



TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, "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." So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

Mark 5:18-20

The people you meet: Before and after

If you've ever been desperately looking for something on TV while home sick from school, you've probably stumbled across an infomercial for weight loss products. Inevitably these commercials include before and after pictures. They lost 9 pounds! They lost 40 pounds! They lost 300 pounds! The person on screen stands inside one leg of the pants they once wore. It's hard to believe one person could change so much.

Our text today features a man who went through a dramatic change. Before: he was running around a graveyard, cutting himself with stones, and terrifying anyone who encountered him. He was possessed by demons who forced him into crazy, self-destructive behavior. After: he was calmly sitting down, fully dressed and rational. Jesus met this man on the way to the cross and changed him forever.

The devil messes with us too. He urges us to engage in crazy, self-destructive behavior. He's a big fan of the violent, angry words that tear through our relationships as easily as this man tore through his chains. We leave our parents, friends, classmates in a confused wake behind us. Why did we do that?

The devil loves the easy access we have to all kinds of pornography on our phones, a kind of visual graveyard where faith goes to die. Our eyes, hearts, and minds are slashed up by the stony shards of visuals we know we should avoid. Why did we do that?

Our day to day decisions seem so crazy when looked at later. Was that really us? Sadly...it was.

Like the man in our text, Jesus has mercy on us. Like the demons in this text, the devil must kneel before Jesus. Jesus set us free by letting himself be captured by his enemies. On the cross he suffered the imprisonment of hell in our place so that we might have the freedom of sins forgiven. When we meet with Jesus, conqueror of Satan, we are transformed.

This meeting with Jesus is not something that happens out of the blue, but rather in worship, in Bible study, in personal devotions. God uses his Word to open our eyes. We see that our crazy behavior is, well...crazy. Anything that threatens our relationship with God makes no sense. We want to instead calmly do what God calls and equips us to do.

The man begged to go with Jesus, but our Savior made him stay. This man had just become a walking infomercial for the power of God in Christ. Jesus leaves us here for a purpose too. The world needs honesty about our before and after picture. Let people see the miracle that is sins forgiven. Let them see how meeting Jesus puts an end to our crazy, self-destructive behavior. Let them see that you've met Jesus and now you are free. Who will be amazed by what Jesus has done for you?

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, we are very grateful that we meet you at the cross. Transform our hearts through the means of grace that we might resist the devil and live out our faith as the people you have made us to be. Amen.