

Momentum for Life: Vision
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Introduction: Roger Depue is a 21-year veteran of the [Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#), where he served as Unit Chief of the [Behavioral Science Unit](#) at the [FBI Academy](#) at [Quantico, Virginia](#). Following retirement from the FBI, Depue founded [The Academy Group, Inc](#) (AGI). Served on panel investigating the VA Tech shooting, and the handling of it by the University.

Roger in his book between good and evil writes; in the course of my career I have seen horrible things- cruelty and human depravity in every imaginable permutation. . . Finally it was clear to me. Whoever killed this young girl had also in his own evil way, had loved her. How can these two things- love and hate exist together in a person? In the same way, I believe that good and evil exist in the world. In a constant tension, fighting each other for dominance. I know about that struggle. I believe that I have a deeper understanding than most people do. It is interesting to me that scientist from the FBI has more certainty in Angels and demons than certain people sitting in a pew.

Today's Gospel periscope in Mark 5 is a story about a man overcome by evil and finding redemption in Jesus.

Demon-possessed people are under the control of one or more demons. Demons are fallen angels who joined Satan in his rebellion against God and are now evil spirits under Satan's control. They help Satan tempt people to sin and have great destructive powers. But whenever they are confronted by Jesus, they lose their power. Not, only people but even churches can be influenced by good and bad angels. These demons recognized Jesus and his authority immediately. They knew who Jesus was and what his great power could do to them. Demons, Satan's messengers, are powerful and destructive. Still active today, they attempt to distort and destroy people's relationship with God. Demons and demon possession are real.

Although we cannot be sure why demon possession occurs, we know that evil spirits can use the human

body to distort and destroy people's relationship with God and likeness to him. Even today, demons are dangerous, powerful, and destructive. While it is important to recognize their evil activity so that we can stay away from demons, we should avoid any curiosity about or involvement with demonic forces or the occult (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). If we resist the Devil and his influences, he will flee from us (James 4:7). The evil spirit said its name was Legion. A legion was the largest unit of the Roman army, consisting of 3,000 to 6,000 soldiers. Obviously this man was possessed by many demons. So how do humans become possessed by demonic spirits? Whether the vision of the future they have is fueled by evil or redemptive plans. By feeding or starving evil.

So let's begin by reading the first twenty verses of Mark 5

This brother that we find in our text was very much like any other brother/sister that we may encounter in our time. But something happened in his life that brought separation, of his mind, body and soul.

God's Vision Versus selfish Ambition

This man had been demon possessed but became a living example of Jesus' power. According to Jesus he was married and had a family. He could have been abused as a child and now the demons of his past have come back and tormented his soul. Maybe he's been informed of the fact that he has a terminal disease. Whatever his trauma was, life has become too much to deal with.

Now he's at a point where he can no longer deal with life on life's terms. He's picked up a bag of weed, a fifth or anything that deadens the pain. He let's his pants fall to his ankles and his self respect has fallen beyond beyond his ability to feel good about himself. He has abandoned his family and his life is now a mess!

But thank God- Jesus shows up. The grace of God has a way of showing up even in the madness of our situations. It is when Jesus shows up we begin to envision the future. The trick is we don't fall back into old thought patterns and call it good and godly. We must understand God's will to envision the future. He wanted to go with Jesus, He wanted to conquer the world in the name of Jesus, He was ready to die for Jesus after his mountain top experience of healing. What he had was a momentary case of delusions

of self glory. A moment of selfish-ambition.

But Jesus lands him into reality by telling him to go home and share his story with his friends. It is as if Jesus is saying a true vision of God is when you take up the Cross daily for the benefit of others. God's vision involves you using your hand to serve others. That to go up in the kingdom you must go down.

To live is to give up your rights to benefit others.

If you have experienced Jesus' power in your life, are you, like this man, are you enthusiastically sharing the good news with those around you? God's vision involves how we make our bed in the morning for his glory. Worship is giving your boss your best for 40 hours in the name of Jesus! Holiness is sacrificing for the betterment of your family and church.

The problem man has had since Eve, is we are easily confused! Every evil vision has started out as a good idea. Eve gave into temptation because it looked good! So the next question is. . .

