



ENCOUNTER
Unbelievable
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Discussion Notes
The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

This Sunday, we are continuing our series called *Encounter*. Over the next few weeks, we are walking through the life of Jesus using the Gospel of Mark as the backdrop. Instead of just doing something new in 2017, let us become something new – let us become more like Jesus. Mark’s agenda in writing his gospel is to establish Jesus’ identity as the King with authority over all things, including the Sabbath, and His purpose of dying on the Cross. So, we’re on a journey that has the potential to change our lives. We are getting up close and personal with the life of Christ. Remember, the closer we get to Him, the more our lives will change.

SCRIPTURE¹

Mark 5:1-5 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

Mark 5:9-17 When Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “My name is legion,” he replied, “for we are many.” And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, “Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.” He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank and into the lake and were drowned. Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man – and told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

Mark 5:21-31 When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was beside the lake. Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” So Jesus went with him. Large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes I will be healed.” Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she had been freed from her suffering. At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him, and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask who touched you?”

Mark 5:34 He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

Mark 5:36-42 Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.” He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, “Tabitha koum!” (which means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”) Immediately, the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished.

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise noted.

OBSERVATION

This week, St. Mark is telling us about three people who were desperate for Jesus' intervention in their lives. The demon-possessed man needs Jesus' to order his demons out of him; the man whose daughter has died needs her to be resurrected; and the woman, who has suffered for twelve years with a terrible affliction, needs healing. All are desperate for His help.

Question: Tell us about a time when you were desperate for Jesus' help. What did you do? What happened?

APPLICATION

In past weeks, we have seen Jesus' authority to forgive sins, His authority over religion, and His authority over nature. Today we see His authority over demons, disease and death. Our first story is about a man whose life has been wrecked by a legion of demons. He is naked, insane, and ostracized by his community. The demons recognize Jesus as the Son of God and ask Him to let them go into a herd of two thousand pigs, which he does, and they and the pigs drown in the Sea of Galilee. The man is restored to his right mind.

Question: If you are in a current desperate situation, what will it take for you to overcome your pride and seek Jesus?

Question: How do you answer people who ask you, "Why is this happening to me?"

The second story is about a woman who has been shunned because her illness has made her unclean. When she sees Jesus, she believes that just touching Him will heal her bleeding and that is what happens. Jesus tells her that her faith has healed her.

Question: If you had lived during the time of this poor woman, would you have befriended her? Why/why not? If you know someone today who needs a friend, what are you going to do?

The third story is about a father who asks Jesus to ask Him to heal his daughter who is dying. Jesus goes with him only to find that she is already dead - and He raises her back to life.

Question: What did these three desperate people have in common? What do their miracles have in common? What other people did Jesus raise from the dead?

When you are in desperate situations, what do you tell yourself? "My marriage is too broken. My finances are too wrecked. My addiction is too strong." Don't you realize that, if you each out to touch Jesus, He stops for people like you who have nothing to offer? There is hope in these three stories for all of us.

Question: Which of your experiences in desperation are you using as a witness to other people of the miracles Jesus is still doing today?

Question: Jesus doesn't always heal people. Sometimes He takes a while to answer prayers and then not always in the way we had planned. How does your faith remain strong when you feel Jesus isn't noticing you?

Question: What value has suffering contributed to your life?

When your desperation overcomes your pride, you become a candidate for God's deliverance.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we pray for all of our families and friends who are enduring dire circumstances and desperately need Your healing touch. We know that You are involved in their situations and will reveal Yourself through them. Help them to humble themselves and trust that, through Your wisdom and caring, You will touch them. Give us the courage to share our own experiences in order to lift them up and strengthen their faith. In Jesus' name. Amen.