

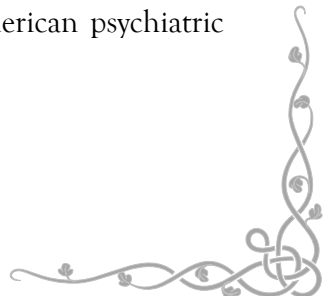
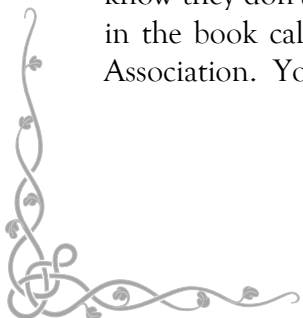
Topic	The Gospel and the Wholeness of Mind (Part 1)
Reference	Mark 5:1-20
Date	16 August 2020
Speaker	Arnold Lim

We are going to do a very serious topic today and this is an article which brother John Goh wrote last month, which is a great article. I'm not going to go into it in detail, but just to follow up on what Yew Lum spoke, besides what happened with the MCO, besides financial problems, when people have financial problems other things come up. When you stick people in an apartment, small apartment or home and they have no money and they just see four walls, emotional issues come up. In the last few months in family life ministry, we had a lot of cases coming up, a lot of people struggling. So one thing which I was very thankful was, the theme started what was known as Talk 2 U initiative, which was for people to call like telephone counseling line. And after that also we did a lot of, much more in the earlier years. So this is a combination of maybe the last three years of me doing this and also the last few months, which has been very heavy. The article is self-explanatory. Let me just start with this. These are the common things people say.

Why do you need to talk about this? Why do we need to talk about counseling, et cetera, et cetera. Let me just give you one reason, and I hope it's enough. Because people who suffer tremendously like this, especially when they go to what is called a clinical disorder, they won't tell you. They will suffer in silence. Let us just take depression. You have severe depression, you will not tell people. So if you're watching this or you're here just for the few people in our church that suffer we will do this sermon. Because that's what Jesus would have done. He would have gone out for the lost sheep. So I just asked you to bear with me if even if you feel you're not one of this, just for those that suffers that they do not suffer in silence.

Before I continue I just want to thank many people. I am only three years doing this, to technically talk about this you should be a trained therapist and has some pastoral training. I'm an architect. So I'm completely out of my league. This is not my area experience. I don't even think in the area of gifting, but I thank God I have a very good committee. They have been with me for years. I will not mention their names. They work very hard. I thank also for a team of what we call para counselors. We have a pool of 25 last few months we are using 10 of them. So we are thick already and I think the Life Groups and many people who have supported us. The way we do this, we do this in teams. And I'd like to thank you.

Let me just, before I start the message say this, I have been talking about some quite heavy stuff. I'm not referring to anyone because people can be very sensitive. Hey Arnold is talking about me. No, we are not talking about you. I had the privilege of meeting many people who struggle and this is just a general thought. So today we're going to look at the idea of mental health, wholeness struggles, illness disorder. Let me give you two caveats before we start. Number one is a very complicated topic. People assume they know they don't. You can't even get a definition of mental illness. The most common definition is found in the book called "The Diagnosis and Statistics Manual of Mental Disorder", but American psychiatric Association. You take that and with the Mayo Clinic definition, they don't even match.



Now what's the role of the church? What's the difference between a psychiatry, psychologists, psychotherapists, and therapists, and you have a problem, who do you see? Is it medication? Is it therapy with pastoral care? Is it something I think for a few people in church to be involved in, is it something that everybody involved him. And when you talk about training, what do you mean by training? What do you mean by biblical counseling? What do you mean by counseling was the end goal of counseling. So there is a lot of confusion. So let's have grace.

I notice, a lot of people are very opinionated on this matter. But there is no consensus even on the definition. We should have grace to say, we should not have any consensus on this. So today we are just going to have a conversation. This is not what you call prescriptive sermon. It is basically a conversation. Here's the second thing, it is not the Holy Grail or discipleship. Just because someone doesn't is not very passionate about it, don't judge the person. I noticed one thing by evangelical Christians; we can take everything and go off stream with it.

