **furious squall**, common on this lake, surrounded by high hills and narrow valleys that functioned as wind tunnels. A storm in the evening was especially dangerous, and on this occasion the boisterous **waves broke over** (lit., "kept spilling over into") **the boat so that it was nearly swamped**.

MARK 4:38

Some find it peculiar that Jesus was asleep during a raging storm at sea. However, James A. Brooks, in his commentary in the *New American Commentary* helps the reader see that his sleeping gives us insight into the character and nature of Jesus.

Not a few have compared the sleeping of Jesus and Jonah. It is, however, a mere coincidence and in no way implies that the story is modeled upon that of Jonah or a passage in Psalms, such as 89:9; 106:9; or 107:23-25. Jesus' sleeping does suggest confidence in God (cf. Ps 3:5; 4:8; Prov 3:24). Furthermore Jesus' sleeping is one of many indications in Mark of his humanity. The disciples' question strongly rebukes Jesus and is another example of Mark's candor, which Matt 8:25 and Luke 8:24 tone down. Note Moffatt's rendering: "Teacher, are we to drown, for all you care?" The verse contains the first of twelve times Jesus is addressed or described as "Teacher" (also 5:35; 9:17, 38; 10:17, 20, 35; 12:14, 19, 32; 13:1; 14:14). The similar term "Rabbi" is used in 9:5 (10:51, "Rabboni" in Greek, but not the NIV); 11:21; 14:45. The verb "to teach" is used with reference to Jesus fifteen times (see the references in the comments on 1:21). Obviously Mark emphasized that Jesus was an authoritative teacher. Even so, it is doubtful that "Teacher" should be treated as a Christological title in the same way that "Son of God" or "Son of Man" are.

MARK 5:1-10

The story of Jesus restoring a demon-possessed man is certainly strange, especially the fact that Jesus gave permission to the demons to enter a herd of pigs. Walter W. Wessel and Mark L. Strauss, in their commentary in the *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, provide clarity to the passage to help the reader understand the particular details Mark mentions in his account.

“Across the lake” means on the eastern side. That the population of this region was largely Gentile is shown by the name Decapolis (see comments at v. 20) and the presence of a large herd of pigs—animals considered unclean by Jews and therefore unfit to eat (Lev 11:7-8). The theme of spiritual impurity or uncleanness runs through the narrative. The man is possessed by “unclean” (akathartos, GK 176) spirits; he is living among tombs (unclean by virtue of the corpses); the demons are sent into unclean animals, which are destroyed. Through Jesus, the kingdom of God is invading and purifying the defiled realm of Satan.

The name of the place where the miracle was performed is disputed. The correct reading in Mark is the “region of the Gerasenes” (so NIV). The textual variants (see Notes) arose because Gerasa, located about thirty miles southeast of the lake, seemed too far removed. However, Mark says the “region” of the Gerasenes, which apparently included the entire district extending down from the city to the lake. Another possibility is that Gerasa is to be identified with the ruins of Kersa (Koursi), a village on the eastern shore. Not far from this site is a cliff within forty meters of the shore and some old tombs.

From this verse it would appear that Jesus, on stepping out of the boat, was immediately confronted by the possessed man. Verse 6 clarifies the situation. The man actually saw Jesus from a distance and came running to him. Since it was already evening (cf. 4:35) when they started across the lake, by the time they reached the other side it was probably dark.

The possessed man lived in the tombs. Often in Palestine people were buried in natural caves or in tombs cut out of the limestone rock. These enclosures provided good shelter for anyone desiring to live in them. It was a natural place for a possessed man to dwell, for popular belief held that tombs were the favorite haunts of demons. This wretched man had probably been driven from ordinary society into the tombs.

Typical of his vivid style of storytelling is Mark's detailed description of the man's condition (vv. 3b-5; cf. Lk 8:29). Efforts had been made to control the demoniac, but without success. Although bound “hand and foot,” he had broken the chains; and no one was strong enough to subdue him. He would wander about at night while crying out and cutting himself. Solitary and self-destructive behavior was often associated with demon-possession. The Jerusalem Talmud describes people who go out alone at night as sleeping in graveyards, ripping their clothes, and losing what is given to them (y. Ter. 1:1 [40b]).

The NIV correctly translates *prosekyn sen aut* as “fell on his knees in front of him” rather than as “worshiped” (KJV). The act was one of submission rather than worship. The possessed man shows respect because he recognizes that he is confronted with one greatly superior to him.

The demon addresses Jesus by shouting “at the top of his voice.” The NIV's “What do you want with me?” captures the sense of the Greek idiom, “What to me and to you?” (see comments at 1:23-24). This exasperated outburst is the equivalent of “Why are you bothering me! Leave me alone!” The

demoniac recognizes that he is in the presence of the One who threatens his very existence.

