

Reading Tracks

TRACK ONE

Follow along with basics of the story in a short selection of readings this week..

Monday: Mark 5:1-9

Tuesday: Mark 5:1-20

Wednesday: Matthew 8:28-34

Thursday: Luke 8:26-31

Friday: Luke 8:32-39

Saturday: Mark 1:21-28

TRACK TWO

Get a little bigger perspective by reading assigned sections from *The Story* © 2011 by Zondervan.

Read pages 343-44 and 353-55 this week.

TRACK THREE

Get the whole story by reading through most of the Bible in longer sections.

In your Bible, read Luke 1-3 this week.

This Week's Scripture Memory Verse

"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 (NIV)

Next Week in Worship

Next Weeks' Message: *Not a Fan*

Next Week's Readings: Mark 3:1-6; Luke 15

In episodes like the one we read today, Jesus demonstrated his authority to restore lives and defeat the power of sin and evil in us. When *The Big God Story* continues next week we will read some stories of opposition to Jesus, especially among a group called the Pharisees, and see that not everyone was happy with the things he did and taught in the name of God.



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Group Discussion

Connect

Where's a place you have been that felt very foreign or out-of-your-comfort-zone to you?

Learn

Read Mark 5:1-20. This is a very colorful story. As an exercise in simply learning the story, have someone in your group turn to another person in the group and re-tell them the story in your own words. Or, if it's easier, imagine that a child asked you to tell them this story. How would you tell it to them? (If you have children in your group, you could include them in this exercise.)

In vv. 6-9 Jesus has a tense encounter with this man and the unclean spirits that are afflicting him, but Jesus never seems to lose sight of this man as a person. His words in v. 9 are so *normal*: "What's your name?"

- Are there times of challenge or conflict in our lives where we lose sight of the humanity in others?
- Why do you think that happens?

If there was ever someone who was beyond help, this story presents a man who would have been it. He lived on the wrong side of the tracks, was spiritually possessed, lived in a cemetery (a source of tremendous cultural uncleanness), without clothes on, threatened himself and others, and possessed unnatural, dangerous strength. This story is told partly to show us Jesus' power to save *anyone*.

- Have you ever felt like you were beyond the power and grace of God?
- Do you know anyone who has given up on knowing God? Could you imagine God using you to represent his love and grace to them?

In our message this week we learned about what it means when God wins. After reflecting on this story, how would you describe what it means for God to win over the power of sin?

Apply

At the end of this story, Jesus sends the man back home again. "Tell them how much the Lord has done for you." Our witness to Christ doesn't have to be complicated or sophisticated. It's nothing more than your own story.

- What is it that the Lord has done for you? How do you experience the Lord's mercy?
 - Is that a story you could share with others?
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Pray

This week's story reveals the spiritual side of one man's struggles. No doubt his problems were also emotional, social, and perhaps even medical. As you pray this week for friends or family in challenging times, be sure to pray for spiritual health and growth in their needs as well.