I was recently reading a movement that says we should go back to the Torah that the reformed position about doing a way the ceremonial laws is unbiblical. Jesus should be called Yeshua. You should all not eat pork. Very big movement. Now you have a right to that, afterward they only judge you on that. It is like the last time they judge you whether you speak in tongues or you judge you whether you've got five points, judge you whether you are reformed, judge you whether you are baptized, judge you. Let us not do that. Let's not judge people, whether they do counseling or not. This is a very, very difficult topic. Let's all have some humility and we learn. And so today we are just going to have a conversation and we're going to continue this conversation to next week. And I hope after this, we'll talk more about it. There's actually the main aim. I asked we talk about it because this is a topic we do not talk about it. And so today we look at the gospel and mental wholeness.

Let's come before the Lord in prayer...

We read the text just now, so I'm not going to go to it. Just go through the whole thing. Let me just give you a few context, which is very important for us to pick up. Number one, that region is Gerasenes, is the town of Gadara. You find this also in the book of Luke. It is a pagan area. Now let me ask you a question. When was the last time you saw a man or a woman who is demon possessed? Very-very unlikely. Unless maybe you come from some other church and you are suspicious, when someone tells you I saw a demon possessed man, you go hmm. But you tell someone that I met someone who had schizophrenia or bipolar problem or ADHD, or, you know, antisocial personality disorder or OCD, you said okay. That means if I tell you, now you meet someone with a classified mental illness, you said yes. But if I asked you to have you met a man with a demon possession, you get suspicious.

Now you flip it the other way around. In the time of Jesus, is the opposite you know. The word demon possession was common, it is common because even in a pagan town they accepted it. You find it in the book of Luke, whether you're in synagogue everywhere, they saw demon possession as common. So here is the theory which may not be correct. Is that what people saw last time as demon possession was actually mental illness. Now that's a proposition for you to consider. For example, epilepsy in the early centuries was considered demon possession, but it's not. So there is something for you to already tell you the controversies about this matter, because there is lot of non-clarity because what Mark is writing is that a

pagan town who does not believe in God saw this as demon possession is a common thing. Now here's the second thing. We should be more critical in biblical exegesis or biblical texts. The story first starts off the four accounts of the kingdom of God, and basically Mark gives you a parable. So you find it in chapter four, four parables. It starts on the parable of the sower and it goes all the way down. So the context is the kingdom of God. Always remember that. After that, when it comes to this, there are four accounts,

- Jesus and the storm,
- Jesus and the demon possessed man,
- Jesus and the woman who is very sick and
- Jesus and a young girl who dies.

You notice that four parables, four miracles, they are match. Because Jesus is talking, Mark is telling us, here is the kingdom of God. This is how the kingdom of God operates. Notice there is environment, the storm, demon possession the mind, there is illnesses and then there is death. At the end of the story, this is what he says in chapter six. He says this, they went out. This is not about Jesus. This is the church. They went out and preach that people should repent. That's the gospel. Here's the second part to tie in. They drove out many demons. That's today's text. Anointed, many sick people. There's the next account. What is the second part? That's the gospel. That's how you understand it. So it gives you a hint of the role of discipleship. It is not just about sin and repentance. It goes out to the community. So we're going to study a little bit of the context.

Now, the way to do this is I'm going to take this in four vantage points. That means we're going to take it from the position of the demon possessed man, some people call it the demonike, the demon itself. The people of the town and Jesus. So four perspectives to give you. Four points created, uncreated, recreated. That's the gospel story. Number two, the domain of mental brokenness. And we are not going to go clinical, we're going to go biblical. And this one, do you know those that stay at Taman Tomb. Do you know or not? You should? And it's a strange commandment. Jesus says, follow me, but do this person. He says, don't follow me. So let's go to the first one.

