

Jesus Turns the Night Into Day

by Arno Stegen

The sermon emphasizes Jesus' power to transform lives and the importance of staying close to Him amidst life's storms and challenges.

Duration: 1:07:49

Scripture: Mark 5:1

Topics: "Miracles"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher describes the life of a lost soul who is trapped in a cycle of destructive behavior. The man is unable to control himself and engages in harmful activities that cause physical and emotional suffering. The preacher highlights how this struggle is not limited to young people, but also affects older individuals who lose control when exposed to worldly temptations like the internet and television. However, the preacher emphasizes that there is hope in Jesus Christ, who came out of love to save us from our sins. The preacher encourages listeners to turn to Jesus and find deliverance from their struggles.

Transcript

Lord Jesus says, we consider your word now and as we consider the wonders, the miracles that you have done in people's lives may it be alive to us in a new way today may it bring life to us in a way that only you can bring life so that your name will be uplifted and glorified. Amen. Unfortunately, it's quite a few verses.

I don't know whether we'll read them all, but let's start from the first verse. We find it in Mark chapter 5. It's an experience where the Lord had been busy with multitudes. He had been very busy that day.

As it is when the Lord is at work, and if you're involved in it, it can become very busy. If you're very busy in the Lord's work, it's a good sign. It's wonderful when the Lord is at work and that keeps you busy.

If you're just sitting around and you don't know what to do with yourself, maybe you should ask yourself what you're busy with. But the Lord, when He was there on the shores of the sea, and not just that day, but His whole life really, and throughout His ministry, He was very, very busy. And so were the disciples.

It was wonderful because their business was at the Lord's feet. That's where they were kept busy. Obviously, you can be busy with many other things as well, but it's not the Lord's business one is busy with.

Blessed is the one who's kept busy with the Lord's business. And then He said to those disciples, let's go to the other side of the sea. That's when the storm arose.

A terrible storm. One of the greatest challenges the disciples were to meet up with. In fact, it's one of the times in their lives where they thought this was going to be the end.

And remember how they went and they woke the Lord. And sadly, when they woke Him, what did they say to Him? They said, oh Lord, don't you care that we are perishing? It's sad when we find ourselves in a spot of trouble. Instead of going to the Lord and just seeking His help in a humble way, we actually accuse Him and go to Him and say, oh Lord, how could you allow me to get into this mess? And very often we get ourselves into that mess, but we blame the Lord for it.

In fact, there are people that go against the Lord, turn their backs on Him, because they blame Him for predicaments they've got themselves into. And they don't realize that sometimes the Lord even lets an experience like this happen, getting into a storm, not because He has anything negative, He hasn't got bad intentions, He just wants to glorify Himself through it. But we can know for sure that if the Lord leads us into the storm, He'll lead us out again, as long as we stay close to Him.

And so they went across and they got to the other side of the sea. And in verse two, when He had come out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him. And He had His dwelling among the tombs, and no one was able to bind Him anymore, even with a chain.

Because He had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by Him, and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue Him. And constantly, night and day, among the tombs and in the mountains, He was crying out and gashing Himself with stones. Let's stop reading here for now, we'll continue just now, but that's perhaps the first thought.

Or should I say the first part of the story. The picture of a lost soul. What a life.

What a picture of misery and hopelessness, helplessness. The life of someone whose life is out of control. This man could not control it.

He was doing the most terrible things. Things that were harming himself and even his body. Physically, he was suffering as a result of this life.

A true picture of what it's like in the life of a person who's being ridden, if we may use that in that way, being ridden by the devil. These unclean spirits, these demons, the devil had taken control of his life. And it's just like today where there's not just one unclean spirit, you find so many unclean spirits.

And so one often feels sorry for, especially young people, for children growing up in this time when there's so many unclean things which can defile you in body, soul and spirit. You just have to go into town and sometimes you don't even need to go there and all the literature that is lying around and the things which are seen and things which are said and stated and insinuated, you just find more and more how people's minds are unclean and defiled. You can almost go to any function which is held out there.

And sometimes it even seems to be a dignified occasion. There are very few that you go to nowadays where there's some form of defilement which comes out of it, where one just realizes how defiled people's minds are. And you need to pray and we as Christians need to pray that God will keep us in this time.

That we won't be defiled by all this uncleanness which is around us. Because it's in fact got to the point where people seem to be proud of the fact that they can be so defiled and it seems to be the honorable thing, in inverted commas because it definitely is not honorable, to be and to speak in the most defiled way as possible. In the world, the person that is great is the one who can speak the biggest lot of rubbish and the most unclean and obscene things in public.

