

“What’s Influencing You?”

Mark 5:1-20

Introduction – read the whole section

- **Put up the Main title slide**
- I had a real hard time picking a title and thereby a main point for this morning’s message
 - Instead of what’s influencing you, I thought of...

The Case of the Deviled Ham – slide #2

- Come on, get it– Jesus sent the demons into the pigs and they jumped to their death in the Sea of Galilee

Or maybe Tchaikovsky’s famous Swine lake – slide #3

- or wait, was that Swan Lake, well then that doesn’t fit

Then I thought of maybe “when Pigs fly” – slide #4

- That is just not okay

Or Simply “Hog Heaven” – slide #5 –

- because all the little piggies wee, wee, wee, all the way to heaven
 - but I settled on **“What’s influencing you?”**

Because today we are going to meet a man who is influenced by Satan, Society and eventually the Savior, Jesus Christ

- and each of those things will have a profound impact on this man’s life
 - and they can impact our lives as well
- as the great theologian Grover once said, “Grover here – and This Morning is brought to you by the letter “S”

What’s Influencing You? – Mark 5:1-20

#1 – Satan

#2 – Society

#3 – Savior

- we will look at those one at a time this morning

What’s Influencing You? – Mark 5:1-20

#1 – Satan

- Sometimes when we read in our modern day and age about a man who is demonized, filled and controlled by demons, by Satan, the enemy of our soul
 - We are a little skeptical
- But any missionary in a third world country knows the reality of demons and the work of Satan in people’s lives is not a thing of the past
 - In fact KP Yohannan, of Gospel for Asia has said from what He is seeing in India, demonic influence of people is on the rise, not the decline in the last few years
 - Demons are real

It’s not just 3rd world missionaries that experience that, but I will never forget my first night on staff at 3rd world Vista

- It was a Wednesday Night – Pastor Rob was teaching, this guy came in off the street, acting totally bizarre, which happens around here, and they put him into the front office to pray for him

- Good old Howard Anderson, pulled the new guy, me, into the office as well, - oh you graduated Bible college hugh, well come on in, college grad – I was not prepared for what I saw
- This man was shaking, looking all over the place and he lets out this scream saying, I hear voices
- And Howard, being Howard asks him, what are they saying? – “Don’t ask him that – this is not a game?”

The man says, they are telling me to kill you and you and you and then he points at me – and you

- Oh no they are not
 - Hey listen you can all it whatever you want, but all I know is we prayed for that guy that Satan would release him and he was instantly better

He got saved that night and was part of our church for years

- in fact He runs our children’s ministry department now
 - just kidding – oh my, I love you Sam, I’m sorry – your kids are safe
 - I’m kidding about the Sam part – but that story was real
 - Demonic activity is still with us today

Now normally people make one of two mistakes about demons

- CS Lewis said...

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which we fall about demons. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist and magician with the same delight” – CS Lewis – “Screwtape Letters preface”

- some believe that demons and the devil do not exist
 - Kenneth Woodward who is the religious editor for Newsweek magazine, you know that deeply religious magazine Newsweek said,

“The Devil is a trivial personification, hardly adequate to symbolize the mystery of evil” – Kenneth Woodward, Newsweek, August 1982

- So some think – oh the Devil, such a made up fantasy
 - And others see him around every corner

If you come to the Wednesday Night service I know I have told you before, but when pastoring in Texas, before we had a mid week service, I would go around a visit other churches midweek, because I had never really been outside of Calvary Chapel – I’ll never forget one night, where first of all, all the ushers wore white gloves – amazing – we need to get those for Ernie and Mike – but once I was sat by the ushers wearing white gloves, the pastor came out and first thing out of his mouth was – Satan told me he was coming here tonight

Now two problems – First why was he talking to Satan

- Secondly – he is coming here? – Satan can be only one place at one time, and he picked your church this Wednesday night – hmm?
 - Oh it gets better – then he told those same ushers with the white gloves to bar the doors and block Satan from coming in
- Like the power of darkness needs a door or could be stopped by men wearing white gloves

- But I could not get out of there fast enough as the whole service was about this guy's interaction with Satan and how Satan was responsible for the plumbing problems, lack of tithe and outfits the ladies in the church were wearing
- To which I thought – nope, Satan is evil, but those things aren't his fault – the plumbing is your old nasty building and the other two is because you don't teach the Word and what it says about how to live and be
 - That is it or it also could be that the people in town who are rational enough to hold a job and therefore tithe, don't come to your church more than once
 - Either way – it's not Satan's fault