Now the first one is interesting. The NIV version says, a man with an impure spirit. If you take the message, the message says mad man. Now that's fascinating. Why? Because unlike other accounts of demon possession in the Bible, we basically have someone yelling, this person has what we call behavioral symptoms and the behavioral symptoms are very-very detailed and side this is the classic text on mental disorder. So here is the first objection, this is about demon possession, nothing to do with mental illness. That's the first objection some people say, now that is a valid objection, and we're going to study this, but let me give an example. Let me give you detail, when you look at his symptoms, I read from another pastor who is a psychiatrist online, they say he has got two symptoms. One is, he has got bipolar with a symptom of mania. The second, because of the name Legion, he suffers some schizophrenia with the symptom of mania.

Now the point is this, an unsound mind, Is spiritual warfare or clinical disorder. That is the key question. One book, David Murray,

“As the brain is the most complex organ in our body, it is liable to be the most affected of all the organs by the Fall and the divine curse on our bodies.”

Once you say that this is not the domain of clinical signs, it is the domain of the church. That's important. Ed Welch with David Powlison founded a very famous movement called the Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation. It says this,

“The problem with immediately opting for medical explanation is that, once the decision is made, every other perspective seems superficial or irrelevant.”

So here is the thing. Someone has got depression, go see a doctor. The perspective is clinical, but I humbly suggest to you, why this text is important is that the starting point is always spiritual. You see what the Bible is saying? It doesn't matter whether it is in a sense everything that happens in mental illness comes from a spiritual attack from the devil. MacArthur, I'm not a big fan of John MacArthur, but he gave an exegesis on it. Very interesting! He says, you look at serial killers, you look at Charles Manson, Jack the ripper, why do you call them monsters? Why does someone becomes psychopathic, now that is something we don't talk about in church.

You don't think that there's a demonic force behind it. I think he's quite right. So here's the point. The point is the demon says this to Jesus. My name is Legion, for we are many, very chilling words. This is extremely chilling fact. So, let's recap a little bit, you know, what happens is that when Jesus arrives, this man runs to him. We find from the book of Luke that he is not the only one. So the tombs are the place where the town people throw rejected people. In fact, Luke tells you there are two of them. So very likely all people who are not normal all stay in Taman Tun and they you get fat. This guy is so unrestrained, they tied him down. Basically Taman Tun is your first time doing Tanjung Rambutan. Only thing is there is no padded walls and no strait jackets. They tie you the irons and you're in so much pain. You cut yourself with stones. It's the first account of bodily harm in the Bible, is very frightening. How the Bible is so accurate to the things we see out there. And of course you run to Jesus. It's very interesting because it talks about the authority of Jesus. And of course, it's what you want. We find that when we look at verse 8, we meet Jesus son of most high. Did you come to torture me? And Jesus says, come out of man you evil spirit and Jesus asked him, what is your name? My name is Legion for we are many. And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out the area.

Number one, it shows you the authority of Jesus. He has authority over the storm. He has authority over the demons. He has authority over bodies who are aching and the final archer of the story, he has authority over death. That is the gospel and the power of the gospel and we live in a time of now and not yet. The gospel is not completely fulfilled. The church fulfills that function in the not yet. Don't quite get that, we will go slowly in that. Not a select few people, but the church as an entire body. But when you say my name is Legion, we are many. A Legion is an army, is a Roman Garrison of 2000 soldiers at least. Why do you think there are 2000 pigs, by the way you drown 2000 pigs, you bankrupt the whole town. That's all your shares gone. That's all your shares liquidated 0. 2000 pigs that the narrative is telling you that, what is he saying? He's saying this. It's not one demon. Jesus isn't squaring up. No, this isn't WWF with one demon verses Jesus. Who is Jesus squaring up against? The entire army of Satan. That's the way the story is presenting itself. It is Jesus versus the devil.