That person is seen as the hero nowadays. There was a time when people, it was ridiculous in a way, but people said, men would say you can sway as long as it's not in the company of ladies. And some men would let it slip out now and then because it's difficult to control one's tongue and I'm still going to touch on that later on.

But today, the men sway in front of the ladies. In fact, the ladies sway themselves. And of course, they have to be equal to the men nowadays, so that's one way in which they can prove that they are now equal.

And even they are starting to try and crack wise jokes at meetings, trying to impress the others and probably impress the men in the first place. So that spirit of uncleanness, which was in this man and these demons that were riding him, didn't die when those swine went over the cliff that day. Here's a picture of a life where the person had lost control.

He was like a horse or a mule that was wild, that needed a bit and a bridle. And in fact, in this man's life, it seemed as if even that wasn't working anymore. Because there are such people where they have lost control and everyone else seems to have lost control as well.

Where it's a horse or a mule that's wild and you've got this bit and bridle, you're trying to control the horse, but it's not even possible anymore. And you even read about wild mules and wild donkeys, people that are driven also by lust. There are such people.

When they see the opposite sex, they just lose control. In fact, nowadays it's got so bad that sometimes people don't even see the opposite sex, even their own, and they can't control themselves. And more and more the governments in the world are calling these things legal.

Even in our own country. And I wonder whether we as Christians realize our responsibility when we elect a government. What will God say to us one day when we've elected a government that passes laws which are directly against his word? Won't we carry indirect responsibility? But no matter how much these things can be legalized and our courts can allow these things because of the laws that have been passed, it does not change God's standard on these subjects.

And so people are becoming more and more defiled in their ways and also by what they do and say and of course also think. And nowadays with TV and also through the internet, these things aren't just out there in the world, they even come right into our homes. Dear friend, if you've got a TV set in your home, what is it that you look at? Does it defile your mind? Why then do you look at it as a Christian? Or have you perhaps also lost control like this man has? And maybe it's not TV, but maybe you've got the internet.

The internet can be used for many good things, but the devil uses it masterfully. What is it, dear Christian, that you look at? And you find not even young people suffering under this curse, but even older people. When they look at the internet, they lose control.

And they do it to their own detriment. They hurt themselves just like this man was. And he couldn't control himself.

And people started noticing it. Because there are such people. When it gets to girls, they can't control themselves.

When they look at the internet, they can't control themselves. Or when they look at TV, with the worldly pleasures that are around them, they can't control themselves. And when people started noticing it in this man's life, they came and tried to help him.

It seems crude the way they did it, but they probably could see no other way out. They tried to tie him with shackles and with chains. But it's obvious that these people had become desperate.

Like so many parents become desperate. They see their children going down a slippery slope. The end of which is a bottomless pit, which has been prepared for the devil and his demons.

And when parents see their children sliding down that slope, they get desperate to the point where they start saying, What can I do to stop my child from doing these things? And they probably won't end up tying the child with chains and shackles because the Human Rights Commission would soon be on to the case. But how often don't you meet desperate parents who are trying their level best to curb their child's behavior in some way or the other, setting limits. If they go out to visit, be back by a certain time.

And probably to the annoyance of an irritation of their child. And one obviously often sees their child being hugely upset by these limits which are being imposed. But the parents do that out of love and out of desperation because they see where their child is heading.

The parents stop the child from going to school. The parents stop the child from going to work. The parents stop the child from going to school.

The parents stop the child from going to work. The parents stop the child from going to the cinema or to the disco or whatever parties or wherever else they want to go because of these desperate attempts to try and stop this child from doing what it's doing. They stop their children from going to the cinema but they put an internet portal into the child's bedroom and there the child can see probably worse things.

Have you parents ever considered what your children are looking at? It's frightening. It's a spirit of uncleanness. These demons are more active than I've ever known.

And then there are others whose tongue is out of control. And sadly it even applies to many Christians. The Bible speaks of this tongue a lot.

Read about it. What the Bible says about the tongue, that fire, that evil fire which sets forests alight, does tremendous damage. Sometimes one would think irreparable.

That's what one person's tongue can do. And not just grown-ups, children too. When they talk to their friends at school about defiled things, defiling other children's minds because they are defiled.

The tongue that does so much damage. In fact the Bible says it's probably the member of the body which does the most damage. One would think lust and immorality is probably the worst but the Bible says the tongue is the most dangerous.

But obviously it's because the tongue is also part of that whole program of filthiness. But maybe your tongue is more pious than that by now. Because one can have such pious talk and yet it still sets forests alight.