How to Know if it is a Godly Vision

Life

When the demons entered the pigs, they drove the animals into the sea. The demons' action proves their destructive intent—if they could not destroy the men, they would destroy the pigs. Jesus' action, by contrast, shows the value he places on each human life. ***The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*** John 10:10 God's agenda brings life to you and others.

Steve Goodier says " Both the hummingbird and the vulture fly over our nation's deserts. All vultures see is rotting meat, because that is what they look for. They thrive on that diet. But hummingbirds ignore the smelly flesh of dead animals. Instead, they look for the colorful blossoms of desert plants. The vultures live on what was. They live on the past. They fill themselves with what is dead and gone. But hummingbirds live on what is. They seek new life. They fill themselves with freshness and life. Each bird finds what it is looking for. We all do.

It is not a godly provision to pursue a desire, a goal, a dream to the detriment of your health, to

the weakening of your family life or to the detriment of others! A book I recently read was of a professional football player, who to accomplish his career goals started taking painkillers and eventually became possessed of every drug demon known to man. God created this man not to be destroyed by drugs, but his athletic ability to point to his creator. God created us to live and give life to others. When your dreams bring death and destruction to others it is not God's vision but selfish ambition.

Free to Serve

Mark often highlights the supernatural struggle between Jesus and Satan. The demons' goal was to control the humans they inhabited; Jesus' goal was to give people freedom from sin and Satan's control. The demons knew they had no power over Jesus; so when they saw Jesus, they begged not to be sent to some distant place ("the Bottomless Pit" in Luke 8:31). Jesus granted their request to enter into the herd of pigs (5:13) but ended their destructive work in people. Perhaps Jesus let the demons destroy the pigs to demonstrate his own superiority over a very powerful yet destructive force. He could have sent them to hell, but he did not, because the time for judgment had not yet come. In the end, the Devil and all his angels will be sent into eternal fire (Matthew 25:41).

Now, whether it was because this man in Mark 5 had been arrogantly rebellious or because he had practiced consulting the spirit world to divine his future... or because of some other addiction - this man in the graveyard had become demon possessed.

He didn't just wake up one morning and say: "Hey, I'm demon possessed." This wasn't something he was born with. OR something that he just came down with (like the flu or a cold). Somewhere in this man's life, he had made a conscious decision that he wanted to be free.

He wanted to be free of God's influence.

He wanted to be free from restrictions and responsibilities of life.

He wanted to be free to do what he wanted to do.

And now, as a demoniac, he's become free...

No shackle can bind him, no chain can hold him.

He's no longer bound by social conventions that tell him how to dress and or how to behave.

He has no responsibilities to society - because society no longer wants him.

He has become totally free...

But God's vision always involves true freedom. . .

Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you **free**." John 8:32-True freedom is truthful

So if the Son sets you **free**, you will be **free** indeed. John 8:36 True Freedom is found in Jesus

You have been set **free** from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. Romans 6:18 True Freedom is righteous

Be careful, however, that the exercise of your **freedom** does not become a stumbling block to the weak. I cor 8:9 True freedom does not cause others to stumble

You, my brothers, were called to be **free**. But do not use your **freedom** to indulge the sinful nature ; rather, serve one another in love. Galatians 5:13 True Freedom serves others

Is your vision embrace a false or true freedom!

Fruitful

The wealthiest spot on this planet is not the oil fields of Kuwait, Nigeria, Iraq or Saudi Arabia. Neither is it the gold and diamond mines of South Africa, the uranium mines of the Soviet Union or the silver mines of Africa. Though it may surprise you, the richest deposits on our planet lie just a few blocks from your house.

They rest in your local cemetery or graveyard. Just like the potential of the demonic stayed in the cemetery. Buried beneath the soil within the walls of those sacred grounds are dreams that never came to pass, songs that were never sung, books that were never written, paintings that never filled a canvas, ideas that were never shared, visions that never became reality, inventions that were never designed,

plans that never went beyond the drawing board of the mind and purposes that were never fulfilled.

