

Jesus' Authority over Demons, Part 2

Scripture: Luke 4:31-37

Code: 42-57

Let's open our Bibles to Luke chapter 4. We find ourselves in the text of verses 31 to 37. And while it is a brief story, and you might assume that it could be briefly discussed, we're spending some time here because it introduces to us a new theme in the unfolding story of Jesus Christ. This is the first time we encounter a demon-possessed person. Obviously the demon possessed appear again and again and again during the ministry of Jesus and the apostles, even into the book of Acts. It is very significant that the first miracle that Luke records of Jesus is a miracle of delivering a demon-possessed man from that evil spirit living in him.

There is a real world of demons. There is a real world of evil spirits, not to be confused with Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. I said that in the early service, somebody in the back immediately closed their Harry Potter book. I read a little bit of Harry Potter, about eight pages which was enough. I'm not debating whether it's interesting reading but it's fantasy and he creates illusions about a nether world, an underworld, a spirit world of wizards and magicians, a strange bizarre kind of creature that has supernatural power. The world of Harry Potter doesn't exist. It is the world of fantasy. But there is a real spiritual world, there really are demons, there really are unclean spirits that possess people. And sometimes I think that all of this fantasy, all of this preoccupation with the world of Harry Potter, and we see it in television, we see it in the movies, the endless fantasies of spiritual beings, supernatural worlds, aliens is somewhat of a clever smokescreen that covers over the true reality of the underworld of demons.

It was no fantasy in which Jesus engaged, however, when He confronted the forces of hell. It was a real world, a real world of demons. And one of the most fascinating features in the ministry of Jesus is His encounter with the demons. The whole subject of spiritual evil in high places, the whole area of study that we call demonology, the world of evil spirits obviously fascinates people. And unfortunately even in the Christian world reality and fantasy have merged to create a body of material that is basically very confusing. Were you to go in the average Christian bookstore and just take the material out that deals with demons and read it, in the end you would be probably hopelessly confused about the truth. It has never been God's purpose in the revelation of Scripture to confuse people. The Bible was written to make things clear. God revealed Himself on the pages of Scripture in order that we might know the truth, that we might understand, that we might have what we've been hearing in the music this morning, the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ is not a mystical experience,

having the mind of Christ means to think the way Jesus thinks and that means to think the way things really are, that is to have a true understanding. It is important that we have a true understanding of God, it is important that we not deviate with regard to God or else we are guilty of having a false God. It is important that we not have another Christ, than the Christ of the New Testament. It is important that we understand the trinity and the Holy Spirit the way the Holy Spirit truly is. It is important that we understand salvation, the way salvation is because a deviant form of the gospel damns men's souls. Why would we think that we are free to mingle truth with fantasy and error in understanding the dark world of Satan, the world that holds the whole planet captive and in bondage?

It is a great grief to me, of course as you well know, that there's so much confusion in the church today about many things, and this is just another one to add to your list. In some ministries demons have become a major preoccupation. In fact there are ministries that exist for the purpose of going around trying to chase demons out of Christians, something that I don't think even exists. I'll say more about that later. But demons have become a major item in many ministries. Sadly, most of those purvey a view of demons that is not biblical, that is of their own imagination and invention and misrepresents the reality...and whenever you misrepresent the reality of Satan you put yourself in a highly vulnerable position. Confusion can be dispelled. I don't think you need to be confused about the demon world, I don't think you need to be confused about demon possession, it requires, however, a rejection of speculation. It requires a rejection of experience as the norm that establishes the standard and demands a careful confinement to Scripture. And you can go where Scripture takes you and beyond that you cannot go, but you certainly can go as far as Scripture takes you, and Scripture is the only reliable source.

And when you're talking about Scripture and demons, essentially you're talking about the gospels and the book of Acts...primarily there is no incident of a demon-possessed person in the entire Old Testament. There is an explosion of demon possession during the time of Christ and the apostles, and then in the epistles there is no reference to demon possession. Then there will be a greater explosion of demon possession as the apocalypse of Revelation tells us just prior to the return of Jesus Christ when according to 2 Thessalonians 2 the restrainer is removed, and all hell breaks loose as all the demons effect their evil on the world of the Antichrist. But in the Old Testament and in the time of the epistles which define for us the church age, there's no discussion of demon possession. It really explodes on the scene when Jesus arrives. It's as if, as I told you last week, demons did their work in a clandestine way, chose to function in subtleties, for the most part, until Jesus came and they couldn't remain confined and hidden. Their cover was blown under the power of Jesus as He pulled them out of their hidden places and exposed them and dealt with them. And so we see this dramatic escalation of demon possession and demon activity in response to the ministry of Jesus Christ, and we also see His immense and complete power over them all.

So the definitive material on demons is found in the historical records of Jesus' life, Matthew, Mark, Luke in particular, John doesn't mention demon possession. And it's also found in the book of Acts as we see demons being dealt with by the apostles of Jesus who also were declaring His messiahship and articulating the revelation of the gospel.