Can you control your tongue? The Bible says he who talks a lot sins a lot. How much do you sin? How much do you use your tongue? To further the devil's cause. Your tongue is perhaps as uncontrollable as this man was.

This man also lived among the tombs. It's another point we could talk about. That's where he felt at home.

He was spiritually dead. And so he felt himself at home among the tombs, among the dead. Where do you feel yourself at home? Last Sunday we spoke about being happy when you go to the house of the Lord.

When they said let's go to the house of the Lord I rejoiced. Is that what you sing when you go to church? But there are many who don't feel at home in church. The shorter the service the better.

And if one can miss a Sunday service it's even better. Where do you feel at home? Where does your heart and soul come to rest? Do you also sing and say oh if I could stay in the house of the Lord forevermore that would be the most wonderful thing for me. This man felt at home among the dead.

Where do you feel at home? Is it among the worldly friends that you have? Those who are also spiritually dead? Or do you have friends that are an inspiration to you? That bring life to your spirit? So it was this man hurting himself. He was a danger unto himself. And it's interesting when you see those that worship the devil how they self-destruct themselves.

They don't just hurt their spirit and their soul but even their bodies suffer as a result. Use so many classic examples we hear about them so often. There's drugs, there's alcohol and smoking are included in drugs.

Immorality, HIV, AIDS. Where we see how the devil destructs those that follow him. Destroys them spiritually, emotionally and ultimately physically too.

The devil is no good taskmaster. Like the worshipers of Baal who when they prayed to him they were cutting themselves and doing ridiculous things. That's how the devil treats his own.

And so we see here this man having lost control and no one else being able to control him. No matter what people tried. The parents, the minister, the teachers.

Everyone has tried no one seems to be able to help. And you find a person who's in this situation like we find in Romans chapter 7. You can read it at home but just a few verses in Romans 7 this miserable state of a person and even of a Christian who is in this lost state and in this miserable and desperate state. In verse 15 where he says for that which I am doing I do not understand for I am not practicing what I would like to do but I'm doing the very thing I hate.

Verse 19 for the good that I wish I do not do but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. Verse 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Verse 24 wretched man that I am who will set me free from the body of this death? See also someone who's in a miserable state.

This totally lost state. He says this body of death. He's not even among the tombs.

He himself feels as if he's in the grave already. He says I do what I don't want to do. I know what I'm doing is wrong but I can't help myself.

But then we get to this wonderful part. The very next verse there. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is what makes the difference. This is the good news when Jesus arrives on the scene. He comes for no reason that we could explain other than because of his great love for us.

There we were on the other side of the sea. He wasn't even on our side of the sea. He came from heaven.

He left the multitudes, that glorious fellowship that he had, crossed the sea through the terrible storm which the disciples thought no one would survive. The devil did his utmost and to this day does his utmost to stop the Lord Jesus getting through to us. That's one of the greatest fears the devil has.

And that is that the Lord Jesus gets through to us. That's why he builds these walls around you. That's why you resist the message of the gospel.

Because he doesn't want the Lord to get through to you. Because he knows when the Lord gets through to you, once he's over that sea and he's on your side and he's gotten through to you, he's had it. But praise God he got there.

And he left those multitudes and he came to this one man. He came to this one man. Why? For what reason? There's no other reason but because of his love.

He loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten son. And why? What a difference it makes. In verse 6, when this man saw Jesus from a distance, he ran up, he bowed down before him.

Crying out with a loud voice. And then here we hear not this man speaking but these demons in him, the devil speaking, what I have to do with you Jesus, son of the most high God. I implore you by God, do not torment me.

It's wonderful to see how the devil loses control when Jesus comes onto the scene. We so often see and get the impression as if the devil has got his act together. When we see things developing in the world, one so easily can be under the impression he's in control.

It's as if he's winning the war. And one can so easily get despondent. But when Jesus comes onto the scene, he loses control totally.

For now one far greater than himself has arrived. And he becomes like someone that is totally nervous, jittery, and he does the most ridiculous things like here. Can you imagine? This man comes and he falls at the Lord's feet and he starts speaking to him.

It's the last thing he should have done. He should have run the other way. But you just see how God overrules in a situation.

It's like so many people could testify and say, you know, I was lost. I was in the world. I was a goner.

And I don't know how, but today the Lord found me. I don't know how. I don't know what made me go there.

I don't know why I ended up at that place or that church service where the Lord got through to me. But there you just see the grace of God, how he overrules and how he gets through to a person who is in the

greatest need. In verse 8, for he had been saying to him, the Lord had been saying to him, come out of the man you unclean spirit.