But some don't think Satan exists, some see him around every corner and blame him for every problem

- and as CS Lewis, and I agree, I think Satan is good with either wrong thought toward him
 - and we see this morning – the truth – Satan and demons are real
 - but they are not all powerful, they are subject to the power of Christ like everything else in this world

You know we have no idea of how this man got into this place, was he opening his heart up to occult? To the dark things of this world - we just don't know

- but we do know that Satan's forces were in him now, in fact many, for they said their name was legion
 - now understand a Roman legion could number up to six thousand men
 - there was much evil in this man
- Demons were in him and we see Satan's desire for him and anyone who is made in the image of God
 - Satan is destroying this man
- He is alone, lost his family, fellowship with others, he was in bondage, out of control and hurting himself, cutting himself
 - Imagine what it would have been like to be this man in his lucid moments – to know no one wanted to be around you, the people were scared of you, that you were scared of you
 - What a horrible existence
- And we need to wake up to the fact this is Satan's heart for everyone of us

We live in such a tolerant society, and we tend to think – what does it really matter if I mess around with dark things – it's just make believe

- well that is just it – it is not make believe – Satan and demons are real
 - and if we let them have a foothold in our home, through what we watch, through what we let our kids participate in
 - you are setting yourself up for disaster
- because the enemy's plan for your family is exactly what the enemy's plan was for this man we are reading about this morning

Do you see the parallels?

- This man hung out among tombs
 - There was an obsession with death
 - Just as we see today with culture
- This man was in bondage
 - And our culture is in bondage to everything, drugs, alcohol, pornography, bitterness
- Notice this man is cutting himself

At the very end of my time as a youth pastor here was when the epidemic of kids cutting themselves started

- and at first I couldn't understand for the life of me why anyone would do that
 - As a diabetic I have to prick my finger four times a day and after 25 years I still sit there, okay push the button, push the bottom – ouch!
 - Why would anyone purposely cut themselves
- And I would talk to experts who said, they are just trying to feel something, they are hurting so bad from problems
 - Or it is a cry for help
 - And I don't discount any of that

But then one morning I was reading the word and it hit me, this is demonic, not that those kids are possessed by a demon but what I am saying is their enemy is influencing them to do this to themselves

- I see a lot in our culture today that can be explained no other way, than the influence of Satan
 - I mean what would possess a man to walk into an elementary school and start shooting little kids
 - What would influence a man to hurt a little child
 - Tell me the enemy doesn't have influence today – of course he does

And we need to recognize the fact that Satan is alive and well in our culture today

- and guard our homes
 - guard our kids – not to be weird legalistic, but to prayerfully consider – should this be in our home
 - should this be something we watch as a family, as an individual
- It seems there isn't a week that goes by without one movie being about demonic oppression of a family, a home

Just as an example while preparing this study this week, I just searched, show times in Vista

- the first movie that popped up – Evil Dead – I wouldn't dare to put the graphics up that popped up on my screen, just the description should be enough

Evil Dead - In the much anticipated remake of the 1981 cult-hit horror film, five twenty-something friends become holed up in a remote cabin. When they discover a Book of the Dead, they unwittingly summon up dormant demons living in the nearby woods, which possess the youngsters in succession until only one is left intact to fight for survival.

- Really???? – and every week there is something like that – and our culture just takes it in
 - And I tire of hearing, well I don't let my kids watch it, its for us grown ups

- I don't ever want to be grown up enough to soak my mind in things that glorify Satan and invite him into my home and mind
 - We need to be wise precious men and women
- And sadly I see parents who in the name of toleration and wanting to be awesome, let their kids get so wrapped up in this dark culture – and the result – well I have seen kids end up on the same road as this man from Gadara

What's Influencing You? – Mark 5:1-20

#1 – Satan

#2 – Society

We also see society's effect on this man

- They could do nothing to help him
 - Their answer was to send him away
 - To put him in chains
 - and this seems to be the best society can do, lock them up and throw away the key
 - out of sight, out of mind
- And though I am personally glad society doesn't react by just tolerating sin, letting murders live next door, I appreciate the fact that they are in jail
 - But I want you to see this is all society has to offer and it does no good when it comes to the transformation of a human
 - People need Jesus

And that to me is so key to realize

- you see the answer to our society that is so influenced by the enemy is not to protest
 - get signs and head to Kerkorian, why is this movie out – please don't do that – that won't change anything
 - but people need Jesus

Satan, wanted to destroy this man, society couldn't help, but just locked up this man, but the Savior was able to transform him

