



# Gerasene Man/Naming & Healing

## 6th Confirmation Class Lesson

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**Supplies Needed:** Notebooks; Handout; laptop with internet access or (baby) names book that gives the meaning of names; a non-see-through curtain/blanket/towel that's big enough for a student to hide behind; a rod or stick of some sort to help you hold up the curtain/blanket/towel;

### OPENING ACTIVITY

- Names - Using a name book or the internet, look up everyone's name and tell them what their name means.
- Then do activity called, "shoot out."

### EXPLAIN SHOUT-OUT

- There are two different teams.
- There is a divider between the two teams (usually a blanket held up by two people).
- Each team picks someone to hide behind the blanket.
- Those two people sneak up to the blanket.
- Without warning, the person holding the blanket, drops it.
- First person to say the name of the other person wins a point for their team.
- Person holding the blanket determines who said whose name first.
- Put up the blanket and do it again.

### DO SHOUT-OUT

#### ASK

- What strategies did you use to try and figure out someone's name quickly?
- What strategies did you use to try and make it harder to be recognized?

### OPENING PRAYER

**REVIEW CHALLENGE OF THE WEEK:** What are some things you think you don't have enough of; some things you think you DO have enough of?

### REVIEW LAST FEW LESSONS

- There are three main groups of people surrounding Jesus: What do we call those three groups?
- The word disciple means? (Student)
- What did a disciple in Jesus' time do? (Followed their rabbi; tried to do exactly what their Rabbi/Teacher did).
- Concepts we've talked about so far in class:
  - Perspective – where we stand determines what we see and what we think/believe.

- Experience – When we experience an event, it cements or changes what we believe. Following Jesus offers many opportunities to experience the workings and presence of God.
- Abundance – When we follow Jesus, we experience the abundance of God’s life. Abundance doesn’t just happen. We have to first give something up (if we all hang on to everything, then there’s nothing to work with). Once there’s something to work with, then there’s the take, bless, break, give pattern that Jesus lives out. The result is that there is more than enough.

## TRANSITION

- Another concept that is experienced and witnessed when we follow Jesus is healing.
- There are two types of healing that take place in the scriptures: Physical healing and internal (emotional/psychological/mental) healing.
- We’re going to look at that second type (internal healing) today.
- As a culture, the Israelites didn’t have the language of “psychology” or “therapy” or anything like that. So if there was something internally wrong with someone, they called it “unclean spirit(s).”

## READ Scripture: Mark 5:1-20

*1* Jesus and the disciples came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. *2* And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. *3* He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; *4* for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. *5* Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. *6* When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; *7* Jesus said to the man, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" *8* But the man shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." *9* Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many." *10* The man begged Jesus earnestly not to send them (Legion) out of the country. *11* Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; *12* and the unclean spirits begged Jesus, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them." *13* So Jesus gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea. *14* The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. *15* They came to Jesus and saw the crazy man sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. *16* Those who had seen what had happened to the crazy man and to the swine reported it. *17* Then the people of the town began to beg Jesus to leave their neighborhood. *18* As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. *19* But Jesus refused, and said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you." *20* And the man went away and began to proclaim in the ten cities how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

## ASK

- When the man first saw Jesus, what does he do? (runs to Jesus and bows before him)
- What does Jesus then do? (tries to cast out the unclean spirit)
- Is Jesus successful? (no!)

- Does this surprise you that Jesus is not successful on his first attempt?
- In verse 9, Jesus asks the man his name. With what name does the man reply? (Legion)
- Do you think this is his actual name? (no)
- Instead, the man seems to be naming his problems, right? So what does he ask Jesus to do with his legion? (send them out of the country)
- How did the townspeople respond to the healing of the man? (they were afraid)
- What did they ask Jesus to do? (leave their town)
- Does this surprise you?