Now as we come to Luke 4 and verse 31, we come to the first miracle in Luke and in this miracle Jesus casts a demon out of a man. We also come to a turning point in the big picture of Luke. Up to chapter 4 verse 30, Luke has been concerned with the person of Jesus. Everything up to this point has focused on His person. He is the promised Messiah. He is the one John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah announces. He is the one that the angel Gabriel proclaims will be born to the virgin Mary. He is the one who fulfills the Abrahamic, Davidic and New Covenant promises. He is the one who fits the Davidic genealogy. All that Luke has said up to this point focuses on the person of Christ, the testimony of angels as to His person...both the angel who announced to Elizabeth and to Mary, the angels who talked to the shepherds. Then the testimony of the shepherds, the testimony of Zacharias and Elizabeth, the testimony of Simeon and Anna, the testimony of Joseph and Mary, the testimony of a genealogy, the testimony of John the Baptist at the Jordan River, the testimony of God the Father, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," the testimony of the Holy Spirit who descends on Him like a dove, and then the testimony of the Messiah Himself who steps into the synagogue of Nazareth and says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He's anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, and He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate those who are oppressed and to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord and today this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears," that's His own personal testimony to His messiahship as the fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1 and 2.

Up to now all of this testimony has focused on the identity, the person of Jesus. Now we have a transition here, and Luke looks at not the person of Jesus so much, but the power of Jesus. If He is to be the Messiah, if we are to believe He is, He has to demonstrate that He has power beyond any human level. And so he begins to tell us that He does and He presents His power over all teachers and all teaching, His power over disease, His power over nature and He begins in verse 31 by showing us His power over demons. This is a very, very important matter. Let's look at the text, verse 31.

Jesus came down to Capernaum and it is really down, it's 2,000 feet and Nazareth is 1300 feet above sea level and Capernaum on the shores of the Sea of Galilee is 686 feet below sea level, so He came down about 2,000 feet. After incensing all of the people in the synagogue in Nazareth, He had to flee for His life. They tried to throw Him off a cliff and kill Him. He goes to a rival city twenty some miles away called Capernaum and He there on the following Sabbath probably or soon after that was teaching them. And they were amazed at His teaching, that was always the response. They never

heard anybody like this, clarity of mind, precision of vocabulary, mastery of the language, mastery of thought, power of conviction, all of it was there. They were astounded at His teaching. His message came with authority. And according to the verb in verse 31 He was teaching, in the process of teaching when there was a man, verse 33, in the synagogue possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon and he cried out with a loud voice, "Ha, what do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth, have You come to destroy us? I know who You are, the Holy One of God."

There in the middle of His teaching, having read the Scripture probably from the same text, Isaiah 61, and now explaining to this city that He is the fulfillment of that, He is the Messiah and that He is come to preach the gospel to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, free those who are downtrodden. What He is saying is, Jesus has now come to go into the kingdom of darkness where sinners are kept in spiritual poverty, where they are kept as spiritual prisoners, where they are spiritually blind and spiritually oppressed and destroy the works of the devil, 1 John 3:8, and set those prisoners free. In other words, He has come to destroy the kingdom of darkness and to transfer sinners from that kingdom into the Kingdom of light. And in the midst of making that declaration and preaching that message, a demon screams out, according to verse 33 and says in verse 34, "Ha, what do we have to do with You..." and so forth.

Why does Luke start his discussion of the power of Jesus with this miracle? He's very selective for a very obvious reason, all sinners are in Satan's kingdom. All sinners are in Satan's kingdom. They are in the kingdom of darkness. They are dead in trespasses and sin in whom the god of this world literally works. The whole world, 1 John 5:19, is in the lap of the evil one. He is the spirit who works in the children of disobedience, Ephesians 2:1. He is the god of this world who has blinded their minds, 2 Corinthians 4. He is the one who holds the sinners all their lifetime in bondage, Hebrews 2:14. The whole world is captive to the kingdom of darkness. They are all the children of the devil, John 8:44. And if Jesus came to set the prisoners free, to make the spiritually impoverished rich, to give sight to the spiritually blind, and to deliver those who are downtrodden or oppressed, He's going to have to break the power of Satan and demons over the souls of men.

We are always, and I think in particularly in current years, discussing the doctrine of salvation. And there has been a great debate, as you know, on the issue of justification, as there has been effort to redefine justification in very broad terms which embrace both Protestantism and Catholicism. There has been a necessity of clarifying the doctrine of salvation, clarifying the doctrine of justification. And in that discussion there's a lot of things being written. And I, of course, am reading many, many things on the subject, and I do read about regeneration and I read about conversion and I read about justification and I read about redemption, and I read about adoption, but there's one feature of salvation that I rarely ever read about and it's unfortunate because it's critical and that is the element of salvation that we would call deliverance...deliverance. When is the last time you read a book or even an article on the matter of deliverance that when a person becomes a believer they are delivered from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, Colossians 1:13? They

are delivered from darkness to light, Acts 26:18. That's what salvation does. It takes us out of the sovereign dominating power of Satan and puts us under the sovereign dominating power of Christ. We're no longer slaves of sin, we become the servants of righteousness, to use the language of Romans 6 .