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- This story starts off about as close to a modern horror film as you can get

I mean first of all it's a dark and stormy night – remember last week, they have just been rowing across the sea in a storm that Jesus had to rebuke

- and now as soon as they get to the other side, a man, who lives among the tombs, this guy who lives in a grave yard, I'm not making this up and this is not from the trailer of another movie, this is Mark chapter 5 – a man who lives in a cemetery
 - is running at them, naked, Luke's gospel says, howling and screaming unnatural things
- He has super strength, ripping himself out of the chains that people had put him in
 - No man can deal with him
 - Yet he falls at the feet of Jesus

This Savior you and I have is awesome, friends

- again we picture Jesus as the emaciated, Hebrew Hippy
 - and yet this one who no one can deal with, falls before our Jesus
 - He was a man's man, He was Lord

I mean - what are you up against?

- because the opening of chapter 5 is really a worse case scenario for your evening – it's a dark night - you just get off the boat and a naked howling man is running at you
 - the toughest among us would not like to be in that situation
 - but Jesus purposely goes there and this man falls before Him
 - because there is no one like Jesus
- even the demons realize this

It is amazing to me to consider the Christology of the demons in the Word

- Christology is a fancy word that means theology of Christ –the study of Jesus –

Notice when Jesus begins to interact with this demonized man, what the demons say

They know who Christ is

- they call Jesus son of the most High God
 - Son of God – doesn't mean physical son, but it means you Jesus, you are of the same essence as God, "you are God" is what the demons were saying to Jesus

They understand who Jesus is and they understand where they are going in the future – they know not just their Christology, but they know their Eschatology, the study of end time things

- they knew they were headed for hell, for judgment
 - they knew who Jesus was
 - They knew Hell was real
 - That is better than many so called Christian college professors today – "we can't be sure who Jesus was and if there is really a hell or judgment"
- Seriously can we just be as fundamental in our faith as demons, that seems to be low bar, but many in the church aren't even there
 - so these demons know Christ, but like many today, that didn't mean that they were serving Christ, in submission to Christ
 - they were in opposition to Christ

Jesus said to the demons in his heart, "come out of this man"

- And with a word what Satan did not want, and what Society couldn't do, the Savior did – He transformed this man into a new man

He is transformed from the "Thing that lives down in the Cemetery, to a Bible college student, just sitting there at Jesus' feet listening, taking notes" – I love it!

You see what those in our society need who are in bondage to evil, who are being ripped apart by the enemy is the Word of God

- they need the Word
 - just tolerating sin, or in other words just letting Satan have his way will not work, because the only thing Satan wants is destruction

- letting society alone take care of it won't work, because they have no answer for transformation
- but with the Word – get them the Word, get them to a place where they can hear the Word, it's the Word, it's the Word, it's the Word
- It's why I am so passionate, it's why Pastor Rob is so passionate to get you guys in the Scriptures
 - When we gather here, we are not going to go over 10 power principals for life
 - We are going to go through the Scriptures
- And its heart that if you get nothing else from my teaching over the years, that you learn how important it is for you
 - To spend time in His Word
 - Not to earn salvation or reward points in heaven
 - But to be simply transformed by His Word
 - There is nothing like it

To quote the great group of Scholars Newsboys...

“And try as you may, there isn't a way

To explain the kind of change

That would make an Eskimo renounce fur

That would make a vegetarian barbecue hamster”

- amen
 - or take a guy that is cutting himself, all alone, howling, screaming naked
 - into someone with a notebook and a study bible just sitting by Jesus' feet, give me the Word
 - amazing

Now seeing this I am also amazed at reaction of the people to this man Jesus touched, the reaction of the people of Gadera

- you would think they would have rejoiced
 - they all knew this man
 - I mean who doesn't know there is some naked guy howling down at the cemetery in a small town
 - Everybody knows who this guy is, everyone afraid of this guy
- And yet they come out and he is in his right mind, he has borrowed a coat from the disciples
 - And he is sitting at Jesus' feet
 - He has been transformed into a Bible college student
 - This is amazing

But they are mad

- they are mad because their income has been destroyed in the form of the pigs
 - and they want Jesus to leave

Now we don't know if these were Jews who shouldn't have been raising pigs in the first place

- I mean pigs were an unclean animal – so what are they doing with them in Israel
 - Well this area of the sea of Galilee had a large Gentile population
 - So maybe they were just trying to turn a profit off the local gentiles

- And maybe it was the Gentiles who were keeping these pigs
 - Either case though – they don't notice the great work of God in this man's life, they just notice they have lost some money
 - And they want Jesus to leave

