



## Third Sunday After Epiphany

*Mark 5:1-20*

### Summary

This passage shows an encounter between Jesus and a man that is said to be possessed by not just one, but many demons. He is out of control and has seemingly supernatural strength.

This twisting story sees the man healed, pigs possessed, and the people so frightened by the encounter, that they beg Jesus to leave.

In the end the man is healed, and goes back to his family and friends to share all that God had done for him through Christ.

### Prayer

Healing Christ,  
Guide us to wholeness in you. Help us to find within us our brokenness, and offer it to you. In that offering, may we come to know that even when we are not perfect, we are loved. Hear us, O Christ, as we offer this and all our prayers in your name. AMEN

## The Story Behind the Words

- ❖ What might it mean when someone is said to be possessed by a demon?
  - How does our context inform how we might look at people with similar problems?
- ❖ How were pigs viewed in the time of Christ?
  - How might this view inform other parts of the passage?
- ❖ How did the reaction of this community reflect the broader response to Jesus' miracles during his earthly ministry?
  - In what ways did it differ?

## The Characters

- ❖ Who is this story about?
  - Why do you think that?
- ❖ In whom do you see yourself in this story?
  - Why?
- ❖ What sort of emotions do you think the possessed man experienced?
  - How did Jesus respond?
- ❖ How does Jesus' response to the man differ from those in the community?
  - What do you think inspires that response?

## What is the Word saying to us?

- ❖ What does this passage say about the person and attitudes of Jesus Christ?
  - What does it say about us as followers of Christ?
- ❖ What insights can we gain from the spiritual journey of the man who is healed?
  - What does this passage say to you about the power of an encounter with Jesus?
  - Have you ever had an encounter with Christ? If so, how did it affect you?

## Where do we go from here?

- ❖ How can we be inspired by Jesus' compassion and willingness to engage with those considered socially outcast?
  - Who in our community is often forgotten or cast aside?
- ❖ In what ways do we react like the community in the reading when faced with the unfamiliar or miraculous?
  - What can we do to be more open to the people, situations and places to which God calls us?
- ❖ How can the transformed life of the healed man inspire us to share our own stories of God's grace and redemption?