Deliverance is an issue that needs to be grasped. I'm probably talking myself into such an effort. I usually can't convince anybody else to do it and wind up doing myself. But that's a great concept, isn't it? If we are...if we are prisoners to Satan, prisoners to darkness, if we are in bondage to the devil, if we are in those fortresses of 2 Corinthians 10, locked in those massive granite fortifications of hellish ideologies and we need to be liberated, if that is our condition then salvation is our deliverance. And that's why 2 Corinthians 10 says that we come with the gospel and the gospel smashes the fortifications and we rescue the prisoners and lead them captive to Christ. That's what evangelism is.

Now if we are going to be delivered from the power of Satan which is no small force, if we're going to be delivered from the world of demonic power and influence, then Jesus Christ who is our deliverer must have power over that kingdom, right? Now we already know that He had power over Satan, we saw it at the beginning of chapter 4 because one of His credentials as Messiah is the fact that when He was tempted by Satan He was totally triumphant. So we know that personally Jesus can resist the power of Satan. What we also need to know is that He can break the power of Satan for the sinner. It's one thing for Him to resist the power of Satan in His holy perfection, it's quite another thing for Him to break the power of Satan over an unholy sinner. That's why Luke starts at this point. If we're going to talk about the power of Jesus, then let's talk about the place where that power has to be in effect. Jesus came to save sinners and sinners are subjects of Satan, children of the devil if they literally are controlled by the spirit of Satan working in them, if they are under demonic control, if they're held in bondage, if they're in great massive fortifications of demonic ideologies where they are prisoners, if Jesus is going to deliver them, if He's going to justify them, if He's going to redeem them, if He's going to regenerate them, if He's going to adopt them He's also going to have to deliver them. That's why the apostle Paul on the Damascus road was told by the Lord Himself that you're going to go and preach deliverance. You're going to preach deliverance.

I don't think Christian people even understand that today. We have people in our church who come out of other churches in this very area where the belief is that Christians are literally under the constant terrorizing by demons. That just is not true. I remember a few years ago reading a book in which there was a chapter on, "The Demon of Post-nasal Drip," and that somehow there was a formula that you could call against this demon to make your noise stop running-this is what we need to do... And there are ministries far and wide going on today in quote/unquote evangelical Christianity where the assumption is that whatever is wrong in your life as a Christian is due to some demon

that's in you that needs to be exorcized. They failed to understand the great truth of deliverance..

The fact of the matter is, folks, we do not tremble in front of the demons, the demons tremble in front of us. We need to understand that. Satan has been put beneath our feet. James 2:19, "The demons believe and...what?...shudder, or tremble." They're afraid. I'm not afraid of the demons, we have no reason to be afraid of the demons. "Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world," right? There's nothing to fear. I am not the temple of demons, I am the temple of the Holy Spirit. That kind of tragic misrepresentation strikes a blow against the wondrous work of deliverance that Christ wrought in the life of everyone who is regenerated.

If they're going to be delivered from the kingdom of darkness while they're being justified and redeemed and regenerated and adopted and converted, all those great concepts, when we're going to be delivered then Christ has to have power to shatter darkness that destroys Satan and his demons. And He does. First John 3:8, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose that He might destroy the works of the devil." And He's done it in my life, has He done it in yours? He has if He saved you. Satan has nothing in me, he has no authority. Can he condemn me successfully? Not according to Romans 8, he can't condemn me. God hears no accusation against me by the devil, the devil is the accuser of the brethren, God hears no accusation. Why? Because Jesus Christ already paid the penalty for all my sins, no accusation stands. That's why nothing can ever separate us from...what?...the love of God, absolutely nothing. That's why no one can ever condemn us, no one can ever bring a charge against God's elect. I have nothing to fear from Satan. Satan cannot crawl into my life and possess me. My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which I have of God, I'm not my own, I'm bought with a price, He paid the price of His blood. He purchased me, took me into His Kingdom, filled me with His Holy Spirit. And that's permanent.

Now the sin...the sinners in the world, the unconverted people, they're in the kingdom of darkness, they're under its influence. They're not all demon possessed. Demon possession is an extreme form of demonic bondage. It is a rare form of demonic bondage. As I said, throughout the whole Old Testament you don't have an occasion where there is a description or a discussion of demon possession. Through all the epistles of the New Testament you don't have any description or any incident of demon possession or any formula for dealing with it. The question is this simply, if a sinner is under demon power whether it's influence or the rare kind of possession, can Jesus deliver that sinner? And the answer to the question, according to this passage and many others in the gospels, is yes He can because He did and He did it sovereignly and He did it immediately.