In addressing Jesus the man uses Jesus' personal name. As at 1:24, this recognition reveals the profound spiritual and eschatological significance of Jesus' ministry. While human beings—even his own disciples (4:41)—puzzle at his identity, the demons know exactly who he is: the mighty “Son of the Most High God,” who has come to destroy them! As noted earlier (see comments at 1:24), in the ancient world identifying a spirit being by name was considered a way of gaining control over it, so the demons may be trying to exert spiritual influence over Jesus. That the demons are seeking to gain some control is evident from the oath in the next phrase. The NIV's imperative “Swear to God ...” misses the Greek idiom, where it is the demon who swears by God's name (*orkizō se ton theon*; cf. TNIV, “In God's name don't torture me!”). The tormentor now changes his role; he pleads exemption from torment. This may be a reference to eschatological punishment (cf. 1:24: “Have you come to destroy us?”). The kingdom of God means the ultimate defeat of Satan and his minions. Matthew adds “before the appointed time” (8:29), which captures the sense that Jesus has authority in the present to pronounce eschatological judgment against the demons.

Verse 8 is a narrative aside, an explanation by Mark to make clear why the man was acting so excitedly. Jesus had ordered the demon to come out of the man. With v. 8 understood in this way, there is no need to follow the suggestion of some commentators that v. 8 originally preceded v. 7.

To Jesus' demand for his name, the demoniac replies, “Legion.” A Roman legion consisted of over six thousand men, but the explanation “for we are many” indicates that the reference is meant to be general rather than specific. The man has been overwhelmed not just by one demon but actually by a great host of demons. Whatever the number, it will be enough to panic two thousand pigs (v. 13). Whether any other significance attaches to the name “Legion” is uncertain. The demons' giving it may be their futile attempt to avoid providing a true name and so succumbing to Jesus' power. Or it may intend to sound threatening by pointing to a large demonic presence (cf. Lane, 185). The latter possibility is less likely considering the possessed man's consistent attitude of submission toward Jesus (vv. 6–7, 10).

Some commentators, noting the military language here and elsewhere in the episode, have suggested that Mark is here weaving a political allegory concerning Jesus' mission to liberate Palestine from Roman military occupation (so Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 190–94; Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 255–56). This explanation seems unlikely, however, especially since the episode takes place in Gentile rather than Jewish territory.

Both the singular and the plural occur here—“He begged ... not to send them”—probably in an attempt by Mark to indicate that the multitude of demons are speaking through the lips of the demoniac. What they request is that they not be sent out of the “area” or “region” (*chōra*). The exact meaning of their plea is uncertain. It could simply mean they do not want to wander aimlessly on the earth (cf. Mt 12:43–45; Lk 11:24–26). Or it may reflect the popular conception that demons are assigned to particular localities (cf. Hooker, 145). In Luke (8:31) the request is that they not be sent into the Abyss, the place of confinement before judgment (Rev 20:1–3). The requests in Mark and Luke may carry the same meaning; for to be sent out of their appointed region would mean confinement in the Abyss to await judgment (2 Pe 2:4; Jude 6). Another possibility is that the demons hope that even apart from their human host they will be able to maintain some of the authority they have gained in this region. This last suggestion fits well their request to enter the pigs.

MARK 5:19-20

In his commentary on Mark's gospel in the *Focus on the Bible Commentary*, Geoffrey Grogan notes the significance of the words 'Jesus' and 'Lord' and why Jesus told some to be silent about his miraculous work.

In verses 19 and 20, the use of the words 'Jesus' and 'Lord' is most interesting and significant. In his Gospel, Mark shows people addressing Jesus as 'Lord', but he does not normally use this term himself in the narrative framework he provides until after our Lord's resurrection. At this fairly early place in his narrative, however, he is giving his readers the clear hint that the great title 'Lord', with its overtones of deity, was perfectly appropriate for Jesus even before the resurrection.

The so-called 'Messianic secret' has been the focus of a good deal of scholarly interest and speculation over the years. Why did Jesus counsel silence about himself on a number of occasions? Our present passage may well be the key for our understanding of this, for the events recorded in it took place in a largely Gentile area. Among the Jews at this time there was a good deal of misunderstanding of the Messiah and his vocation. It was widely held that he would be a military figure and many hoped that he would lead an army against the hated Romans. If such a view of Jesus were to become widespread among the Jews, it could upset the programme of ministry which was God's plan for him at this stage of things, for instance by stimulating Roman antagonism to him. There was, however, little danger of such misunderstanding in Gentile country, and so the man is told to tell what had been done for him.

MARK 5:21-34

Warren W. Wiersbe, in his commentary in the *Bible Exposition Commentary*, highlights the breadth of Christ's love and mercy toward those who suffered.

