

ADDITIONAL MIRACLES

Mark 5

I. The Lord Is Stronger Than Demons. Mark 5:1-20.

As soon as the boat had grounded on the beach in Gadara and Christ and His disciples had disembarked, they heard wild cries on the cliff above them. Looking up, they saw a dreadful wreck of humanity rushing down toward them. His hair was long, matted and disheveled. His body was gashed and bleeding from the wounds which had been made by the stones with which he had cut himself. He was a ghastly figure who had been dwelling in the tombs and proving to be a terror to all who had been passing that way. Much of the time the poor outcast was roaming over the hills, crying and howling fearfully, cutting himself with sharp flints and torturing his body in a terrible fashion. Abandoned, avoided and feared, this poor demoniac pictured the devastation and loneliness of sin. Dominated by the demons, he exhibited human life in its uttermost derangement.

Having lost all that could make life desirable, he had fallen back into the condition of savage life. Homeless, houseless and hopeless, he led the life of a vagrant. His agony of mind was dreadful, so by cutting gashes in his body with stones he sought to transfer at least a part of his suffering from his mind to his body. Moreover, this man was antisocial. Nobody could live with him.

Running to Christ and His party when they landed, the demoniac cried, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not." His fear that Christ might use His divine power to injure him was without basis. Christ said, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." Upon the leaving of the demons, the man became a rational being and the wild look faded from his face. What an amazing transformation took place in him when he passed from the companionship of demons into fellowship with Jesus Christ!

Even though these demons hated Christ, they requested Him to permit them to enter the two thousand swine which the herders were watching while they were feeding on the hillside nearby. In response to their request our Lord gave His consent. When the demons entered the swine, the hogs became so miserable that all of them rushed over the cliff and drowned themselves in the sea. The astonished herders rushed into the village and reported what had taken place. So resentful of this loss were the people that they actually requested Christ to leave their country. He promptly complied with their wishes.

When our Lord stepped into the boat in order to cross the sea, the man whom He had healed begged Him to let him accompany Him. Instead of granting his request, Christ said, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." Thus Christ put the man's duty above his desire. Christ knew he could be far more useful telling of the Saviour in the man's own home and among his own people than he could in traveling about with Him. So, the Lord told him where to go and what to do. The witness of the lips is needed as much as that of the life. It is good to read, to pray, to go to church and to listen, but it is also necessary to "Go and Tell."

II. The Lord Is Stronger Than Disease. Mark 5:25-34.

Curious and eager crowds followed Christ after He had returned to the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, desirous of seeing Him perform a miracle. Among those who thronged Him was a woman who had been suffering from a constitutional illness for twelve long years. Her very touch was regarded as a defilement to other people, so she was not permitted to enjoy the ordinary privileges, such as entering the synagogue. Because of her affliction she was ostracized from society. What made matters worse was the fact that others regarded her trouble as the direct consequence of sin. They believed that she was under a curse from God.

Sickness takes the flavor out of everything. It changes the whole current of feeling and desire. But, in spite of the fact that her illness had sapped her strength and caused her great sadness, she was fondly clinging to life. In her effort to get well she had gone to various physicians, but all that they could do availed nothing. Her case defied their skill and ability. Although she had spent all of her money for medical treatment, she had not improved. She had been given up as a hopeless case. Perhaps she, too, had practically lost hope. However, she did not surrender and indulge in self-pity.

Having heard about Christ, Who had come her way at last, she determined to apply to Him for a cure. She somehow believed that He could and would heal her. She reasoned that if she could touch Christ's clothes she would be healed. Modestly she made her way through the crowd, came up behind Christ, stooped down and nervously, shrinkingly and appealingly touched the kraspedon on His robe, or the tassel on the hem of His garment.

Looking into her heart, Christ distinguished between what she wanted and her way of expressing her desire. He knew that her idea was wrong. His clothes were no more efficacious than were the clothes of any other person. Knowing her need of healing and her desire for it, Christ permitted her faith to lay hold upon His heart and power in such a way that she got what she wanted. Because her faith was genuine it was sufficient for Him. Just as soon as she touched the tassel of His robe, her hemorrhage stopped and health beamed in her face.

Instantly Christ stopped, turned around and faced the crowd and said, "Who touched me?" Peter protested that it must have been the pressure of the crowd, but Christ knew better. When Christ looked into the eyes of the woman who had touched Him, she realized that she had been perceived and discovered. With fear and trembling she cast herself on His mercy as she fell prostrate at His feet and told Him the whole truth about the miracle of healing which had been wrought in her. She then awaited the pleasure of His will, whatever it might be. Confession followed cleansing. This should ever be true. The Word of God links belief in the heart and confession with the mouth. On the ground of her confession, she received the threefold word of cheer: "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." By use of that tender word, "Daughter," Christ recognized the fact that she had been adopted into the family of God.

III. The Lord Is Stronger Than Death. Mark 5:21-24, 35-43.

In the crowd on the shore when Christ's boat landed was Jairus, who held the honorable position of ruler of the synagogue at Capernaum. With a sad heart Jairus quickly approached Christ and fell at His feet. He was in great distress because of the critical illness of his twelve year old daughter, who was his only child. This kind and devoted father dearly loved his daughter. She was the light of her father's eyes and the joy of his heart. Having become ill, she grew weaker day by day, until it appeared that she was going to die. At least she was beyond human help. But, her loving parents still had hope for her, their hope being anchored in Christ. Jairus earnestly pleaded with Christ to come to his home and "lay Thy hands upon her, that she may be healed."

Delayed on the way to the home of Jairus by the conversation with the woman whom He healed, a messenger came running to the ruler and said, "Thy daughter is dead. Why troublest thou the Teacher any further?" That was a very sad report which was made to that loving father. Before Jairus had a chance to speak a hopeless thought, Christ spoke to him saying, "Be not afraid, only believe." This call was intended to get him to banish fear and to exercise faith.

When Christ, Peter, James, John and Jairus arrived at the home of the latter, they found there a motley crowd of neighbors and hired mourners making a tumult of noise, according to the custom among Jews on such occasions. When they entered the house Christ said, "Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth," meaning that her decease would be no more than a temporary sleep. Those in the house who heard His declaration "laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead." More than that, they claimed to know that no one could ever raise her from the dead.

In the midst of their laughter and ridicule Christ put the whole company outside. They were mourners for the dead, and He had no intention of permitting the girl to remain in that condition. Neither did He intend to permit those scorners to witness her resurrection. Then Christ and His disciples and the parents of the girl "entered in where the damsel was lying." There Christ spoke His word of power and the damsel was restored to life. Knowing that she had returned to the earthly level, Christ then commanded her parents to give their child food to eat.

The spiritual teaching of this miracle is not far to seek. It declares that it is Christ alone Who can raise us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. He quickens those who are "dead in trespasses and sins."