It breaks my heart that these men of Gadera are more concerned about their pigs than they are a person who was being ripped off

- It breaks my heart, but it is how we are as a society even to this day

It is a 5,000 dollar fine to touch an eagle's egg, Nacho Libre would have been in big trouble if He lived in the United States - \$5,000 dollars fine to touch an eagle's egg - but you can kill an unborn human and are applauded by some in our culture

- We spend millions to save the spotted owl, but not ten minutes or for some ten dollars to save a lost soul
 - And I know that is the world, and that is how the world behaves
 - But what about you and me?
- Is our priority people or pigs
 - Is it mercy or money
 - Is it salvation or conservation
 - Something to really think through
- Don't misunderstand me – I am all for having a clean planet earth
 - I enjoy once a year getting up to Yosemite and spending a day in fasting and prayer, I look forward to that every year, its next month – Amen!
 - I enjoy a clean planet and healthy animals
- I enjoy the fact I have a job to provide food and clothing and put a roof over my family's head
 - There is nothing wrong with being for a clean planet or making money
 - But we can never forget people – Jesus died for people – I have to have a heart for people

And Why it is so important that we care for people?

- Because people change the world – you have no idea how the person you are ministering to will turn out

Church history indicates this man went on to change his society

- Our passage ends with the man who used to be demon possessed wanting to follow Jesus – now we can understand why
 - Satan was trying to destroy him
 - Society could do nothing for him
 - So he decided to follow the Savior – that makes sense – I like this guy
- But Jesus refuses him
 - This is the only one in the story He refuses
 - The demons want to go into the pigs, Jesus allows it
 - The people want Jesus to leave – He is on His way
- The demons, the people get what they want from Jesus, but this one who wants to serve Him
 - He gets told no

That bothers us sometimes doesn't it?

- Why doesn't God answer me?

- Well He did –He told you no, or not now
- And that is just as much as an answer as yes
- But are you and I willing to trust the Lord's word for us

Jesus doesn't let the former demonized man become a disciple

- I'm sure the guy was bummed,
 - but what He doesn't know is he is going to become the first Christian missionary in History
 - this story happens before Jesus sends the apostles out two by two, so this man is the first missionary
 - and he is a missionary to the Decapolis

The Decapolis were 10 cities around the region of what we know today as Israel and Jordan

They were cities built to be Rome away from Rome

- but they were controlled by the Gentiles
 - they coined their own money
 - had their own government
 - they were Roman cities
 - with all the comforts of Roman society
- For traveling Romans these cities would have been welcomed sites
 - If you have ever traveled outside the US, foreign countries can be different
 - I remember going down to Visit Phil McKay and long story I won't tell but we ended up in San Jose Costa Rica, and not the airport a hour from his house, this one is like 6 and it was late at night and I was thinking what are we going to do
 - And as I pulled out of the airport, right across the street was a Hampton Inn and a Denny's – I thought all right – I know what to do there
 - Home away from Home

There were the cities of the Decapolis

- And this man, who used to be as messed up as you can be, becomes the first missionary
 - And Church history records that when the First Jewish War against the Romans broke out in 66 AD, many of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, fled to the Roman Decapolis cities to stay out of the battle and most went to the Decapolis city of Pella, why – because there was a huge Christian population there
- Why is that significant to our story, because tradition holds that Pella was where this formally demonic was originally from
 - Jesus said go back to your family, verse 19, go back to your home town to your friends

And I'm sure that man was bummed, but Lord I want to be your disciple

- but he would later understand what we need to understand – Great are the Lord's plan for us, if we would just trust and obey
 - This first missionary apparently went back to Pella and started sharing the great news of what Jesus had done for him

- And 30 years later – a Christian Community is thriving – that God used to save some of the believers as times were getting tough in the city of Jerusalem – Amazing!
 - Satan didn't do that
 - Society didn't do that
 - That is the touch of the Savior

So I ask you, what is influencing you?

- Satan? – Or I just mess around with that, I just watch that occasionally – but I am just dabbling – Listen friend Satan's plan is to steal, to kill and to destroy
 - That is what the Word says about him

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.” – John 10:10

- is it Satan
 - or Society – they have no power to make things better, only worse –the world is a hard master
- is it Satan, society or is it our Savior – who can change this man into a missionary
 - what can He do for you?
 - As you yield to Him what will He transform in your life?
 - Aren't you ready? Aren't you tired of being the same old way – Turn to Jesus!!!!

“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.” – John 10:10