Now someone had appeared on the scene who has the authority to drive out that unclean spirit. This man was helpless. Everyone else had tried and failed.

But praise God, someone came onto the scene who could drive out that unclean spirit. And he was asking him, what is your name? And the demon answered, he said, my name is legion for we are many. It's interesting here that they use this term, a legion, implying that this is a battle.

It's a military term. These are soldiers. Some people, they say it's 6,000, others say up to 12,500 soldiers, like a battalion of thousands of soldiers.

Do we realize we are in a spiritual battle? We need to fight the good fight of faith. It's not just a bed of roses. It's not always just going to be a walk in the park.

So easily we as Christians think, oh now it's going to be plain sailing and it's going to be wonderful. And the first problem we meet up with, we fail because we think the Lord is not good enough anymore. Because we just wanted to have a life of happiness and everything to be hunky-dory and everything just to go smoothly.

That's what we want. We don't want any problems. The devil doesn't want us to know that we are in a battle and how serious it is, the whole matter.

He doesn't want us to realize that we need to take a stand for our faith, even when it's difficult and maybe we have to stand all alone sometimes. He doesn't want us to take it seriously. He wants us to be under the impression that everything must just go its way, tolerant of everything and just don't go against the stream.

No, the devil knows it's a battle. He knows it's a battle, but he doesn't want us to be under that impression. But even though this was a huge battalion of demons in this man, this one man Jesus, who is not just a man but God himself, the devil was no match for him.

And suddenly these demons who were so, even at this point, were still trying to put on a show and say, we're a legion, you see, we're strong, we're lots, you know, he's just putting on a show, knowing that he's actually defeated already. The devil uses a lot of propaganda. That's full of emptiness.

It's very often. It's just a big show, a boast, and it's like people who are bullies, who are always just bullying others, and he's the biggest bully of all. And many people fall for his speech.

And we forget that we're serving an almighty God, omnipotent, given all power in heaven and on earth. We're serving the one who left the multitudes, the hosts of heaven, to come down and to seek out one lost sheep. We're serving the one who wasn't afraid to go into that region where the people didn't even want him.

Because we read later that they actually asked him to go away. Sadly, there are such people. In fact, if we read the Bible, we find out that the majority turn him away.

Many people are afraid to let Jesus come onto the scene. Because they realize it has very far-reaching consequences. These people, when they had seen what the Lord had done, how he had set this man free, one doesn't understand it.

But after experiencing such deliverance, seeing it firsthand, this man who was changed radically before their eyes, one would have thought every man in that region would have become a Christian. And woman and child. It's like today, when you see the Lord at work, you think, well, with such wonders which the Lord is doing, things he does before our eyes, one would think, well, there won't be an unsafe person left anymore.

This will change everyone's life. But like it was in this experience, so it is to this day. Jesus will come to them.

He'll leave everything else and come to you. He'll give you a chance to accept him into your life. He'll give you a chance to make everything new in your life.

He'll give you a chance to set you free from all this filthiness that has ruled your life up till now. And after such a magnificent offer, and the cherry on top is that he'll even promise you and tell you he'll give you eternal life if you accept his offer. You'll have life in full here on earth and eternal life thereafter.

But amazingly, there are people, and in fact the majority, turn down the offer. Can you imagine such a thing possible? But these people were obviously like people today who think about things. They realised when the Lord made them that offer, there was a price to pay.

And there are direct and indirect consequences, like the owners of the pigs found out. I'm just going over quickly now because of time, but just some points you can think about them at home. You can go home and read the rest.

There's a price to pay. This great offer, this deliverance, the Lord can set you free, but you also have to give up something. But sadly, there are many people even today who prefer to live with a swine than to live with the Lord Jesus Christ.

They were happy and content with the pigs around them, but they got uncomfortable with the Lord in their midst. Where do we feel comfortable? In whose company do we feel comfortable? In the Lord's presence? In his company? Or in the company of pigs, of swine? You see, when those swine, when the pigs went over the cliff, many people on that day, when they saw them going over there, they didn't see the demons going down the cliff and ending up in the sea. They saw dollars going over the cliff.

Many people turn away the Lord today because of dollars, rands and cents. And it's true, when you accept the Lord, it has an impact on your whole life. Even on the way you direct your financial affairs, it does have an impact.

Because with him in your life, your priorities change. Suddenly your ambitions in life and the way you plan and everything, no longer are your own plans first, but suddenly you say, Lord, what do you want me to do? What is on your eternal plan? See, so it impacts on your life very, very closely. So when he arrives on the scene, the Lord, in the first place it impacts on your spiritual life.