You must understand how the story moves. And so when you break it down, this is what the gospel is. In Genesis God created us, that is Fall and at the Fall, the mind as David Murray says, is the first thing that falls. That's why we have depression, anxiety and all sorts of things that goes about it. And then the psalms pick up, the heart is broken. So much of the Psalms is about the depth of darkness. I cry out to you O Lord and we get a culmination of it here. And so Jesus recreates. Fall, redemption, recreation.

Notice everything in a narrative does not suggest counseling should be a small sub ministry of the church by a few people who are trained. Everything in biblical evidence shows, it is a role of the church because the church is the body of Christ. I want us to pick this up. I wrote it up there. That's what the devil did and what Jesus recreated. So something for us to look at. So let me give you a few scenarios about this, which is something very practical and you see how complex this topic is. And like I said, today, we are just going to go into having a discussion. That's very common. I can't sleep. I wake up many times worrying about many things and again, I want to stress if you are watching this, I'm not referring to anyone. I meet quite a lot people telling me this. I lost my job, last two months I wake at three four in sweats. No, if someone tells you that, what do you tell that person.

Number one, go see a doctor. He will prescribe you some medicine to help you sleep. Psychosomatic, you have a problem, so medication will help you sleep. Is it wrong? Doctor could be Christian, right? Here's option two. You go and see a therapist. He teach you how to breathe in four, breathe out seven, do this, do mindfulness meditation, sit down and look at all your past. You know, maybe go for a retreat somewhere. Sit down, eat organic food, do yoga, and then release all your inner pain. You think that is unbiblical. There's even a Christian version of that. There are Christian camps to help you do this. Don't see a doctor, you get addicted to the medicine, go and see a therapist. The doctor only prescribes you psychotropic drugs, but therapy of eight sessions. We will tick through your inner problems, we will wrestle with hit, that's why you need training and we will deal with it. So another person that cannot, this is very humanistic. This is not from scripture. We are supposed to disciple people.

So third option, go see your pastor. He will counsel you. Didn't the Bible says all scripture is useful for, 1-Timothy 3:16. Are we seeing the word of God is not enough? Isn't structure full of people who are depressed, have mental issues. Are you saying we cannot find from the scripture, do you not have faith to use the Bible to help you. Notice in all three scenarios, let me ask you a question. If someone had a problem like this, how would you answer? And you are like, most of us, we don't know, we would just Google find a nearest thing or someone told us this, we do that. That's why this thing has so much confusion. Let me give you a little bit of this, because they break this down into a few things because it's highly controversial.

Option one is a theological position called levels of explanation. It simply means the church should not get involved in clinical matters. That means, like I have a flu, I see a doctor. You got a depression, you go see a psychiatrist. SJMC is down the road, why is the church doing this? That is position one, it is called levels of explanation. After you cure the guy, come back, we do Bible study with you. We pray for you. I have one visiting preacher got very annoyed when I brought this up, he may literally told me that over out there on the table, you should've been doing this, the church has no business of getting involved in this. It is called levels of explanation.

Let me go to option three and you will see where FBC is. Option three is a position called biblical counseling or to be more accurate is under a movement called CCEF. Biblical counseling argues that all psychology is essentially evil. There are grades of it. Because counseling and psychiatry and psychology comes from Freud and Freud hated God. His predecessor Yung hated God, the guy before hated God. Psychiatrists and psychologists and therapists teach empowerment by self and self is idolatry. When you teach people in church to do empathy, listening to people, self-care, you are teaching people humanistic thing, because that kind of training is exactly a secular training. The church will not do this. See the confusion. They have a whole program on this and then there is secular psychiatrist. Psychiatric organization take pock shots at them to see it is completely irresponsible, completely not supported by science. It denies science, denies research, because neuroscience is a science that's called biblical counseling.

