

“This man lived in the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a chain.” Mark 5:3 NLT

lectio // Mark 5:1-20

I've spoken about this passage before. I titled it "mad naked man" or MNM for short. I definitely think this man was a local and everyone knew him either directly or had heard the stories of the man who ran the tombs. It's hard to tell from the story of the locals we're trying to protect themselves or truly help this man in his madness because they often bound him with ropes or chains. And, either they did a horrible job of binding him or this man, filled with demons had a super strength - because he would just break off the restraints. I use a line in my sermon, "they tried to help by binding him, but he needed freedom!" So often in our attempts to help we end up just making it worse by restraining or even prolonging the problem by putting temporary measures in place. The truth, all those times they tried to subdue him didn't really help him or the locals who had to endure his tortuous screams of pain. Another point, I believe the man was a cutter. Maybe not to torture or hurt himself, but to take physical measures to feel more human not less. Often this cutting has been associated with demonic influence or signs of being possessed. That is completely possible. However, I've known some cutters and they're really crying out for help. Their cutting is a way of grounding themselves or comforting themselves, not trying to kill themselves. In fact, we see that once Jesus kicked the demons into the pigs, the pigs drove themselves to DEATH. That's the extreme pressure this man was under. He was struggling to LIVE not die. He had a small amount of control and he was using it to stay alive, hoping that someone could really help him by evicting the demonic roommates that homesteaded his heart.

oratio

Dad,

You know I drive by and see mad naked men and women aimlessly wandering down Main st. One gal was actually naked! One gal was crossing the street walking like a zombie with a needle hanging from her arm. My heart was crushed, that image burns in my memory. Another man positioned himself on the corner by Baja Fish and screamed profanities at passer-bys. We have our own desperate souls right here wandering my neighborhood. Could you visit them, please? Could I hop in a boat ride with you and pull up on the asphalt shores of main st and have you kick demons out of these suffering humans? What should I do God?

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root