

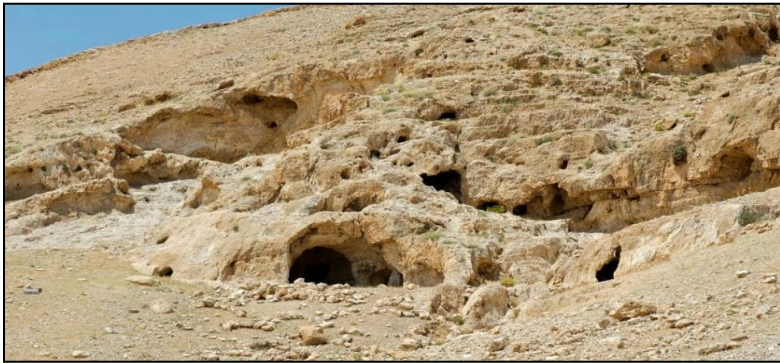
JESUS: HEALER OF OUTCASTS

Open

In biblical times, nearly every society and every city had a large underclass—people scraping by on society's margins. Reduced to poverty, they begged, stole, worked in menial labor, often as enslaved people, or engaged in prostitution.

- How are those living on society's margins viewed in your culture and country of origin? What is their life like?

Context



The demoniac would have dwelt in caves like these, probably between burial containers.

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Upon arriving by boat on land where non-Jews live, Jesus and his disciples encounter an internal storm, a man tormented by demons.

Read [Luke 8:26-39](#) (NIV)

^{8:26} They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. ²⁷ When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torture me!” ²⁹ For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept

under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

³⁰ Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

“Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him. ³¹ And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

³² A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission. ³³ When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴ When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, ³⁵ and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus’ feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ³⁶ Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. ³⁷ Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left.

³⁸ The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ “Return home and tell how much God has done for you.” So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.

Discuss

1. What can we know about demons by observing their effect on this man (vv. 27-29)? Why did their influence over him make him an outcast?
2. How do you think the pig herders felt while viewing hundreds of their pigs floating lifeless in the lake (v. 33)? How might you feel about the situation? Towards Jesus?
3. Why do the townspeople want Jesus to leave (v. 37)? Why are they so afraid of him?

4. What is the demon-possessed man's response to being healed by Jesus? What does this and what Jesus tells him suggest about his renewed status in the community?

Reflect

Jesus restores the man to wholeness and gives him a new mission and purpose.

- If we recognize parts of ourselves in this outcast man, we can discover that deliverance is not only something demoniacs need. Might we hide behind our academic success, articulate words, social poise, and fashionable clothes for fear of exposing the brokenness we think would make us an outcast?
- Who are the marginalized and outcasts in our healthcare fields? What implications might Jesus' restoration of this man have for us?
- Responding to Jesus' command, the man proclaims, "throughout the whole city the wonderful things God had done for him" (8:39–40). What great things has Jesus done for you? Who could you tell about those things?

Pray

Sit silently with Jesus. Picture him coming alongside you in temptation, struggle, and brokenness. What is he saying to you? Invite Jesus' guidance.