Option two has two. One is called integration and that is FBC's position. See a therapist, preferably Christian, God is a God of science. God is a God of scripture and they two go hand in hand. It is a very elastic relationship and that's why it is so difficult to understand this. Which part of therapy do you take? Someone takes what we call cognitive behavioral therapy. CBT, how much of that is biblical? It's not another person takes emotionally focused therapy. How much is there. Someone does family therapy and you find a lot of therapy really is actually humanistic. You know, they teach empowerment by yourself. You can solve your problem. That is not what the Bible says. God can stop your problems, not you. And therapy has an end result. I cure you of your symptoms, it is successful. That's not what the bible says. The Bible does not define success by curing your symptoms. The Bible defines success by you repenting of sins and glorifying God. And if a person cures your depression and in that process makes you so self-empowered that you have no place for the church, he has basically led you down the road to hell.

Why do you think this topic is so dangerous and difficult and we are having a conversation of it? After that another movement started called Christian psychology. I won't even go there, very difficult. So let us do a little bit and try to learn. So now let me look at a domain of the unsound mind and we try to break it down. Now, if you look at this, why this text is so interesting is because you look carefully at the way it is described by why people are fascinated by it, because Mark is very detailed by his behavior. One, we notice there's a change to his physiology. He suddenly became super human. Number two, there is a change to also the fact that where there put him. There is an environmental impact. And obviously there's very certain patterns to his behavior. Let me give you a three that is very critical. To me this is center piece.

Number one, there's a biological change. His unnatural strength, he is able to break his restraint. The text says, no one was strong enough to subdue him, we find it in verse four. He had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. Wow. Why? Because he is Legion and again science tells you, science tells you, when people have a certain condition they can amplify their bodies. There is a lot of research to show you they can break bonds. So that is one. Very obviously market detailed. So the first thing to look at is biological. And I'll tell you later on what Dr Martin Lloyd Jones, one of the most famous reformed preachers talks about this. The second is environmental, he is in Taman Tun. Basically what is this? The town was like, ask upper income Chinese people, we watch Astro, we got life, we got no time for such a person, so we stick the guy at Taman Tun and feed him. Obviously he's being fed. We stick him there far away. So number one, he is living in complete isolation. He has no society, and we all know without people around you, you do not develop. Number two, he is living among

the dead. The text is telling you that, you know. He is living in a place, not fit for a human being to live. Three times it is mentioned, he is living in a tomb. Mark is trying to give you a point. That's not how you treat a human being.

Third point. It is the will or some people call it volition. And this is key to the Bible because the will is it, this is the whole the either thing of we being predestined and we are free to choose. His life functioning cognition is impaired. Why? Number one, he is naked. He's running around naked. We know that because at the end of the text when he is recovered, he said to be fully dressed. We see that in verse 15 when it says, they saw the man who was possessed the demon, sitting there dressed and in his right mind. That means he was naked. Before that, we find he is in pain. Why? Because we are told in verse five night and day among the tombs, he would cry out. He is in pain and his mind is so tormented, he is self inflicting himself, you know people who are suicidal first go through that. They will cut themselves. It is very descriptive and I want to suggest this is key.

So even if you don't have a mental issue, I suggest that this is key to your thing. And the summit church put it in a very, very good diagram. The summit church proposes, number one, counseling is the domain of the entire church, not a select few trained people and these are the three areas you got to look at. But before that, let me give you what Dr Martin Lloyd Jones. He says that, Christians don't understand how physical, psychological and spiritual realms interrelate because Satan muddies the boundaries. Many of our troubles are caused because we think our problem is spiritual when it is physical.

We think our problem is physical, when it is emotional or spiritual. So it's an interesting point. So let me go back to this diagram and I want to see whether we can help. You see the reason why a lot of us don't like to get involved in this because we find that it is beyond us, but it is actually a bit easier if you understand some broad parameters and I suggest it's something every Christian should understand. I am going to give you four of these orders. Again, I'm an architect, I'm not even a doctor, but to understand, let's give you the first one. It is called postpartum disorder. You do the studies on these people who do this can commit suicide, you know, extreme cases they will drown their babies. Do not, do not take this lightly and they are church going people. What happens to this? This is very simple. Postpartum is something that happens after a woman gives birth. So where is the centering of this, it is obviously biological.