One crowd sighed with relief as they saw Jesus leave, but another crowd was waiting to welcome Him when He returned home to Capernaum. In that latter crowd stood two people who were especially anxious to see Him—Jairus, a man with a dying daughter; and an anonymous woman suffering from an incurable disease. It was Jairus who approached Jesus first, but it was the woman who was first helped; so we shall begin with her.

The contrast between these two needy people is striking and reveals the wideness of Christ's love and mercy. Jairus was an important synagogue officer, and the woman was an anonymous "nobody"; yet Jesus welcomed and helped both of them. Jairus was about to lose a daughter who had given him twelve years of happiness (Mark 5:42), and the woman was about to lose an affliction that had brought her twelve years of sorrow. Being a synagogue officer, Jairus was no doubt wealthy; but his wealth could not save his dying daughter. The woman was already bankrupt! She had given the doctors all of her money, and yet none of them could cure her. Both Jairus and the poor woman found the answers to their needs at the feet of Jesus (Mark 5:22 and 33).

The woman had a hemorrhage that was apparently incurable and was slowly destroying her. One can only imagine the pain and emotional pressure that sapped her strength day after day. When you consider her many disappointments with the doctors and the poverty it brought her, you wonder how she endured as long as she did. But there was one added burden: according to the Law, she was ceremonially unclean, which greatly restricted both her religious and her social life (Lev. 15:19ff).

What a burden she carried!

However, she let nothing stand in her way as she pushed through the crowd and came to Jesus. She could have used any number of excuses to convince herself to stay away from Him. She might have said: "I'm not important enough to ask Jesus for help!" or "Look, He's going with Jairus, so I won't bother Him now." She could have argued that nothing else had helped her, so why try again? Or she might have concluded that it was not right to come to Jesus as a last resort, after visiting all those physicians. However, she laid aside all arguments and excuses and came by faith to Jesus.

What kind of faith did she have? It was weak, timid, and perhaps somewhat superstitious. She kept saying to herself that she had to touch His clothes in order to be healed (see Mark 3:10; 6:56). She had heard reports of others being healed by Jesus (Mark 5:27), so she made this one great attempt to get through to the Saviour. She was not disappointed: Jesus honored her faith, weak as it was, and healed her body.

There is a good lesson here for all of us. Not everybody has the same degree of faith, but Jesus responds to faith no matter how feeble it might be. When we believe, He shares His power with us and something happens in our lives. There were many others in that crowd who were close to Jesus and even pressing against Him, but they experienced no miracles. Why? Because they did not have faith. It is one thing to throng Him and quite something else to trust Him.

The woman planned to slip away and get lost in the crowd, but Jesus turned and stopped her. Tenderly, He elicited from her a wonderful testimony of what the Lord had done for her. Why did Jesus deal with her publicly? Why did He not simply permit her to remain anonymous and go her way?

For one thing, He did it for her own sake. He wanted to be to her something more than a healer: He wanted to be her Saviour and Friend as well. He wanted her to look into His face, feel His tenderness, and hear His loving words of assurance. By the time He finished speaking to her, she experienced something more than physical healing. He called her "daughter" and sent her on her way with a benediction of peace (Mark 5:34). To "be made whole" meant much more than receiving mere physical healing. Jesus had given her spiritual healing as well!

He dealt with her publicly not only for her sake, but also for the sake of Jairus. His daughter was close to death, and he needed all the encouragement he could get. It was bad enough that the crowd was impeding their progress, but now this woman had to interfere and stop Jesus! When one of Jairus' friends arrived and announced that the girl had died, no doubt Jairus felt that the end had come. The Lord's words to the woman about faith and peace must have encouraged Jairus as much as they encouraged her.

Finally, Jesus dealt with her publicly that she might have the opportunity to share her testimony and glorify the Lord. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy ... He sent His word, and healed them ... Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" (Ps. 107:2, 20-21) No doubt some people in that crowd heard her words and trusted in the Saviour; and when she arrived home, she already knew what it meant to witness for Christ.

MARK 5:25-34

In the *Holman New Testament Commentary* Rodney L. Cooper focuses on the woman Jesus healed and the faith that made her healing possible.

A woman was in the crowd that followed Jesus. Mark states that she had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. It is not clear what her bleeding was. Some suggest a uterine discharge. Others suggest that this was not a continual bleeding but excessive bleeding that had continued off and on for twelve years. She probably suffered from physical exhaustion as well and possibly pain. An even greater source of pain would have been the interruption of daily social activity because of her disease. Anyone coming in contact with her would be made ceremonially unclean (Lev. 15:25-30). She herself was unclean and would not be allowed to participate in communal feasts and sacrifices. She was just as much an outcast as the demon-possessed man had been.

Adding to the woman's physical disorder was her financial distress. For twelve years she had made the round of doctors, and none of them could help her. Many of the cures listed in the Talmud and probably tried on her—such as carrying the ashes of an ostrich egg in a cloth—would seem like superstitious magic to us. She did not get better but only grew worse.