Jesus in His life time has numerous encounters with demons. And during the time of Jesus they kind of blew their cover, they moved out of a clandestine and subtle operation with which apparently they're more comfortable and they were exposed. They were exposed in panic and fear very often

like this demon. I don't think this demon necessarily wanted to burst out like this but he involuntarily couldn't restrain himself under the powerful preaching of the gospel, the implications of which was going to be his expulsion if that man believed and ultimately the implications are that he's going to be cast into the lake of fire, that's why he said, "Are You here to destroy us? Is this the time? Is it now that You've come to send us to the lake of fire?"

All sinners are influenced by Satan to one degree or another but demon possession is a very rare kind of phenomena, but it was escalated during the time of Jesus Christ as the demons literally were sitting under the powerful preaching of Jesus. The people were all astounded. The people were all amazed. They were astonished, they never heard anybody speak like this. Well, the demons had the same reaction with the added feature that they knew that the powerful preaching of Jesus would not only spell the salvation of those that they possessed, but the power of Jesus would some day damn them to a lake of fire. So He exposed them and they escalated the fury of their attack, I think they perhaps may have indwelt more people more frequently trying to hold on to sinners because of the powerful influence during the time of Jesus Christ. You find that same kind of demon activity in the early parts of Acts as the apostles are ministering and on into Acts down in to 16 and even in to 19 and then it just sort of fades away as Jesus moved off the scene and the apostles. We could say that they dropped their normal subtleties, they sort of blew their cover, they were exposed by the power of His message.

Now as we look at this incident, but I've told you last time, I'm just going to kind of talk about this a little bit, laying some ground work for the future cause we're going to see a lot more of this...I told you that the thing I want you to recognize is that demons live in fear. They are constantly terrified. James 2:19, "The devils, or demons, believe and tremble." Now what makes demons tremble? That's really the title for this brief little series, "What scares demons?" We think we're supposed to be afraid of demons. There's no reason if you're a Christian to have any fear at all. The question is, what makes demons afraid? And the answer is in this passage unfolding...the preaching of the Son of God, the purpose of the Son of God, the purity of the Son of God and the power of the Son of God. Now that's the clear outline in the text, unfortunately I can't preach it to you in one sermon and the reason I can't is because I have to lay the ground work so you understand the phenomena we're dealing with and then we can go through those points.

Let's just go back to the first point. The great power against the demon world was the preaching of the Son of God. Jesus is preaching. He's in the synagogue, He's teaching, He's preaching and in the middle of His message this demon who is dwelling in the man in the synagogue screams, the end of verse 33. The demon literally can't restrain himself. This is an un...this is a sort of an unpremeditated, involuntary panic that sets into this demon as he hears the gospel being preached, the gospel that says the Messiah has come to deliver these sinners from the darkness, the blindness,

the spiritual poverty, the oppression in which the world of demons and Satan held them captive. And the demon can't restrain himself and out comes, "Ha," eain the Greek from the verb saying "let me alone." It's an exclamation of terror. The demon is literally terrified.

This is a rare thing. I've preached the gospel for a long time and only about three times in my whole life have I ever heard demons speak being confronted. One of them was a few weeks ago, I told you about last week, right down in the front when a demon-possessed person came running down the aisle after I was preaching the gospel, exalting Christ's power over the kingdom of darkness...came at me and said, "Why are you attacking me? Why are you trying to hurt me?" Which is exactly what the demon said here.

But it was some years ago when I had first come to Grace. We had built the family center and we were having services there before we built this facility. It was a Sunday night and after the service was over I was over having some food with somebody from the church and I got a call from Jerry Mitchell who was here a few weeks ago, he was on the staff at the time. He said, "You've got to come down here, John, I've got a...I've got a girl in here whose got all kinds of demon voices." He had never experienced anything like this and I never had either. And I said, "Well I don't know if I could be much help but I'll come right down."

So I came down, I walked in and there was chaos in the office. It was over in the building by the family center, and I walked in and the place was in disarray and it was obvious she had been terrorizing things. She had overturned the desk and poor Jerry who was a boxer in the Navy was having a hard time defending himself against this girl, and this is characteristic of New Testament accounts where there's a certain level of strength that's beyond normal. And I'll never forget the greeting when I walked in the door. I walked in the door and this...out of this girl's mouth whom I had met and with whom I had spoken because she had been coming to the church came this voice, and I can't, obviously, replicate it but in my memory...I know what the voice said, it's something like (in a hoarse voice): "Not him, not him, not him, get him out, get him out...get him out," to me.

Well my first reaction was, "I'm leaving. I'm not sure I'm up to this." Wow! And my second reaction was, "They know who I am and they know whose side I'm on, that's very affirming." It was affirming. I sort of started feeling apostolic. Paul I know and Jesus I know and John MacArthur...you know? Wow! Amazing!

