

Series - On Your Mark!

Date/s - 29 Apr 2018

Topic - Jesus Sets The Captives Free (Mark 5:1-20)

Speaker/s - Senior Pastor
Lionel Goh**Welcome** [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

www.thesource4ym.com/games/

www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like “Cornerstone”, “Praises (Be Lifted Up)”, “No Longer Slaves” or “God I Look To You”.

Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

1. Be more aware of the reality of the spiritual realm.
2. Exercise spiritual authority over demonic influences.

Suggested **opening prayers** by leaders to include: “Jesus, we acknowledged that You are the Lord of our lives and of this cell group. We take authority as your children to bind up all works of darkness, unbelief, fear and blockages. Holy Spirit, be our teacher and guide as we discuss on this topic.”

Word [45 min]

This week's sermon is taken from Mark 5:1-20, the story of the demoniac at the Gerasenes.

SP Lionel Goh highlighted the plight of the demoniac: He had been demonised for a long time, homeless, was naked and lived in tombs (Luke 8:27). He was a violent man and a menace to passers-by (Matthew 8:28). He had supernatural strength and could not be tamed or secured. He was a restless person, committing self-mutilation and crying out in pain and desperation (Mark 5:3-5). In summary, the man was a tormented and lonely soul, living a sub-human existence without any human dignity (John 10:10).

But all is not lost for him – God hears the desperate cries of the poor soul. He sent Jesus to set him free!

As Christians, we believe in both the physical and the supernatural realms. It is therefore important for us to have a clear understanding not only of heavenly beings, but of demons as well. Demons are real and they do have some degree of influence on the physical realm.

The reality of demons

SP Lionel spent some time elaborating on what the Bible says about demons.

1. They were once holy angels. God created these beings before He made man. (Job 38:4-7)
2. Satan, also known as Lucifer, was one of the most beautiful and mightiest of all the angels that God created. But he became proud and wanted to be like God. (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-19)
3. Satan conspired with a third of the angels to rebel against God. They failed in their attempt, were defeated, and cast out of heaven. (Revelation 12:4, 12:7-9)
4. Demons are highly organised as the kingdom of Satan (Ephesians 6:12; Matthew 12:25-26)
5. Their main purpose is to destroy humanity. (John 10:10; 1 Peter 5:8)
6. At the Cross, Jesus disarmed and defeated them. (Colossians 2:15)

7. They are destined to spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. (Revelation 20:10)

Jesus' confrontation with the demons

When Jesus arrived at the Gerasenes and the demoniac came out to meet him, He confronted the demons inside the man. When Jesus asked the demon his name, he replied that it was Legion – meaning that a large number of demons were in the man. A legion was a military unit in the Roman army that consisted of over 6,000 soldiers. Therefore, possibly around 6,000 demons were living in the man! Demons, being spiritual beings, do not occupy physical space so it is possible for many demons to reside within one person.

Legion begged Jesus not to torture them but instead to send them into a herd of pigs. Jesus gave them permission and they left the man, entering the pigs and causing them to drown in a nearby lake.

What can we learn from this?

Demons are destructive forces, and this was manifested in the way they caused the pigs to commit suicide. The demoniac was able to continue living, albeit in great suffering, with thousands of demons inside him. This illustrates man's capacity to hold great evil within himself. As believers, we ought to be aware of our deeply sinful nature. From Jesus' confrontation with the demons, we see that there was no fight between Jesus and the demons, as Jesus had full and complete authority over them!

The impact of Jesus casting out the demons

Once Jesus cast the demons out, the man was completely restored (Mark 5:15). The man was calm, composed, clothed, and cognizant. In effect, he became Jesus' first missionary when Jesus told him to return home and tell the people what God had done for him (Mark 5:18-20).

Surprisingly, the residents in the Gerasenes were unhappy with what Jesus had done. Because so many pigs drowned in the water, they would have lost a big portion of their livelihood. They valued money over lives and would rather have had the man continue to be demonised than to lose their source of income.

Practical applications

What does all this have to do with us? Here are some practical pointers:

1. Demons are real and we need to be vigilant about them (1 Peter 5:8-9).
Satan commonly attacks believers in the following ways:
 - a. Plants doubts and fears in our mind. (Genesis 3:1-7)
 - b. Tempts us with sexual immorality. (1 Corinthians 7:5)
 - c. Creates disunity among believers. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
 - d. Slanders us before God. (Revelation 12:10)
 - e. Takes us down through pride. (1 Peter 5:6-8)
 - f. Distracts us with worldly riches. (Matthew 4:8-9)
2. At the Cross, Jesus defeated Satan. Jesus also has full authority over Satan and his demons. (Colossians 2:15)
3. Jesus has delegated His authority (including authority over demons) to us to continue His Great Commission. (Matthew 28:18-20)
4. God wants us to exercise our spiritual authority over our lives, homes, ministries, and workplaces. (James 4:7-8)

Discussion Questions

1. **SP Lionel reminded us that Jesus has authority over demons and He delegated that authority to us believers. How does that change your perspective of the kind of influence and command we have over situations and temptations that distract us from God's will?** [15 min]
2. **Do you have a personal experience of an oppression by the evil spirit? How did the Holy Spirit deliver you from that encounter?** [15 min]
3. **A physical or emotional demonic encounter is one way that demons can oppress us. However, sometimes the oppression can be in less obvious forms. SP Lionel mentioned a few of these ways, such as tempting us to sin or causing disunity amongst us. Get into small groups to share and support each other in prayer, taking authority over Satan's influence on our lives.** [15 min]

Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. Every RiverLifer will learn to exercise the authority that Lord Jesus promises in Matthew 28:18-20. Release freedom, joy and peace into the lives of the members.

Announcements

1. **COME EXPERIENCE COMMUNITY AT OUR UPCOMING CELL ZONAL CAMPS!**
Visit our Camp Booths at the Fellowship Atrium for details and registration
2. **UNDERSTANDING GOD'S LOVE & PURPOSE FOR HIS CHURCH:
LEARNING WEEKEND WITH DR RICHARD GOETZ**
Session 1: Fri, 11 May | 8-10pm | Grace Chapel
Session 2: Sat, 12 May | 9am-12.30pm | Grace Chapel
Session 3: Sat, 12 May | 1.30pm-4.30pm | Victory Chapel

Sign up online via bit.ly/rlclearn-rg or at the Information Counter by Sun, 6 May.
For more information, please contact Pastor Suzanna Chia at 65114111,
or email her at suzannachia@riverlife.org.sg.

Church Vision Statement:

"A vibrant family where sons and daughters mature and reveal the Father's glory from generation to generation."