Once you understand that, you understand a woman after giving birth, you really have to take care. Don't be like most men try to rationalize. I don't know, what's your problem, you know? It is a disorder. The moment a diagnosis is made the church supports by giving space, because it is biological, you anchor yourself in that you understand how to basically support. Here is another one post-traumatic stress disorder, much more common than you imagine. I give you a very simple case. You, as a teenager were in a car with your friends, very happy driving and bang. You had an accident. Your car turned boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. At that moment, you think you're going to die? And the car turns turtle, you are now 45, you think you got over it, you never did. You know why? Because every time you're in a car and someone goes very far before you, you become apprehensive, that's called environmental.

So when you are a church and you decide as a live group to go on outing, everybody has a goal, very fast, the guy that is behind is sweating, you know and you don't realize it. This one anchor itself in environmental, it is a trauma from that past.

Another one, this one is very deadly. The simple English it is called a sociopath. The deadliest part of it is called a psychopath. Antisocial personality disorders are people who are very young are cruel. So imagine you're a parent and your child is cruel. I had a friend who used to share with me, he had a girlfriend and one night he thought he caught the girlfriend outside. You know, what the girlfriend was doing, the girlfriend caught a cat and was bashing the cat against the tree. So people will do this. Have one thing. They are manipulative. They get married. They can show tears, but the intention is really to hurt you, but you cannot see it. And you do the research, family members are the ones who get hurt. The more they call you cannot accept your childhood like that. So you meet a Christian, you know what he sees.

He sees sucker, why I'm going to take you for a ride. And the research shows this one is all three, you know. It is biological, normally the environment pushes it and he has lost his will because these are people who can do cruel things. They feel absolutely no remorse, nothing. Whether it is bashing a cat, stealing money and statistics they all go into crime. Here's one, very common. They call this add ADHD, and this is biological and environmental. And again, parents don't like that. Sometimes you see a young kid running around, running around, running around, maybe it's hyperactive, but what if he has got an disorder and then you just add to it that you're in an environment where you're busy parents. You have no time. You give the kid a device. He spends all his time on his device and he's running around. Guess what you have done to your kid. And please don't tell me the church isn't involved in this.

This is the domain of the church. Are these very complex and we will do a bit of this detail next week, but let me tell you for myself, even what we call a functioning person, I found this helpful. So here is one for all your simple people. Number one, biological as what Dr Martin Lloyd Jones say, sleep, nutrition, exercise, me time. These are things which are critical to discipleship. Don't think it has nothing to do with your spiritual walk. It has everything to do with you spiritual war. Remember Jesus's aim is to go form creation. You are now uncreated by the devil, but to recreate you and look at certain genetic disposition. If you look at Genesis Abraham's family, Abraham was a liar. He lied about his wife. His son was a bigger liar. His son's son was an even bigger liar, his name went deceiver. That is genetic.

So I tend to ask myself, what am I particularly prone to? For example, I get worked up very easily but to say it is very liberating. I don't need to go and psychoanalyze it, but I sit down and say I'm very genetically inclined to a certain sinful behaviors. I admit it and I bring it before God. So biological is critical. I confess, I am considered a health freak. You don't have to be an extreme as me, but a lot of Christians same thing, all of these things are sleep and nutrition and exercise and having downtime has nothing to do discipleship. That is completely nonsense.

Especially men, I may like to be hero, I can do it. You can't do it. You're so stressed at work. You keep saying, I got no time for church, no time when I free or do, which actually means you will never do for church. You so burn yourself out and you don't realize how that affects your daily rhythm and your emotions and your spiritual war. So here is the first thing. When we look at the story and I think John picked it up, we looked at the story of Elijah. He wanted to kill himself, you see, he got fed up. He fought

with Jezebel and he got so fed up, he said God take me home. What's the first thing God says, go get rest and get some food. Biological.