I don't think that demon was afraid of me humanly. I don't have any human power to deal with demons. In fact, Jerry and I didn't know what to do. We started trying to send the demons away. We sent them everywhere you could think of...the pit, the abyss, Phoenix...anywhere hot, you know. (Laughter) And the bottom...the bottom line is they didn't go anywhere and so we just were praying

and saying..."You know, this isn't working, this casting out thing isn't working, I'm not Jesus and we're not apostles and we don't have authority over that kingdom." There's only one way that this girl will ever be delivered and that is when Christ delivers her in the act of salvation. So we wrestled...literally physically trying to restrain her and get her in a chair and she was so exhausted physically and finally calmed down and we gave her the gospel. And she confessed her sin, I'll never forget it, just really gushed out her sin before the Lord and embraced Jesus Christ and then it was just this calm that came everywhere. There was deliverance. Nothing to do with me, nothing to do with a formula, nothing to do with an exorcism, nothing to do with that at all, that...that is not what deals with demons. She needed to be delivered from the kingdom of darkness, you understand that? She was...she was.

The demon was terrified of me not because of something I could do in the human. The demon was terrified of me because the demon connected me with the message of the gospel. And the demon knew that if the gospel came to this girl and she believed, that he was finished. And that's exactly what happened. She was as clean as the driven snow after that and never had another occasion of that kind of terrifying experience.

So this demon is in this man and here's Jesus preaching the gospel. If the demon is afraid of me...whoa...how fearful is he going to be of Jesus? And the demon just screams out, "What do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth?" which is idiomatic. And I told you last time what that means, "Why are You attacking us? Why are You trying to hurt us?" That's exactly what that man said to me a few weeks ago.

You see, what terrorizes the demons is the preaching of the gospel that sets the prisoners free. Do you see that? That's what terrifies the demons. When the supremely powerful and absolutely authoritative Word of God is preached, the forces of hell who hear it panic. And never was it preached and never has it been preached the way Jesus preached it. It's no wonder they couldn't restrain themselves. As I said last week, what a motivator that is for the preacher to preach the Word of God, right? You go into the pulpit with all your silly human ideas and your cleverness, you literally emasculate yourself. If you want some power, then just preach the gospel. That's what delivers people.

Well let's go back to the man. That was just review. Let's go back to the man...but I yelled in different places so you thought it was new. Verse 33, let's go back to the man. I mean, there's nothing about the man, it just says a man. We don't know anything about him and nothing is said about him. We don't know any post-script of the story or how the man dealt with any of this, it just says there was a man in the synagogue possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon.

So here's this man and the demon that's in him, dwelling in him, probably has managed to keep a low profile and ply his work through the man subtly to the effect of the advancement of the kingdom of darkness. All of a sudden the demon is exposed and we meet a man who now is a classic illustration of being demon possessed. It says, "possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon," that's comprehensive language just saying it in a very full way so we know exactly what was going on. This is a man demon possessed, possessed by a spirit who is an unclean demon. We talked a little bit about that phrase last time, I won't go back over that.

Now this is the first of Luke's miracles. There are many, many incidents of demon possession, as I said, in the New Testament. Now I want to add something. Whenever a demon -possessed person was manifest, whenever the demon manifested itself through the person, it was obvious to everybody what it was. So, listen carefully, demon possession was never confused with mental illness. It was never confused with paranoia, schizophrenia or whatever mental illness is, that's probably a misnomer, but being crazy or being...lacking the ability to understand reality whether willful or not...never was demon possession confused with some kind of craziness, some kind of irrationality because when demons manifested themselves...listen carefully...they were always rational. Whenever there was a conversation between Jesus and a demon, it was very rational. This is a very rational demon, by the way. He knew Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth. He knew that Jesus was going to destroy the demons, that's very clear in Scripture. He knew who He was, the Holy One of God. That is a rational demon. This is not double-talk, this is not craziness, this is not wild fantasy, this is not the absence of rationality and reality. I got another phone call this week from the office saying, "We want you to be aware on Sunday, somebody is sending you e-mails that they're coming. They're coming because they're coming against you."

And I said, "What does the e-mail say?" Well the e-mail is so crazy, so irrational, so non-objective, so out of touch with reality. I said, "That's probably not demonic." I don't know what that is, somebody who has chosen to make everybody think he's crazy so he's not responsible for his sinful behavior, probably. But the bottom line is, tell me when somebody shows up who is vicious and rational cause that could well be the expression of a demon. It is possible that a demon could make a person lunatic, as the New Testament word is in the case of one boy who was acting in a deranged way. But when confrontation comes with the demon, there is rational confrontation at that point. That's the way it was, that man came rushing down towards me and said, "Why are you attacking us? Why are you trying to hurt us?" very rational. And the kingdom of darkness was being assaulted by the truth of Christ.

