

January 13/14, 2024

"The Legion"

Pastor Aaron Buer



**Beyond the
Weekend**

SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.

2024 Challenge: Finding Jesus in the Old Testament

JANUARY: Read Luke to see how the author points back to the Old Testament

Day 1 **Mark 5:1-20** | Encountering Jesus in Gerasenes

When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. Mark 5:6

No one remains the same when Jesus encounters darkness. In Mark 5, Jesus leaves Jewish territory and crosses the Sea of Galilee. He enters a region heavily influenced by Roman and Greek culture. This is enemy territory to the Jews, an area stained by uncleanness and impurity. Yet Jesus moves toward uncleanness. He knows his presence pushes out darkness and impurity. He immediately encounters a man bound by darkness no one can contain.

We all face things that feel overwhelmingly dark. We may have tried everything to find healing, yet still feel stuck. We can't break free of the shame or guilt of what we've done or what's been done to us. Our fractured family feels hopeless, with no path to restoration. Doubts cause our faith to falter and we wonder if returning to God is possible. So we hide, fearing that God could not love us if the truth comes to light. Yet Jesus willingly steps into the hardest, darkest spaces without fear, and with the power to forgive and bring freedom because he is God.

This week, we will encounter Jesus as God-in-flesh in all his power. We will see there is no darkness he cannot defeat. There is no situation he cannot disrupt to bring God's healing.

TODAY: What area of your life feels too hard, dark or hopeless? Bring it to Jesus and ask for his power to be at work. "Jesus, I admit this part of my life feels too hard. I need you. Please work your power in this area. I trust you and lay this at your feet. Amen."

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Luke 10](#). Highlight anything that refers to the Old Testament and how Jesus fulfills it.

Day 2 **Mark 5:6-13** | Jesus's Power

Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!" Mark 5:8

This isn't a fair fight and the demons know it. Jesus encounters a man with an impure spirit whom no one can help. They've tried everything—chains, iron fetters—but nothing could stop him. His pain is deep. The darkness is overpowering. Then he meets Jesus, who commands the spirit to leave. The spirit says it is not one but many. They know they're going to lose. They identify Jesus correctly—Son of the Most High God. They're terrified of what he might do to them and beg for mercy.

We might look around the world and fear the darkness. Yet, Jesus reveals we need not fear. The Apostle Peter, who witnesses this encounter, later writes that our enemy, the devil, seeks to devour. Peter says we can resist

him, standing firm in our faith in Jesus ([1 Peter 5:7-8](#)). The enemy has limits and must flee when we resist ([James 4:7](#)). We have the Holy Spirit within us— the same power that defeated the darkness. We are never alone.

This encounter is a clear statement about Jesus's power. It reminds us of what happens when a person places their trust in Christ's sacrifice on their behalf. Jesus cleanses us, no matter what impurity or darkness has marked us in the past. He has the power to make us whole and restore us to God.

TODAY: Join the Ada Bible Worship team as they sing [Living Hope](#). Praise Jesus for "Through the darkness, your loving-kindness tore through the shadows of my soul. The work is finished, the end is written. Jesus Christ, my living hope."

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Luke 11](#). Highlight anything that refers to the Old Testament and how Jesus fulfills it. Look up any Old Testament cross references included in this chapter.

Day 3 Mark 5:14-17 | Change is Disruptive

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. Mark 5:15

Jesus steps onto shore in Gerasenes and within minutes a crowd buzzes over the disruption he's caused. They see the man with the impure spirit sitting calm, clothed and clear-minded. They know the power that held him captive. Now they're afraid of the power that set him free. Word spreads and tension mounts. They beg Jesus to leave immediately. So he does. He could have healed more people, but they want nothing to do with him.

Many of us see God's power doing radical things in people's lives. He brings healing from addiction. He gives freedom from bitterness and anger. He empowers people to move from greed and pride to generosity and humble service. He replaces fear with peace. Jesus's work is *disruptive*. Yet we must respond to Jesus and allow him to work. Jesus will not go where he isn't welcomed. Nothing stays the same when we invite Jesus into our lives. He brings order, peace and wholeness in ways that may be disruptive.

TODAY: If you've never invited Jesus into your life, now is a great time. You can pray, acknowledging who he is and inviting him in. "Dear Jesus, I believe you are the Son of God who came to forgive my sin and restore me to God. I admit that I need you. Please forgive my sin and help me live for you. Amen." If you've already invited Jesus into your life, thank him for the good disruptions in your life. If you have questions about following Jesus, please email us at btw@adabible.org.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Luke 12](#). Highlight anything that refers to the Old Testament and how Jesus fulfills it. Note how Jesus talks about his return and the title he uses for himself. Consider what Old Testament passage this points back to.

Day 4 Mark 5:18-19 | Trust

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Mark 5:18

The man just received his life back. He moves from darkness to light and wants to stay with Jesus. He begs Jesus to let him come with him. In a surprising twist, Jesus tells the man to stay. He has a different mission for him. The man must return to his people and tell them all the Lord has done for him. The man trusts Jesus's leadership and goes home, telling people in the region about Jesus's work in his life.

Jesus won't always do what we want him to. Following him means trusting his plan and his timing for our lives. We accept that he knows what is best, even when he doesn't provide what we think we need. We may believe God has led us to a new job, but it falls through. We may have thought that a relationship was moving forward, but the other person leaves. We may want healing desperately, but the illness remains. Following Jesus involves trusting him for forgiveness for our sins *and* trusting him to lead every area of our lives.

Even Jesus wrestled with the Father's plans. Hours before his death on the cross, Jesus cries out, asking if there might be another way. Ultimately, he trusts the Father and prays, "Not my will, but yours be done" ([Luke 22:42](#)). We become more like Jesus when we submit to his leadership, especially when it's painful and doesn't make sense.

TODAY: Trust Jesus with a situation that isn't going like you hoped and prayed. Pray Jesus's prayer of trust and submission. "Father, not my will in _____, but yours be done. Amen."

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Luke 13](#). Highlight anything that refers to the Old Testament and how Jesus fulfills it.

Day 5 Mark 5:19-20 | Go and Tell

Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." Mark 5:19

The man experiences a power and healing people couldn't have imagined. He returns to his hometown and his family likely wonders how this could be possible. How has he gone from being restrained in chains to walking with peace and presence of mind? Neighbors may gather, curious to see if the news is true, waiting for the story. It's simple but so powerful. Imagine what it sounds like. "There was a time in my life when I was held by chains and lived in the tombs. Then I met this man named Jesus who set me free from all that held me captive. Now I live confidently and freely, telling others what he did for me."

Jesus also sends us to tell others what he has done. There are people Jesus wants to reach that we are uniquely equipped to talk to. We may wonder what to say, but the message is simple and powerful. Share how Jesus has changed our lives. People encounter Jesus when we share stories of the freedom, hope, healing and peace he's given us. When we go and tell people what Jesus has done, God provides the opportunity for them to respond and know Jesus too.

TODAY: Ask God who you need to go and tell what Jesus has done for you. Write the person's name in your journal or mobile device and pray for God to give you the courage to share as he provides the opportunity.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Luke 14](#). Highlight anything that refers to the Old Testament and how Jesus fulfills it. Note how Jesus talks about the Sabbath and look up the Old Testament cross references in this section.