This woman had heard about Jesus, and she acted upon what she had heard. She desired to touch his clothes, believing that this would heal her. Some interpreters believe this was an act of humility on her part—that she did not want to disturb Jesus on his mission. Some compare her to the centurion (Matt. 8:8), who asked Jesus to give the word of command so his servant would be healed. Others see this as a demonstration of the belief that a holy person's clothes carried power.

Barbieri has the right interpretation (Mark, p. 124). This woman was an outcast. Because of her condition, she would not have been allowed to approach Jesus. To talk to him would be unthinkable. So she approached him in the only way she could—secretly. And it was enough. At once, she was freed from her distress.

This question has puzzled many people. Did Jesus not know who touched him? Doesn't he know everything? Why did power go out from him when it did not go out from the apostles when they healed in the Book of Acts? There are some things that Jesus did not know, such as the day and hour of his return. Some interpreters feel that Jesus did know who touched him, but he did not want her to remain anonymous. Faith always requires confession. This would allow him to restore her to community as well.

The disciples were astounded that Jesus even asked such a question. The Lord, however, would not be deterred.

Under the ceremonial law of the Jews, this woman was considered unclean. She had made Jesus unclean by touching him. It was no wonder that she came to him trembling with fear. Like Jairus and the demon-possessed man, though, she knew her place was at his feet.

The first thing we note in this verse is that Jesus called her **daughter**, a word used only in this passage in the New Testament. He claimed the same special relationship with her that Jairus had with his little daughter—ininitely precious, unbearably sorrowful at the thought of loss. She had come to him as an outcast, fearful of rebuke because of her status. Instead, she had found not only physical healing but spiritual healing as well.

Your faith has healed you. Not magic or superstition, but faith in the person of Jesus had healed her. The word for “healed” is the same as the word for “saved,” indicating the physical and spiritual aspects of her healing. **Go in peace.** Only now could she go in peace—a bodily peace from which all traces of disease had been removed and a spiritual peace in which all hostilities with God had been removed through the work of Christ.

We learn something, as well, from what is not said in this section. Jesus did not rebuke the woman for touching him. As with the Sabbath laws, Jesus was giving the Jews a message about his kingdom. As Stock notes, “The story subtly shatters the legal purity system and its restrictive social conditioning” (Stock, *Mark*, p. 172). If Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, then he is Lord of the purity laws as well.

MARK 5:38–42

In his commentary in the *ESV Study Bible*, Hans F. Bayer gives greater depth and understanding of what was actually happening when Jesus raised Jairus’s daughter from the dead and what the response of the crowd was to his miraculous work.

The **commotion** with **weeping and wailing loudly** reflects deep grief in the face of death. However, some in the crowd are professional mourners, who were a required presence even at funerals for the poor (see note on Matt. 9:23). Amid the mourning, Jesus proclaims that **the child is not dead but sleeping**. The mocking and laughing crowd takes Jesus’ statement literally (cf. Mark 9:26), supposing that Jesus cannot accept the reality of death. The child had indeed died (see Luke 8:55), but from Jesus’ viewpoint her real death is but sleep. **put them all outside**. The unbelieving crowd would only be a distraction (see note on Mark 6:5–6), so Jesus allows only the girl’s closest family members and his closest followers to witness the miracle.

Touching a dead person renders one ceremonially unclean (Lev. 22:4; Num. 19:11), but once again (cf. note on Mark 5:25–27) Jesus overcomes uncleanness, for the girl comes back to life (cf. 2 Kings 4:17–37; Acts 9:39–41). **Talitha cumi**. At times, Mark reports Jesus’ statements in Aramaic, reinforcing the eyewitness quality of this Gospel account.

The **amazement** of those who witnessed the miracle does not necessarily indicate faith in Jesus. No doubt some believed, but others remained puzzled.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Hans F. Bayer, *Mark*, The *ESV Study Bible*.

James A. Brooks, *Mark*, The *New American Commentary*.

D.A. Carson, *Mark*, The *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*.

Rodney L. Cooper, *Mark*, *Holman New Testament Commentary*.

Donald English, *The Message of Mark*, *The Bible Speaks Today*.

Timothy Gombis, *Mark*, *The Story of God Bible Commentary*.

Geoffrey Grogan, *Mark: Good News from Jerusalem*, *Focus on the Bible Commentary*.

Grant Osborne, *Mark*, *Teach the Text Commentary Series*.

Leland Ryken, Introduction to *Mark: Literary Features*, *The ESV Study Bible*.

R.C. Sproul, *Mark*, *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version*.

Charles Swindoll, *Mark*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary.
Walter W. Wessel and Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary.
Warren W. Wiersbe, *Mark*, The Bible Exposition Commentary.