So, even unbelievers, now mark this, knew when a person was manifesting demon possession. They might not know a person was demon possessed if it wasn't a manifestation, but once there was a manifestation the spiritual pathology was unique to demon possession so that they knew it was

demon possession. It was a kind of extreme and bizarre behavior where there was another entity, another personality within that person, and it was apparent. So it doesn't take a gift of discernment. The gift of discernment, by the way, in the Bible is not the gift that says you can walk up to somebody and spot a demon in them. That is ridiculous. That is not the gift of discernment. The gift of discernment is the knowledge of the truth by which you can measure error. It has nothing to do with being able to spot demons, invisible demons. The only way you will know that the person is demon possessed is if there's a manifestation and in that manifestation there will be extreme bizarre behavior and irrationality so that even in the time of Christ unbelievers knew what was going on.

Demon possession then is a phenomenon that occurred on an amazing scale during the time of Jesus. The rest of biblical history, it seems to be very rare. And it will escalate again, as I told you, at the end of the age, just before Jesus returns, when He comes and raptures His church, takes the church out, removes the restraint. All hell breaks loose. The demons that are now bound in chains in hell are released. They come up to earth, join the ones that are already here and they wreak havoc during the time of the Tribulation which is described from Revelation 6 to 19, also 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. But it is a rare occasion and again we can understand why because they were exposed. There are demon possessed people, I think, at all times, they don't always manifest themselves. I think there were even more demon-possessed people during the time of Christ because the demons were moving in trying to hold on to the souls of men who were being influenced by the powerful preaching of Jesus. But mark it now, folks, there's no such thing as a demon-possessed Christian. Salvation is deliverance from that kingdom. Going around saying, "Well your problem is you've got a demon of post-nasal drip and a demon of earache...earache and the demon of falling hair and the demon of...of whatever, whatever, go into your house and pray out the demons in your house. That is just absolute foolishness. Pronouncing sentence upon demons and binding demons, binding Satan...first of all, you can't do it, second...you don't need to do it if you could do it, it's been done. You have been delivered out of that kingdom.

Now there are four Old...four New Testament expressions and I'm just going to give you these and we'll stop with a couple of comments, but there are four New Testament expressions that describe demon possession. You need to know what they are.

First, having a demon. That's used 16 times in the New Testament. It's the most common one, *eikon* [?], having a demon. It simply means a person was indwelt and controlled and one other word, tormented...indwelt, controlled and tormented, those are the words. It isn't something that...that a person necessarily wanted. I suppose one could be open to it if one chose, and maybe there are some people who want to be tormented, but the idea of what a demon did came in and controlled, and the person cannot resist the control and the person is therefore tormented by that control. It is not a form of mental problems, it is not anything physical, it is a supernatural phenomena. And as I

said, demons are rational. They are personal spirits. They talk, they scream, they possess knowledge. They show fear. It was something that was very different than some schizophrenia or some paranoia or some bizarre lack of reality. Demon possession was not a physical disease, but there could be physical torments associated with it. Another thing to know about it is it's important to note that nowhere does Jesus speak of the forgiveness of sins with regard to demon-possessed people. You have all these occasions where Jesus is confronted by demon-possessed people, He casts out the demons. Never in any of those, not one single time is there any discussion of the forgiveness of sins, which is interesting. Sometimes when Jesus healed people of physical diseases, there was a discussion about the forgiveness of sins. Never after curing someone who had a demon did Jesus speak of the forgiveness of sins. And that is to say they were not necessarily the most wicked people. Jesus never said you got this way because you're the most wretched, vile, wicked person. That's not true. They weren't necessarily the most wicked, nor were they necessarily penitent. There's no discussion of some of them believing or repenting. That doesn't happen either. It certainly didn't happen on this occasion.

The point here is not the man. The point here is not the demon-possessed person. That's not where the story goes. The point is, Jesus had power over the demons, that's the point. The focal point of the story is His power over demons to show that He can break the power of hell and set the prisoners free. So you don't have...you can't make the conclusion that people got demon possessed because they were more wicked than everybody else. That's not...that's not so in the Bible, in the New Testament. I'll tell you another way that's probably verified is that there were children, little children who were demon possessed. And it would be hard to argue that they were the most wicked of all.

Nor were people delivered because they repented. In the case of the New Testament, it was a matter of Jesus just delivering people to show He had that power and they could be delivered from demons. Listen, in the time of Jesus and the apostles, the apostles were given the power to do that as well as the 70 were, they could be delivered from the demons but not necessarily saved. But once Jesus and the apostles passed off the scene, the only way any sinner will ever be delivered from demons ultimately is to be saved, okay? This was an exhibition of messianic power at that time. There is an ongoing exhibition of messianic power going on today and true deliverance only occurs when Christ comes again into the life of a person and delivers that person through the power of the gospel.