Here is the second one, and this is to me the key area of the church. The church provides the environment. So you are in a family where mum and dad is fighting all the time. You become collateral damage. If you go to work and from young, everybody makes fun of you, they all tell bad jokes, you are a religious Joe, you are outsider all the time. If your family has no time all the time, you do, you glued to a computer, don't know where you go and surf. The dopamine is a dopamine fix is the addiction a transmitter by the way? Yeah, because you need to get high, whether it is a like or surfing the websites, you should not be surfing to. And you don't recognize that you need a deeper high, deeper, high. That's why people into this? They need to go deeper and deeper into it. And burying things that happened to you in the past. The church's job is to substitute this. Let me give you a simple thing that our life group did yesterday. We went hiking to Mount Kiara, Taman Tun.

We did two things. One we exercise. Two, we became family. We created an environment. We call what's the different between a church family and an outside people. I would say people, they judge you, you know, if you're you don't talk, let them speak. Let them do that. You cannot join my clique, but family of God invites everyone along for a hike. So yesterday we hiked, we had people from Hong Kong, people from Sweden, kids, old people and it was such a great time. And I came back. Here's the word, spiritually refreshed. And I'll tell you what we did last night. Yesterday. We did discipleship. We didn't open the Bible. We didn't go over the top of Mount Kiara and did a Sermon on the Mount. We didn't do all that. We just walked and we talked and we bonded. And you have no idea of how that on a spiritual level forms you and here is the last one, will, and will come see many way. The renewal mine comes with tiny habits, little habits you do every day. Habits become you.

In many ways, you are the sum of your daily routine. What you repeatedly do every day becomes you. So you every day do certain things, you do not realize that actually shapes your identity. You know, there's a lot of research into this. They call these tiny habits. So if you're in addiction or you're in bondage or in things where you cannot break out and you're too ashamed to tell everyone, you come to church and you have guilt conscience, you have tried to break out it. You can't break out away. Here's one single simple tip. You can talk to me personally, do small little habits. You know what it does. There is actually a biological shift to it. It actually improves the serotonin level, because serotonin is something that is released when you have achieved something. So after that, you just increase the bar, increase the bar, increase the bar. One day, you will wake up, you will find, you know what, this addiction I am not so attracted to it. A lot of science into this and it is actually very biblical.

Coping mechanism. We all cope with issues one way, which is very unhealthy is we just block it out. You cannot block it out. You actually have to talk it out and work with people to do it. But this to me is critical. So let me just quickly, and in a short while, do you know those that stay at Taman Tomb. You see the end of the story talks about 2000 drowned pigs. What happens is the story is, the demon enters into the pigs, the pigs run down the hill and they all drown, and although they find in verse 14, those tending the pigs ran off, you know why? Because they just bankrupted their bosses and reported this to the town and countryside. And the people went out to see what happened. Now verse 15 is really interesting because it is what you call a juxtaposition. When they came to Jesus, that means, what happened is this,

this pig herders went back and say, hey all your pigs all die already. You know, effectively, the whole town is now bankrupt. So everybody gets very upset. Also the whole town comes out. So they come out and look at how verse 15 says,

When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who'd been possessed by the Legion of demons, sitting there dressed and his right mind and they were afraid. You know, the text is telling you. They came, they saw two things, 2000 drowned pigs, one man made whole, and then the response is they were afraid. You know what they are telling you, 2000 pigs is more valuable than one man made sound. That's what the text is trying to tell you. Because if you value that man that you stuck in tomb, you have been overjoyed that he is now made whole, but they did not see a man made whole, they saw the economy in ruins. And they were afraid.

And how do we know that we reinforce it after that? And then we find in verse 17. Then the people began to plead with Jesus, leave. Wow. Wow. Who really is in spiritual bondage? The demonic man or the town? And we turn it around today sometimes we see people, this person got schizophrenia, this person got bipolar, this person got OCD, this person got ADHD, you know what God is trying to tell you, you know that person could be closer to the kingdom of God than all you fine mentally healthy people. That is story that twisted, that's the twist in the story? Because in the end, I'm going to use a crude word, they don't give a damn about this guy. They don't give a damn. That is how Mark is putting it.

