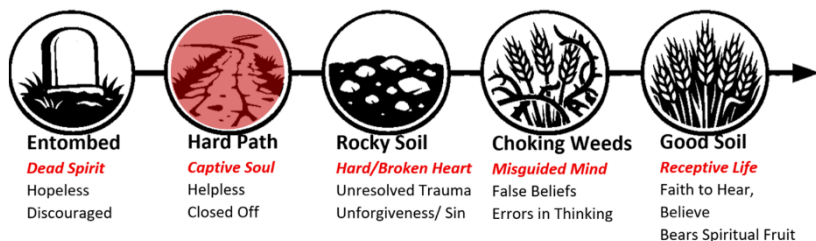


3.7.C(20).Hard Path: Freeing from Spiritual Bondage. Mark 5:1-20.

Mark 5:1-20.

⁶ And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. ⁷ And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, **Son of the Most High God?** I adjure you by God, do not torment me." ⁸ For he was saying to him, "**Come out** of the man, you unclean spirit!" ⁹ And Jesus asked him, "What is your **name?**" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." Mark 5:6-9

Background:



Free Will or Captive Souls?

What we think of as the “Self” is what was formerly called the “soul,” the memories, character, and uniqueness that may you uniquely alive in this world. In the modern mind, the “soul” or “self” is naturally “free” and exercises choice and will as a completely free agent operating in a *neutral* landscape of other *free agents*.

However, the Biblical reality is far different. The Bible recognizes that we are not born into a neutral space but a world ruled by powers, the highest being the unseen spiritual powers whose

influence far outranks earthly powers as the heavens are higher than the earth.

And, if the “freedom” to choose is the ability given to living things, we as a human family and our generations have lived in spiritual *deadness* from the very beginning of our story. In this spiritual deadness, we not only lost any rights we had as the chosen family of God, but we are under the dark power who caused this widespread death, the corrupting Serpent who first deceived our first parents to reject God as their Lord and sin against him, renouncing his *spiritual life* which he had passed to them to make their souls alive—*hai nefesh* in both body and spirit, having been given his very breath—his *nashoma*. Under the Lordship of God, we humans were truly free in the family grace of God-*Elohim*. Ironically, seeking to be freed from this *Lordship*, we became enslaved to

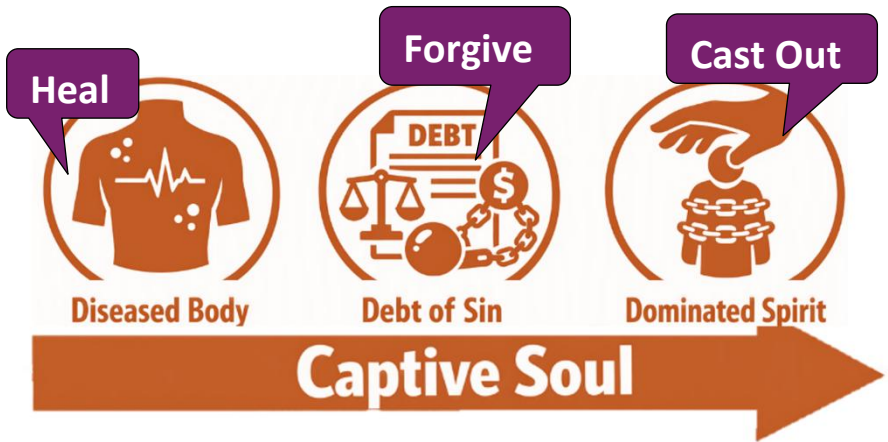
the power of death rather than life, to a tyrannical lord whose only goal for us is to “steal, kill, and destroy” (John 10:10).

With souls with no *spiritual life* from God to animate and emancipate us and *our fallen, dead flesh* captive to the dark lord of this world, we are unable to turn to God or choose his good, for truly, “nothing good dwells” in us, that is, in our “flesh” (Romans 7:18).

So, when Jesus Mashiach teaches that the “Word of God” sown to produce a liberating “faith” in us often falls on the “Hard Path”—that is, the Word is sown in those whose “captive souls” have no possibility at all to choose to receive the Word, for Satan’s enslaving devices render the Word inaccessible and easily removed.

Thus, the only hope for the Word bearing the fruit of faith for those whose souls are held

captive by Satan's enslavement, is the promise of liberation—the power of the Lord Jesus and his Kingdom is needed to break these bondages by God's direct intervention:



- **Heal Diseased Body:** Because our souls are bonded with our bodies, the afflictions, diseases, and pains which trouble our bodies also imprint our souls. Anyone who has suffered through dental pain, or broke a

bone, or lost a limb knows the affect of this pain on one's self of well-being and wholeness. So, the enemy uses bodily affliction, such as when Job was *plagued with painful boils*, to enslave us and keep the word inaccessible. So, when the afflicted experience the Lord's healing power to give them relief, they understand the mercy of God who seeks their wholeness.

- **Forgive Debt of Sin:** Our original bondage has always been the weight of the infinite sin debt which crushes our souls, knowing that we are dead and condemned before God. So, when Mashiach, "the Son of Man," forgives us and releases us with his forgiveness, which he has paid for by the ransom of his own infinite life as the Son of God, our souls are unburdened to draw near

to hear what this merciful Lord has to say to us!

- **Cast out dominating unclean spirits:** In the realm of the spirit, unclean spirits or demons will defile or even dominate a life to captivate a soul. As serving the dark lord whose rule of death rightfully subjugates those who are dead to God, so these lesser demons will dominate a person's life and soul first by the enslaving snares of sin, addiction, and idolatry. Through these enslaving devices, unclean spirits can advance their domination of a person until his or her choice is overruled by this dominating spirit. Only a greater power, the Kingdom power of Lord Mashiach, has the right to cast out these dominating spirits.

