

Week of February 12-18

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## **OUR FREEDOM THROUGH HIS AUTHORITY**

Scripture Reading: Read Mark Chapter 5

A quiet Saturday evening turned into a full test of faith that ended in a demonstration of God's authority. A pastor was called by a family for a person who they thought was demon-possessed. The house was heavy with demonic spiritual forces but these forces did not have authority until the person challenged the spirits to show him they were real. At that moment, the person invited in the enemy and suffered greatly as a result. It took some time in prayer that night but once the person accepted Christ as Lord and Savior the spiritual bondage began to break. Why? We must remember that the enemy is a legalist and the person gave the enemy authority to affect his life. When he relinquished that right by confessing Christ, the enemy had to go.

For some of you, reading about demon possession brings fear and anguish, but it is a reality found in Scripture. The good news is that Jesus has conquered all demonic forces by the cross (see *Colossians 2:15*). Throughout Mark, the Gospel writer continually shows Jesus' authority over demons. This is certainly true in our chapter reading today. A demon-possessed man came running up to Jesus. When Jesus asked their name, they replied "Legion" for they were many. In Roman military terms, a legion could be up to 6,000 soldiers. Truly, this man was in a sad state and the demons had dehumanized him to the point of becoming like an animal. That is, until Jesus stepped on the scene and set him free!

Jesus still sets people free today not only from demonic possession but also from demonic harassment and oppression. The Bible warns us as believers not to give the devil a foothold in our lives (*Ephesians 4:27*). When we walk in unforgiveness towards a brother or sister, live in persistent and unrepentant sin or dabble in witchcraft, we can open the door to the devil and he is given a legal right to harass and oppress us until that door is closed. We also battle strongholds at times in our lives, those entrenched patterns of thought, attitude, value or behavior rooted in our sin nature, and these, too, can become entry points for the devil's attacks in our lives. It is important to note that not everything in your life is a spiritual battle. However everything we do in life may have spiritual consequences. Christ came to set captives free including you and me. He wants to see footholds removed and strongholds torn down in our lives. As we submit to God and resist the devil, the devil must flee. Since the devil has no authority but that which we give him, it's time to renounce what we've given him and walk instead in Christ's freedom.

**Action Step & Prayer Focus:** Ask God to show you any strongholds and footholds in your life and pray that they may be removed. This may require prayer and fasting from other brothers and sisters who can come along side of you.

**Take-a-way:** Removing footholds and tearing down strongholds are two keys to walking free!

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