

Freedom in Life

Mark 5:1-20

Are you living freely today? It looks quite free! But is it really free? Are there areas in your life where you feel bound?

The Bible tells us that when Jesus and his disciples set out from Galilee that day, it was probably after dusk. On the way, they encountered a strong storm. After Jesus calmed the wind, they set out to cross to the other side of the lake. When they arrived at their destination, it was around midnight.

They came to the side of a mountain, which was full of caves where the dead were buried. It was a remote, quiet and deserted place. Suddenly, a man possessed by a demon jumped out of the tomb. What a dark and terrifying scene it was. There were many evil spirits living in that man, so he was called a legion. This man was chained, probably because the demons in his body were very violent and had done many evil things that were harmful to others.

This demon-possessed person has no freedom at all. His situation is extremely pitiful! He lost his freedom of movement and was locked up in chains; he lost his freedom of behavior and was completely unable to control himself. Although he was strong and powerful, he hurt himself and others; he lost his sanity and screamed madly, but no one listened to him; he lost his dignity and was naked all day long; he lost his family, was not accepted by the people, and lived in a tomb; he lost his friends and was forgotten by society; he lost his job and had no social status; he lost his happiness and gave up on himself. It can be said that he lost everything, including his life.

When Jesus got off the boat, this man immediately ran to Jesus and shouted, "What do you have to do with me, Son of the Most High God?" How did this man know that Jesus was the Son of God? Evil spirits are actually fallen angels, creatures of the spiritual world. Of course they recognized the Son of God, and they knew that the Son of God came to bring judgment to them and throw them into the lake of fire and sulfur. So the demons said to Jesus, "The time of judgment has not yet come. Why are you looking for us now? What do we have to do with you? Don't make us suffer now!"

Jesus asked them, "What is your name?" The man answered, "Legion!" This is a military term. One

legion represents six thousand soldiers, which means that six thousand evil spirits lived in this one person. No wonder this man was so strong that he could break free from the chains and no one could subdue him. The demons begged Jesus not to drive them away from that filthy place, so Jesus allowed them to possess the pigs. Then, two thousand pigs, becoming crazy, jumped off the cliff and drowned in the sea.

This person was released and regained his freedom, which should be a great thing. Everyone who saw it should be very excited and happy. But when the people of the city learned about this, instead of rejoicing over the man who was freed, they were afraid and asked Jesus to leave their area. Why didn't these people welcome Jesus? Why did they reject Jesus from the bottom of their hearts?

In reality, they were bound by invisible chains. They were not people with freedom. Although they had freedom of movement, freedom of speech, economic freedom, jobs, families, and dressed decently, they had lost their freedom in their hearts. The demon-possessed people were set free, but another group of people who appeared to be free were bound by invisible chains.

Like this group of people, we are often bound by invisible chains. Many times we are bound by many things without realizing it, some from the world and some from ourselves. These invisible chains that bind us can be classified into three categories.

1. Wrong values

Because of their wrong values, the people of Gerasene valued pigs more than humans. They valued the economic value of pigs more than the spiritual freedom of humans. Because they valued money, their whole hearts were bound by money and worldly possessions. It should be a happy thing for a person to be healed. But those people asked Jesus to leave because they were afraid that their lives would be affected.

How can the life of a pig be compared with the soul of a man? In God's eyes, nothing is more valuable than a person's soul. Do we think material life is important? Or is the human soul more important? Would we rather lose the heavenly glory than lose the narrow temporary enjoyment of the present? Will we reject God's desire to change our lives?

John Rockefeller, the richest man in the United States in the 19th century, fell seriously ill at the age of 53. He was unable to get out of bed, had no appetite, his hair fell out, and he had difficulty sleeping. Having billions of dollars, but losing peace and joy, he remembered the words of his Sunday school teacher when he was a child: "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet loses his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" He repented that day and became a new creation. His health gradually recovered and his mind was freed. He donated his money to the poor, built schools, and established foundations for medical research. His wealth became a blessing to many people.

Christ can set people free. What values of yours need correcting? Which parts of your life that needs to be released?

2. Folk custom and pagan taboos

Secondly, many people live in traditional cultural ideas, or are bound by folk beliefs and controlled by pagan customs.

Let's look at the people of Gerasene. They raised pigs. To whom did they sell them? Jews do not eat pigs, so they were naturally sold to Gentile pagans. Because they often came into contact with pagans, they adopted many of their customs and habits.

Christians in Hong Kong certainly won't go to worship Wong Tai Sin or Che Kung! But there are actually Christians who study Feng Shui, decorate their homes according to the instructions of Feng Shui masters, and wear Feng Shui jade and crystal necklaces. Our everyday language also reflects the increasingly confusion of our values. We call adultery an extramarital affair or a one-night stand, prostitution as paid-dating, prostitutes as sex workers, homosexuals as comrades, exposure as sexy, obscenity as romantic, and seductive girl as hottie. All these seemingly elegant terms dampen our sensitivity to sin. Gradually, it has become difficult for us to distinguish right from wrong.

We must uphold the truth, keep the spiritual principles in our hearts, and not compromise or agree with the customs of this world.

3. Sin and bad habits

Thirdly, some people are bound by sin, hatred, and self.

The place of Gerasene was a place full of sin, so this band of demons did not want to leave this filthy and sinful place. There were also many conflicts and hatreds between the Gentiles and the Jews in that place. The person who had been possessed by the demon must have had a life full of brokenness and bad habits, which led to the possession of this legion of demons.

Do we also have some bad habits? For example: being hot-tempered, prone to conflict with others, loving gambling, being selfish, gluttonous, stingy, lazy, addicted to smoking, drinking, and sex... Unconsciously, we are bound by these invisible chains.

We must gain true freedom in life!

Thank the Lord! Jesus can break all chains, visible or invisible. Are you willing to come to Jesus and let Him break all your chains, so that you can gain complete liberation, true freedom, and enjoy the peace and joy in Christ?