My, what a difference it makes when he comes into your life. So there's a spiritual impact. But then there's also a personal impact it has.

As I've said, your priorities change. So it may impact very directly on your future plans and your new ambitions. And so there are financial consequences as well sometimes.

In fact, I think it will always impact on it because he becomes the managing director of your financial affairs. And you're no longer the boss of what you have. And it has social consequences too.

It impacts on the way you interact with other people. So there are many things that happen when Jesus arrives. Wonderful things.

Things that are to your own benefit. But many people are not prepared to pay the price. They say, Lord, thanks, but no thanks.

It's nice of you to have come over to the side of the sea. But we've seen how much things are left to change here. And just the few minutes that you've been here, you've changed so many things.

We'd rather go back to where we were. We're more comfortable with the pigs. We're uncomfortable when you're around.

Suddenly we're not in control anymore. And it's too uncertain for us. We've seen what Christianity costs, and we're too scared about what the future holds.

In this uncertainty, we'd rather take control of our own affairs. And that's why the gate is so narrow. That's why you only find few people walking the narrow way.

Because it's only those who are prepared to surrender unconditionally to the Lord that actually make it. Dear friend, if you haven't put everything on the altar, you're not going to make it. If there's one aspect of your life that you withhold, that you want to keep control of, you're not going to make it.

You'll end up being like these people who say, Lord, please, just rather go back. But praise God for this man who had this personal experience with the Lord. Everything was changed.

Suddenly someone could set him free from this misery that he had been in. Suddenly that Roman seven-man experiences that deliverance, and he says, as we read in that portion at the end, praise be to God. After he had said, who can set me free? I'm helpless.

Someone has to set me free. And here comes Jesus, and praise God for him, that he can set free to this day. This morning I asked someone to tell me what the words of that song are.

I think Bev Shea sings it, and I wish I had the proper words. But the chorus goes something like this. When Jesus comes, the tempter's power is broken.

This is how I've got them in my memory. I hope I haven't got something wrong. When Jesus comes, the night is turned to day.

He takes the gloom and fills your life with glory. All is changed when Jesus comes to stay. Do we know this Lord that changes everything and fills our life with glory? The night is changed to day.

Wonderful. May we all experience it, and may we never look back, but become like this man who had experienced the Lord and said, Lord, now let me go with you. I want to be with you now.

But like it is with many disciples, if you choose to serve the Lord, it doesn't go the way you think, because now you're a disciple, and you follow him, and you do what he tells you. The Lord said to him, now don't go with me. You stay here, because they sent the Lord away.

The Lord said, well, you stay here, and you do the job for me. Where can you find another Lord like our Lord? He should have said, they don't want me? Okay, you've chosen your way. You'll have to suffer the consequences.

No, he left this man there in the hope that maybe they'd listen to him. And so the Lord is, he follows the sinner right to the grave. So if you don't want the Lord, you send him away.

When he comes to you and says, my child, don't you want to follow me? Then you say to him, no, I don't want to. I want to tell you something. You're not going to shake the Lord off.

He's going to follow you, he's going to talk to you, he's going to ask you again and again, and he'll send other people to you if he can, in the hope that maybe someone else will get through to you on his behalf. Remember, the devil isn't ultimately in control, not even in your life. Neither are you in control of your life.

The Lord's going to have the last say in your life too, like he did in this experience. So if you take nothing else along out of this service, then if you want to shake him off, turn him away, and you want to stay with your pigs, don't worry, the Lord's still going to speak to you again and again and again. And may, by his grace, your heart get soft.

But for the others who have chosen the Lord, who have experienced his power in their lives, may it be an unconditional, a total surrender in every aspect of our lives. And then let's make ourselves available for the Lord to use us. Let's be his representatives, that he can say, well, my child, I'll need you there now because you need to get through to those people on my behalf.

Sorry I've kept you so long. I hope you won't regret it. I hope you can take something along.

But I think maybe you realize my heart was full of this, what the Lord shared with me, and I thought I'd like to share it with you too. Let us pray. Thank you, Lord, that you were prepared to cross the sea to come to me personally.

What grace, Lord, what love. Lord, may we return that favor and that love by an unconditional surrender to you. Thank you, Lord, that we serve a living God, one who changes everything.

He who changes the night to day. Lord, may we all experience that changing power. And may we be renewed daily, experiencing this power that changes us, that transforms us and renews us from day to day.

Lord, we haven't deserved it. But we pray and ask you for it because you're the only one who can do it. And because we want you to do it in our lives.

Amen.

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