

## 20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning Week 19 (May 5-11, 2013)

This week, we will continue to study the miracles of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of Mark. At the conclusion of several more weeks of studying His miracles, I will show you the Lord's assessment of His greatest miracle ever!

### **Sunday -- May 5** (Mark 3:1-6)

There is never a shortage of critics in the synagogue (v. 2). Even today, some folks come to church looking to criticize the program instead of looking to have their lives transformed by the power of the gospel. There will always be people in our services who need the healing touch of Jesus (v. 1). The members who say, "We have never done it this way before" often run away these seekers. In today's text, the religious leaders are trying to protect their Sabbath rules even though Jesus has just declared Himself to be the **Lord of the Sabbath** (2:27-28). He silences them with a question (v. 4). Prior to healing the man's shriveled hand, Jesus becomes angry at the stubborn hearts of His critics (v.5). The embarrassed Pharisees go out and plot with the Herodians how they can get rid of this threat to their religious dynasty (v. 6). This is an example of two groups who hate each other actually working together for their common cause.

### **Monday -- May 6** (Mark 3:7-12)

Jesus is God, but He lived His life on earth in a human body that required rest. People in need of His healing touch gather around Him constantly. The power and authority of His spoken Word cause others to seek Him. As a result, He needs to go out on the lake to teach those on the shore (see Luke 5:1-11) and to relax from the demands of the healing ministry (v. 7-9). There are many sick people who push forward to touch him. The evil spirits of the demon-possessed cry out in recognition, but they are never allowed to identify the Lord before His time (v. 10-12). Jesus commands **us** to introduce Him to the lost world and to tell about His marvelous plan of salvation (see Matthew 28:18-20). He has no interest in being identified by Satan's crowd. How are you doing in carrying out The Great Commission?

### **Tuesday -- May 7** (Mark 4:35-41)

Have you ever faced a violent storm in your life and felt like Jesus was asleep? He often allows us to go through some scary times so that we can learn to trust Him. The disciples are familiar with storms on the lake, but this one seems to be raging out of control. They awaken their very tired Lord and question His concern for their lives (v. 38). With a simple rebuke from Jesus, the winds stop raging and the waves die down (v. 39). Can you relate to His calming voice in the midst of your storms? I hope that you have learned to pray His promises back to Him when you are in a threatening situation. Nothing has affected my faith more than the knowledge that I can trust His wonderful promises during times of stress. If the wind and the waves obey Him (v. 41), what can prevent us from doing the same?

### **Wednesday -- May 8** (Mark 5:1-20)

We will spend the next three days on this miracle, but I want you to read the entire account today. Jesus is still trying to find a spot where He can get some rest with His disciples, but this is not going to be the place. A terrifying demon-possessed man comes to meet them as they step out of the boat (v. 1-2). Because of Satan's power within him, the man is too strong to be controlled by anyone, even though they have used chains to subdue him (v. 3-4). The poor man would mutilate himself with stones and cry out in agony day and night (v. 5). The demons within him realize that Jesus has total **authority** over them so they beg for mercy (v. 6-7). They even answer the question that our Lord asks their victim (v. 9). Our Lord has already commanded them to leave their dwelling place (v. 8). Don't miss the fact that the demons are **begging** Jesus for their survival (v. 10 & v. 12). You do not need to fear Satan or any of his helpers. Our Lord has dominion over them!

### **Thursday -- May 9** (Mark 5:1-20)

We continue our story of the healing of a demoniac. The demons beg Jesus to send them into a nearby herd of pigs (v. 12), and He grants their request (v. 13). Immediately, the pigs rush down a steep bank and commit suicide. Pigs are normally docile animals, but they go out of control when the army of demons moves into them. One of Satan's tactics even today is to tempt someone to take his/her own life. I no longer believe that suicide is a one-way ticket to hell because there are too many mental issues involved that we cannot possibly understand, but I do believe that Satan loves to take the life of anyone who might become an instrument in God's almighty hand. I need to remind you, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). Those who have lost loved ones to suicide have enough pain without adding our condemnation to it. Pray that God will bring healing to those suffering from the tragic loss of a family member who took his/her own life, and leave the judgment to God.

### **Friday -- May 10** (Mark 5:1-20)

The news spreads quickly from eyewitnesses of the event (v. 14). People come out to see for themselves and observe the man "sitting there, dressed and in his right mind" (v. 15). The people are told about the huge economic loss caused by this wonderful miracle so, rather than rejoicing with the liberated man, they plead with Jesus to leave their region (v. 16-17). Isn't this just like America today? A drop in the stock market is hotter news than someone being set free from Satan's control. When have you seen a headline about someone receiving Christ? The loss of 2000 pigs would make the front page! I love what happens next. The demon-possessed man begs to go with Jesus, but our Lord sends him **home to his family** since he has not lived with them for a long time (v. 18-19). Often, those at home need a husband and a father more than the church needs another worker. Take care of the needs at home and witness all over town about the healing power of Jesus Christ (v. 20).

### **Saturday -- May 11** (Mark 5:21-24)

I will only introduce this passage today and continue into tomorrow's devotions. Following the healing of the demon-possessed man, huge crowds follow Jesus to see what he will do next (v. 21). Usually, the synagogue rulers are antagonistic towards the Lord, but now a ruler named Jairus approaches Him and falls at His feet with an urgent prayer request. What would cause one of Jesus' constant critics to plead for His help? His only daughter who is 12 years old (see Luke 8:42) is critically ill. I will guarantee that even those who never pray will turn to God when their child is dying. Jesus does not point out any faults of Jairus' previous relationship with Him. Instead, He goes immediately with the synagogue ruler to his home prepared to meet his urgent need. Jesus will do the same for you when you call out to Him. He is not interested in pointing out your inconsistencies. He only wants to bring healing to you and your family. We will follow this story in our study tomorrow.