So I tell you, let me just tell you. Why is this important? Because the same thing is thrown back to us today, do you give a damn about these people? How do we know that? Let me tell you a few things people like this suffer. Number one, stigmatization, you can't have them living with us. Stick them in the tombs among the dead. We feed them. They cause trouble, we chain them up. We keep giving them food. Don't say we're cruel, now we go over and give them food. I think an animal will be better than that. So the first thing with people who struggle with mental disorders and the family along with them is they have strong stigmatization.

The mentally ill are one group of handicap people against whom it seems to be socially acceptable to hold prejudice. You look at nowadays we are in the egalitarian time, movies must have a gay person, must have a black person, must have Hispanic person, can even have a physically disabled person, but this is one group for all the left is saying is invisible. The church has to step in this gap, because the world is not doing it.

Number two, you feel overwhelmed. My name is Legion. People who have this problem, they feel they have a hundred voices in their mind. So here is the opposite end, can one use the label of mental conditions as a crutch for avoiding taking responsibility for actions. So someone say, I got depression, I can't do my job because I got depression. Actually, you can do your job, but you're convincing yourself because your depression you can't do your job. When people feel overwhelmed, there are three things they always feel like. Let me just say, number one, they feel no one understands them. They think the whole church talks a lot, but doesn't do, I'm not saying it is true, but how they sort of feel.

Number two, they'll kind of tell you don't preach to me. Don't lecture me. Don't tell me all of these things. No, don't give them, don't give me all these things about, stop telling me, I need to be better, stop

telling me about triumphant life. Don't tell me that God has a good thing. And thirdly, they feel they cannot break out of it. So they feel overwhelmed. Legion is at their door.

Last one is collateral damage, and this is probably the most important. We are not talking about pigs. Do you know who are the real collateral damage? And this one is very heartbreaking, the family. The family, because as the person suffers the loved ones around them suffer. Why do you think we call ourselves family life ministry. A, we become the substitute family. B, we do life because a lot of these people, their life is like this person, is a hellish life and three is the ministry.

So let me just say this, is a long and others' journey. Friendship is very important for those with poor mental health, but it is very hard to be a true friend to someone in such a condition. And when you get involved in this ministry, it is one step forward, two steps back, but as Jesus did it so the church is called. let me end by this. Don't follow me, a strange commitment. Why? Actually Jesus is saying following me by not by saying not following me. Why? Because look at the last verse.

As Jesus in the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him, of course. His life was hell and Jesus made him whole, but Jesus did not let him but said go home. Here's a word to who your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how has mercy on you. Then after that it eat increases on family, the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis. The Decapolis are the ten cities in the Greco-Roman empire; they are your KL of today. The man went beyond that and he witnessed. Jesus told him just go to your family.

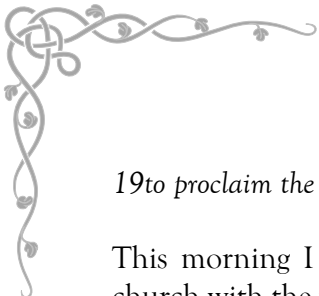
He was the Samaritan woman many times over. He went to his family and not only that he went to the streets of KL and said, Jesus is Lord. That is the power of this ministry and why it should involve everyone and so I close with a few questions for you to consider like I said today, we just have a discussion.

Number one. How do you view mental health issues within the church? There are no answers here. I just want you to pray over this. Secondly, what is the relationship between spiritual warfare and mental health issues? Again, there's no answer. And lastly, how should the church disciple someone who has severe mental health issue because his will is not there. How you bring about renewal of the mind. But let me end with one proposition. To do this, you need the whole body of Christ working together, not a few people and I will close with the words of Luke.

And before he went out to his ministry to all these people, this is what Jesus said.

16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

*18" The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,*

A decorative grey vine with leaves and a circular knot at the top left corner.

19to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

This morning I challenge you to think of those who are oppressed mentally, and it is the role of the church with the work of the Holy Spirit, the gospel duty to do as Jesus did to set them free.