Our graveyards are filled, with potential that remained potential. This is a tragedy.

As I walk the streets of life, my heart frequently weeps as I encounter and observe the wasted, broken and disoriented lives of individuals who, years before, were talented, intelligent aspiring high-school classmates. During their youth they had dreams, desires, plans and aspirations.

Today they are lost in a maze of substance abuse, alcoholism, purposelessness and poorly chosen friends. Their lives are aimless and many of their decisions haphazard. This enormous tragedy saddens me. What could have been has become what should have been. The wealth of dreams has been dashed by the demons of discouragement.

For Christ followers to find momentum we must find and feed a godly vision of the future. The plans of Satan and His minions' is to discourage, distract and delay the fruit we were created to make for our creator! If it is a God-given dream it will bring fruit in numbers, character or by being a blessing to others. Are you being fruitful for Christ? Or have you allowed a godly vision in your life to be discouraged, distracted and delayed?

Conclusion: For Christ followers to find momentum we must find and feed a godly vision of the future.

Praise team come up front –as we close if you need Jesus or a church family come up front when we stand to sing. Would you know join me in praying a public prayer!

Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves, when our dreams have come true because we have dreamed too little, when we arrive safely because we have sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of things we possess, we have lost our thirst for the waters of life; having fallen in love with life, we have ceased to dream of eternity; and in our efforts to build a new Earth, we have allowed our vision of the new heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly, to venture on wider seas where storms will show your mastery; where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars. We ask you to push back the horizons of our hopes; and to push into the future in strength, courage, hope, and love."

—Sir Francis Drake, explorer and naval pioneer during the Elizabethan era

Kung Fu Panda is a movie about a panda named Po who wants desperately to learn kung fu. But from the beginning of the film we learn that several obstacles come between Po and his dream—not the least of which are the dreams of Po's father, which include Po's taking over the family's restaurant business. Though Kung Fu Panda is primarily a children's movie, this scene addresses an issue adults wrestle with most of their lives—the issue of destiny and the basic human longing to be part of something significant.

"Sorry, Dad," Po says as he descends the stairs from his room to the kitchen of his father's restaurant.

"Sorry doesn't make the noodles," his father answers. "What were you doing up there? All that noise?"

"Oh, nothing," Po answers. "Just had a crazy dream."

His father suddenly looks interested. "What were you dreaming about?" he asks.

"What was I—? Uhhhh." Po struggles to find an answer because he was dreaming about kung fu. He knows his father would disapprove of this, so he lies: "I was dreaming about—uh—noodles."

"Noodles?" his father asks, now very interested. "You were really dreaming about noodles?"

"Yeah," Po says, attempting to smile. "What else would I be dreaming about?" He is serving soup to a customer and accidentally drops a Chinese throwing star into the bowl. "Oh, careful!" he says to the customer. "That soup is ... sharp!"

Po's father doesn't notice. "Oh, happy day!" he cries. "My son, finally having the Noodle Dream! You don't know how long I have been waiting for this moment!" He places an official restaurant cap on Po's head.

"This is a sign, Po!" his father exclaims.

Po is confused. "Uh—a sign of what?"

"You are almost ready to be entrusted with the secret ingredient to my Secret Ingredient Soup! And then you will fulfill your destiny and take over the restaurant—just as I took it over from my father, who took it over from his father, who won it from a friend in a game of mahjong."

"Dad, Dad, Dad," Po says, trying to stem his father's enthusiasm. "It was just a dream."

"No, it was *the* dream. We are noodle folk, Po. Broth runs through our veins!"

"But, Dad," Po asks, "didn't you ever want to do something else? Something besides noodles?"

"Actually," his father admits, "when I was young and crazy, I thought about running away and learning how to make tofu."

"So why didn't you?" Po asks.

"Because it was a stupid dream," his father replies. "Can you imagine me making tofu? Ha! No, we all have our place in this world. Mine is here, and yours is—."

"I know," Po interrupts. "Mine is here."

"No," his father answers, "it's at tables 2, 5, 7, and 12. Service with a smile!"

Elapsed time: DVD, scene 2, 00:02:29 - 00:05:18