Of these three forms of soul-domination, the power of the Kingdom must overpower the Kingdom of darkness and its rule before the person might be open to the Word of God.

However, there is a final form of domination that stubbornly captivates the souls of its subjects: **false religion** is likely the most devious method of enslavement, because such religious deception removes the need for redemption and even undermines the Spirit's witness of the Kingdom. Jesus warns that by denying the Kingdom the Spirit's rightful witness, false religion blasphemes against the Spirit so that its adherents reject the Word of God as their act of devotion (Mark 3:29). So, captive souls must be freed of the control of deceptive



religion before the Gospel of the Kingdom can reach willing hearts.

Focus:

1. Dominated: Unclean Spirit controls life. 5:1-7
2. Freeing from Bondage: Man: Jesus permits unclean spirit to leave. 5:8-13
3. Testifying of Lord's Mercy: 5:14-20

Consider:

As disciples seeking to plant the Word of God in people whose souls are held “captive” to the enslaving devices of the dark lord, we must understand the degrees by which a *soul* might be captivated to know how we can appeal to the Lord for appropriate release.



Bodily afflictions captivate the soul by *distorting* and *defining* a person's sense of "self" so that the light of the Word of God is met with a *darkened unreadiness*. For example, the leper, whose body was in a state of *decay*, viewed himself as also *unclean* (Mark 1:40). More destructively, **sin and the debt** of its impending punishment *destroy* the soul, taking away the *image* of God we were meant to bear and dehumanizing the sinner (1 Peter 2:11). But, more seriously, **unclean spirits** dominate the soul, exercising the power of death and darkness to *take over a person's life*. We can see this in the inevitable way that habitual sin and

addiction will so weaken and drain the soul that the next step is a total spiritual domination by the unclean spirit.

But, of all these means of *soul captivity*, the most resistant to the Word are **deceptive religions**, whose teachings directly undermine and reject the Word of God. So, deceptive religions captivate the soul by *denying it* the ability to choose and receive the Word, using human relationships and customs as convincing reasons to reject the Gospel.

1. Dominated: Unclean Spirit controls life. 5:1-7

When we first are introduced to this man of the Gerasenes, he is described as a “man with an unclean spirit” (5:2). This man’s soul is so captured by these unclean spirits that no trace of the man is seen. All his actions and words are taken over by this unclean spirit, and he lives

lawlessly (5:3) and in wild rebellion against order and human society. Thus, we can see that this man's demonization has so overwhelmed him to his very soul, which is powerless to resist. Under the control of the demon, this man has no option to choose to turn to the Lord or hear his Word.

2. Freeing from Bondage: Jesus permits unclean spirit to leave. 5:8-13

As a spiritual being, this unclean spirit is fully exposed to the realm of the spirit, revealing that the power of the Lord Jesus by virtue of his status as the "Son of the Most High God" is irresistible.

It is interesting to consider here the connection between these two realms of "heaven" and "earth," of the unseen spiritual realm of demons and heavenly sonship, and the seen realm of men and boats and chains.

Though the realm of the spirit is unclean, it has the powerful place to dominate and influence the seen world of human bodies and actions. So, the demonized man, driven by this unclean spirit, was able to resist “binding” by even “wrenching the chains apart” (4). So, fleshly, human ability alone has no power to constrain the spiritual realm. In the flesh, relying on our purely human abilities, we will be easily overpowered by spiritual beings.

But, Jesus comes as both the Son of Man and the Son of God, and this duality impacts the spiritual realm, where the power and place of Jesus as the Son of God is not diminished. So, though we have no fleshly ability to resist the unclean spirits, we have the right to *pray* and ask the Lord and our Heavenly Father to “bind” or “release” in the spiritual realm—to “bind” and render powerless these unclean spirits, and to

“release” the captives held under their oppressive power.

So, when the Lord Jesus commands, “Come out of the man” (8), the demon must obey. Notice the irrevocable power that Jesus exercises. As “the Son” of the Most High God, he shares in the Father’s authority over the demons. The demon is forced to obey against its will, even though it *delays to plead for mercy*. So, even the “legion” of demons possessing the man could not stand against a single command from the Lord.

This incident reveal that *in the flesh*, we have no ability or impact at all over the spiritual realm, for we grasp neither the scale—a *legion of demons* nor the damage afflicting the soul in the unseen realm. To presume that any human person or even group or institution can stand against this darkness is foolish. But, like Jesus Mashiach, we

are made part of the *household* of God and so are “recognized” as legitimate heirs with a rightful part in its power. In this way, Paul was “recognized” by the demons who dispatched the sons of Sceva as being with “Jesus” (Acts 19:15).

3. Testifying of Lord’s Mercy: 5:14-20

The result of being *freed* from this legion of demons is that the oppressed man came to his “right mind” (15). He regained his life back, and his soul was freed now to choose to follow the Lord, begging to “be with” Jesus (19). With compassion, Jesus sends him back to his “home” to testify of his work as the “Lord,” which he did as well as proclaim His works “in the Decapolis” (20).

So, as you seek to bring others into the Kingdom of God to live under the Lordship of Jesus Mashiach, know that many like this demonized

man are unready and unable to respond to the Gospel because their souls are “captivated” by the dark lord through some form, whether it is disease, sin or its addiction, unclean spirits, or most powerfully, through *deceptive religion*. Be sure to pray and ask the Lord to free them first that they be in their “right mind” to respond to the Word of God!

Question:

Further Discovery:

Acts 19:11: Seven Sons of Sceva.

A. Sons of Sceva. Unknown/ Human Authority

Human reputation.

1. Jesus Mashiach: Known Spiritual Authority.

2. Paul: Recognized: Under Spiritual Authority.