### THINGS TO TAKE NOTE OF IN THE STORY

- Symbolism in verse 1, 5 & 13:
  - First, the Gerasenes were considered unclean by the Israelites. To be in contact with them was not good. Also, Jesus is outside of his country. The first listeners of this story would immediately recognize that he is on “enemy” land.
  - Second, living near or among the dead was considered unclean to the Israelites.
  - Third, the Israelites did not eat pigs – pigs are considered unclean.
  - Fourth, what does the sea/water represent? Yes! Chaos. So the first listeners of this story would have heard something like this: Jesus went into enemy land and fought on enemy soil, where he won the fight against an unclean spirit by sending it back into the chaos where it belonged.
- Verse 2 – The man is drawn to Jesus, not repulsed. Probably because he sees the possibility of help.
- Verse 3 – 5: He’s certainly mentally/emotionally unwell. He lives in a cemetery, self-inflicts damage, and is pretty violent, though mostly to himself and toward that which binds him (chains and such).
- Verse 6-9: The man bows, but unclean spirits do not come out of the man when Jesus commands it.
- Verse 9: What is your name? This is the turning point of the story. After Jesus knows the name “Legion,” the focus of the story shifts from the description of the strength and wildness of the man to a much more calm, even diplomatic, (he “earnestly begged”) way of describing the man.
- Verse 14-17: How much should the healing/restoration of one person cost? For the townspeople, it seems like 2,000 pigs is too much for one man’s sanity. Because of this understanding, they cannot receive Jesus. This ties back in with what we talked about last week regarding abundance. Also can tie into health insurance debates...if we dare.
- Verse 19 & 20: The man shares his experience and perspective of Jesus and God with others.

### TELL

- The most concise definition of language is this: The naming of things.
- When we name something, then that thing is defined or separated from everything else.
- For instance, when we say “That’s a dog” we have differentiated (or separated) that type of animal from all other animals. And if we say “That dog’s name is Ginger” then we have further separated one dog from all the other dogs.
- This naming of things allows us to see more clearly – we can better see dogs and we can better see Ginger because we know they are different from other things.
- When the man says, “My name is legion” he’s naming his problem.
- Naming/seeing our problems is an important step in healing.
- Because then we can invite God into the named problem.
- And we can see how that named problem is affecting us and has affected us.

- Psychology does some of this – it names psychological problems with the idea that then we can be better once we name our mental/emotional problems.
- The one thing psychology doesn't do very well is with the idea of inviting God into our mental/emotional struggles.

## SNACK

### **EXPLAIN activity: Psychiatrist**

So as a way to demonstrate “naming” and “seeing” of problems, as a class, we're going to act crazy now while one of us is going to try and diagnose us.

(Note to teachers: A round of this game can take a long time so be prepared to be patient. Also, in choosing someone to be the psychiatrist, choose someone who will ask lots of questions and will not be stumped easily).

#### **How it works:**

*Outside the room:* One adult takes the chosen psychiatrist out of the room and explains how it works. This is what to say: Your goal is to try and diagnose the group's problem. You should do this by asking the individuals in the class questions, and then analyze their answers to discover the true nature of their problem. For the sake of patient confidentiality and anonymity, you are not allowed to ask them their names. Nor may you ask them what their symptoms are. If they knew what was wrong with them, they wouldn't need your help! The same problem is shared by all the patients in the group, and the problem is NOT a clinical one (like: schizophrenia, kleptomania etc.)

*Inside the room:* The other adult tells the class, once the psychiatrist is outside the room: Your goal is to answer questions as truthfully as possible, but without revealing the true nature of your problem. Your problem is simple. You believe that you are the person who is sitting next to you on your left. So when the Psychiatrist asks you a question, you must answer as if you are the person on your left. If you answer incorrectly, whoever catches your mistake must yell "Help! S/he's crazy!" When that happens, you all must stand up and switch seats with someone else. When this happens you then take on the characteristics of the new person who is sitting to your left. To win, the Psychiatrist must diagnose that everyone believes that they are the person sitting to their left, and then s/he must diagnose why they are saying “Help! S/he's crazy!” and switching seats.

**Set up for the game:** Take your group and have them sit in a circle. The psychiatrist stands in the middle to question them. Begin.

Variation: If you have time for another round, a variation to the game is that the entire group thinks they are the person who is sitting in a designated chair. So then the person yelling “Help! S/he's crazy” will always be in that same chair.

Another variation: The group thinks they are one person – this person is chosen while the psychiatrist is out of the class. In this variation, mostly its just one person yelling “Help! S/he's crazy.”

## **DO activity: Psychiatrist**

### **TELL**

- Once the Psychiatrist figured out what was wrong with us, then you could ask other questions that would keep us from acting crazy.
- But, if you did ask a question that would cause us to act crazy, because you identified the problem, then you wouldn't be afraid of it.
- Because you've named the problem, then you understand it (or vice versa)

### **CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK**

Name things. Practice using language. Name all sorts of things. Like your couch and toothbrush and parent's car.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**