The second phrase, one is "having a demon," the second most common expression is demonized, one who was demonized, *daimonizomai*, used 13 times describes the same thing, a person indwelt by a demon who is exercising control over the person, the person can't resist that control and is therefore tormented by it, tormented mentally, tormented physically. This is not ever used, to be demonized or ever having a demon, is not ever used to describe demon influence. I mean, we are all influenced. Satan is the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the ruler of the world and

all of that. He's got the *kosmos*, the evil system, we all feel his influence. That's different. To be demonized does not mean to be exposed to his influence, it means to literally have a resident demon or demons controlling and tormenting. And that particular phenomenon...the whole world of sinners is under his influence...but that particular phenomenon is much more rare.

Demons can influence people. They do. They influence, according to the New Testament, in false doctrine, 1 Timothy 4:1. They influence in immorality, same passage, 1 Timothy 4:1 to 3. They influence us in attitudes of jealousy, divisiveness and pride, James 3:13 to 16. In other words, the demons have created a world system that sends temptation toward us. But demonized people were not just influenced, they were dominated, they were controlled and they were tormented. Those are the three words that describe this phenomenon. The demons literally spoke through the vocal cords of the individual, such as Matthew 8:29, or if wanted to, they kept him from speaking, Matthew 12:22. The demons caused blindness, Matthew 12:22, gave supernatural physical strength, Mark 5:3, promoted nakedness, the original streaker was a demon-possessed guy in Mark 5. And it wasn't anything immoral, it wasn't some kind of prurient thing on his part, it wasn't sort of lewd conduct, it was torment. It was embarrassing. It was shameful. It was hideous to be constantly running around naked because you were being tormented and driven to do that by a demon, to say nothing of being cold if it was in the winter.

You also have in the New Testament phrases like "entering in," "going out," "came out," "cast out," referring to demonized people. So it talks about indwelling, control and torment. And it was unique to demonization. Here you can see in verse 35, Jesus says, "Come out of him," which indicates that there was indwelling and there was control because the demon had taken the man's voice and used it and there was torment because the demon threw the man down in the middle, although Jesus prevented him from doing any harm to him.

So demonization is this kind of indwelling, controlling, tormenting of resident demons who've taken up a place in a person's life. Having a demon, being demonized, a third phrase "with an unclean spirit." It's the same thing exactly, you see it here in this text, possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, or an unclean spirit of a demon. It's the same thing referring to the very same phenomena. One other phrase is used in Acts 5:16, "afflicted with unclean spirits," and the word "afflicted" looks at the torment side of it...distressed, disturbed, tormented.

So a demon-possessed person is in this condition. It is a rare thing. And maybe it is more common than we know, but it manifests itself rarely, generally speaking, perhaps because it is rare, perhaps because the demons want to maintain subtlety and be clandestine because it's more effective. But when it does manifest itself, it shows up in the ways that we see it in the New Testament. It shows up in these forms of torment, it shows up in fear and terror and panic at the preaching of the gospel.

Perhaps we could close this morning by looking at Matthew 12, and then I'll summarize this first point. Matthew 12:43, Jesus gives us an illustration of demon possession here. He says in verse 43, "When the unclean spirit goes out of a man," there's that entering in, going out language which indicates indwelling, "When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places, seeking rest, doesn't find it. And then it says, 'I'll return to my house from which I came,' and when it comes it finds it unoccupied swept, and put in order. Then it goes and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, they go in and live there. The last state of that man becomes worse than the first, that is the way it will also be with this evil generation."

It's a most interesting statement. This is a...this is sort of a metaphor, this is sort of an analogy, sort of a picture. The person who is demon possessed is like a house. The demon is like an occupant. In verse 43, "The unclean spirit who lives in the man decides to leave, he goes out." Maybe he decided it on his own, finding somebody else he could be more effective in. Or maybe there was an exorcism. Maybe the Jews got together and they pronounced their little formulas and their little incantations and their little chants and maybe the demon decided to leave. That certainly could happen. And it went out. But it pictures...this is like a man who leaves his home and what does he do? He wanders out in the desert, he's roaming around in waterless places, he can't find a place to rest. He thought the grass was greener but there was no grass and there was no water and so he says, "I better go back, I better go back and I'll go back to my house." Well he comes back and guess what? The place is unoccupied, swept and put in order.

Now how did that happen? Jesus could be referring to these Jewish exorcists who went around like the sons of Sceva in Acts and did this kind of thing. Maybe this is the result of that, you know, this person has had the demons called out of him and the demons have obliged and left and said, "I don't need to deal with this grief, I'll find another place. And now that they know I'm here, my cover is blown, I'm not going to be as effective, so I'll leave." So he goes out, tries to find another place, can't find another place that's as commodious and accommodating and suits the demon's purposes as well as the man. He goes back and what does he find? The man's cleaned up his act. The house is clean. This even makes it more inviting.

