

Hope for the Hopeless (2)

Scripture Reading — Mark 5:1-20

They saw the man who had been possessed ... sitting there, dressed and in his right mind. Mark 5:15

Earl D., a prisoner in Texas, continues his story from yesterday: "Behind bars, I began to treat Christians as badly as Paul did. I became a high priest of Satanism--and even let others drink my blood. I joined a white supremacist gang. Six times I've been in prison, and each time I became more violent. I was ordered to segregation and eventually to the psychiatric ward. I was the possessed man of Mark 5.

"One day a friend invited me to church. I said, 'No way.' He said, 'Four ladies are going to sing.' I said, 'OK.' The preacher preached, but I felt nothing in my heart of stone. Then the ladies sang 'Break My Heart, Lord.' Their voices were like angels; they were covered in the brightest light I had ever seen. And something else was different: where there were four, now there were five.

"I thought it must be the drugs. Wrong. A gentle voice spoke to my heart: 'I love you, Earl.' He showed me how filthy I was, and I saw his nail-scarred hands. 'Jesus loves me,' is all I could think. My eyes were so full of tears that I could not see, and when I tried to speak, I had no voice. That day I repented of all my sins and asked Jesus to be my Savior and the Master of my life. Now, I study God's Word every day so that I can be ready for life on the outside."

Prayer

Lord, only you have the power to truly set captives free. "Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing [our] great Redeemer's praise"! Break our hearts, Lord, and fill us with your love. Amen.

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