

ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

A HELL OF A LIFE

WEEK 5 | WIBKE REES

Mark 5:1-20; 7:31-32 • Matthew 8:29 • John 9:2; 10:10; 12:31 • Romans 5:9

Ephesians 4:27 • 1 Peter 5:8 • Revelation 12:11; 20:10

A hallmark of an encounter with Jesus is that we are set free from darkness to push back the darkness.

1. Our story begins with Jesus being so tired that he needed to get away. When was the last time you felt that tired? What did you do—or what do you do—to recharge your batteries? How big an issue is ‘fatigue’ for you in this pandemic ravaged season?
2. The demons are shown to have a fully developed Christology and eschatology meaning that they were orthodox in their view of who Jesus is and what would happen to them. Being orthodox in thought doesn’t make us orthodox in practice. In what areas of Christian life is it easier to be orthodox in Christology and eschatology but wayward in practice? In what areas of obedient practice do you struggle?
3. The story in Mark 5 teaches us that no life is too far gone. Can you think of a person who was considered to be ‘beyond redemption’? Briefly share what you considered the ‘turning point’ in their story to be. Who did God use to reach this person?
4. Ephesians 4:27 warns us not to give the devil a foothold in our lives. 1 Peter 5:8 warns us that the enemy eagerly looks for people to devour. If you are able, would you be willing to share either your greatest area of temptation or the biggest challenge to you living free from the oppressive struggle that stems from giving the devil a foothold? Remember, transformation is possible!
5. The story has Jesus respond affirmatively to the request of the townsfolk and the demons but negatively to the request of the man himself. Can you think of a time when God said, ‘No’ to a request of yours? How did you process that? Looking back, what have you learned? Do you still wrestle with that no?
6. The end result of Jesus’ ‘no’ to the man is shown in Mark 7:31-32 to be profoundly positive for the inhabitants of the Decapolis region. Looking at the story from this vantage point, what truths can we use to encourage someone who is struggling with God’s seeming ‘no’?
7. Have you ever shared your faith story? If someone asked you to equip them to share their story, what would you consider to be the key components of sharing their story in a powerful way?
8. What is your next step in developing a personal presence in your sphere of influence? How can your small group support you as you seek to push back the darkness?