What that means is he's gotten more religious. Ah, all the better, right? All the better. The demons would rather occupy a very religious man than a very irreligious man. Is that not true? Because Satan disguises himself as an angel of light and his ministers are disguised as angels of light. So now they go back, they find this guy, he's had a little more cleansing, cleaned up his act. This is a legalist. This is a typical self-righteous Jewish legalist and they say this is even better and the demon comes back, brings...that's right, he brings seven buddies with him. And now there's eight of them living in the guy. So much for exorcism...so much for formulas and incantations. Jesus said, "That's how it is with this...what kind of generation?...evil generation." If you've never dealt with your sin, you're never going to be delivered. You have no control. You might have one demon, you might

have a time when the demon's gone and you might have eight coming back. You don't have any control over that. That's the way it is to live in a state of being in the kingdom of darkness under the power of Satan. You're susceptible to that.

Again, I don't think demon possession necessarily is connected to being grossly wicked. I think it can be more likely connected to being religious, certainly in the occult, false religion, pagan religion. Just a footnote on that. In all the accounts of demon possession in the gospels, all of them in the gospels, no one can be defined, identified specifically as a resident of Jerusalem. There is one occasion of demon possession in Jerusalem and that's in Acts I think it's chapter 5. To say that the incidents of demon possession occurred in Galilee and Galilee was called "Galilee of the...you remember?...the Gentiles," because Galilee was surrounded and criss-crossed by the pagan world. And it seems as though pagan religion provides the best place for demons to find occupation. But that's...we don't want to push that point too far because in the Old Testament you have no occasion of demon possession and you have the whole land of Canaan where they were involved in idolatry beyond description, horrible, horrible acts of idolatry and you don't have demon possession there. And you also have the Jew that Jesus is talking about in Matthew 12 who cleans up his act and gets eight times as much trouble as he got in the first place. But it does seem, I think it's a sort of general thought, that false religion is the door of access very often to demons. I think we don't want to draw hard and fast laws on that, I think demons may come into the unbelieving person at any point that they desire to come in. It may not always be easy. You see this demon in Matthew 12 looking for a place and can't find one. It's so...there may be with the demon, you know, looking around trying to find a place, it may not mean that he couldn't find anyplace, it may mean that they're pretty selective and they want to find a place where they can be most effective.

It seems as though they found most of their places in the Galilee where people were exposed to pagan religion and that would be why you tend to find today most incidents, modern incidents, of demon possession occur in Third World pagan countries. Missionaries tell stories about that, don't they? Running into these people who are all infested with demons in the Third World in these very, very pagan forms of religion. That's not to say, however, that demons also don't work in false religion that bears the name of Christianity because they could, although most likely their approach would be more of the gray flannel suits subtlety approach in the advanced world and more of this same kind of manifestation that you see in the Bible in the Third World. I don't want to make any hard and fast rules. All I'm saying is demons aren't limited to people who are particularly wicked, but they are limited to people who are unconverted and they seem more interested in getting involved in people who are in false religion and that is the picture of Satan as the inventor and purveyor of all false religions.

In the light of what we've said, there is a world of unconverted people who are under Satan's influence. Some of them are possessed by demons. It really doesn't matter because when the gospel comes they're all liberated. I asked the question some years ago to somebody who was giving me a whole lot of foolishness about demons and I said, "Which is harder, to deliver a person from a demon or to get them to believe the gospel?"

"Oh," they said, "if they've got the demon, you've got to get the demon out of there before they'll believe the gospel."

No, it doesn't matter. The gospel is so powerful. It is the power of God unto salvation. Jesus just preached the gospel and the demons reacted in panic.

Back to my main outline. This is a four-point outline, I've given you one, I'll give you the rest next week. The first point is...what causes demons to fear, to panic? The preaching of what? Of the gospel, preaching of the gospel and the demons panic. Sure under Jesus they escalated their efforts, but they were not successful.

It is also possible that someone could be demon possessed by invitation. I think there are people who get into Satanism, who invite Satan, who invite demons and certainly become possessed. I think you see some of them in the rock music world and places like that.

Well the demon couldn't restrain himself in the synagogue that day in Capernaum. He was tormented by the preaching of the gospel of salvation. That demon shook, that demon shuddered, that demon trembled at the truth and the authority of the preaching of Jesus and the demon was wanting to hold on to the man but the demon couldn't do it. He burst out in panic and wanted to know what was going to happen to him. And I think the demons tremble even when the gospel is preached today, don't you? This again is a call for preachers to preach the powerful gospel of Jesus Christ and set all the other stuff aside. Demons don't shudder and panic because of your little incantations, exorcisms and formulas, they don't shudder over your great illustrations and your human manipulations. They shudder under the power of the clear preaching of the gospel of deliverance.

Do you like that word? Deliverance? Good word. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for the fact that Your Word gives light on very dark subjects. We thank You that we have nothing to fear because we have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness and we have been transferred into the kingdom of Your dear Son and we are the temple of the Holy Spirit forever. Thank You for this. O God, may You save sinners whether they are under the influence of demons or perhaps even someone who is possessed. May You deliver them. For Your glory and Your honor

we pray. Amen.

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