

Deliverance from Demons

By David Feddes

³¹ And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, ³² and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. ³³ And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ³⁴ “Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” ³⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. ³⁶ And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!” ³⁷ And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

³⁸ And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. ³⁹ And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.

⁴⁰ Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. ⁴¹ And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ. (Luke 4:31-41 ESV)

Jesus had tremendous power and authority, and he has tremendous power and authority. In this passage, we see his mighty power to deliver from the grip of demons.

Deliverance

- Churchgoers can be demonized. (4:33)
- They need deliverance, not blame.
- Demons know and fear Jesus. (4:34)
- Jesus rejects demonic testimony. (4:35)
- Jesus banishes demons by the power and authority of his command. (4:36)

One thing to notice in this passage as we read it is that someone attending worship—a churchgoer—could be demonized. Jesus is up front, and there are others there in the congregation. As Jesus is speaking, one of them starts acting weird and pipes up, yelling that he is the Christ. It is worth noting that you can't assume that somebody is not troubled or even dominated by a demon just because they happen to be in a place of worship. Sometimes there are people in a place of worship who don't truly know the Lord and walk with him. It's even possible that there are people who have come to know the Lord, but for one reason or another have come under a tremendous and terrible influence from outside them. So we have to allow for the possibility that, yes, even somebody who is a churchgoer might be unsaved, and that even a saved person might have times or situations where an evil force is afflicting them or tormenting them in a terrible way.

Another thing to notice is that Jesus didn't spend a lot of time trying to find out what this person had done wrong or blaming them for this or that. A demonized person is not necessarily more wicked or sinful or in that condition because they did something so much worse than anybody else. Oftentimes we just don't know exactly why that befell a person. It is worth noting too that our translations can mislead us a little bit. Sometimes they speak of being demon-possessed. Certainly no believer could ever be fully possessed or owned by a demon, because the demon has no right of ownership over someone who has been purchased by Christ. Really, the demon even has no right of ownership over anybody. Sometimes the original just says somebody had a demon or they were demonized. It sometimes gets translated "possessed by a demon" or "demon-possessed," but that idea of being possessed—wholly owned—is a bit misleading. At any rate, when somebody is afflicted by a demon in whatever manner, we need to focus on their deliverance and not on blaming them or trying to figure out necessarily what went wrong.

Another thing to notice is, of course, the most striking thing about this passage: the demons recognize Jesus. They know him. They know who they're dealing with, and they are very afraid. This particular demon says, "Have you come to destroy us?" Well, the short answer is yes. The Bible says, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:8). So, "Have you come to destroy us?" There are other passages where the demons cry out as though they are fearing that right now Jesus has shown up to drive them all into the abyss and into hell. It's not quite true to say that Jesus drove out all demons and cast them all into their everlasting punishment at his first coming, but nonetheless it's true that Jesus came to destroy the devil and his works. Wherever Jesus went, the demons were terrified, and they had to flee at his command. They also seemed to come out of the woodwork. It's possible that the person we read about had a demon without people knowing it. I'm not sure about that. But you do know that in the presence of Jesus there's no hiding. Jesus discerns completely, and his presence brings out the terror of the demons and sometimes brings out their activity.

Jesus doesn't want true testimony about him from the wrong source. That's another interesting thing. They know who he is. They say who he is, and Jesus says, "Shut up." He doesn't want testimony from the wrong kind of witness. You read that several times in places where Jesus delivers demons—that they cry out, "You're the Son of God! We know who you are!" And rather than take that as something to establish his credentials, Jesus doesn't want that kind of testimony. You find the same thing in the book of Acts when the apostle Paul is preaching and trying to lead people to Christ through the gospel. There's a girl who has an evil spirit who says, "These men are telling you the way to be saved" (Acts 16:17). Well, that's true, and Paul rebukes her and casts out the spirit because God doesn't want true things being said from a false source. We don't know exactly why, but Jesus doesn't. Even if demons say true things about him, Jesus doesn't want them saying it. He wants his testimony coming from the Father, from the Holy Spirit, from his chosen witnesses, and not from the forces of evil.

Jesus banishes this demon and every other demon that he encounters. Jesus banishes demons by the power and by the authority of his command. That is still today the source of deliverance from all demons and all demonic activity: the supreme authority of Jesus Christ and the power that is in his Word to bring about what he says. When he speaks, they flee. You find that the people who saw what happened mentioned power and authority. Authority refers to the rank of Jesus—Jesus ranks higher than the demons. Along with that rank, he has power. He's stronger than they

are. So he has a higher rank and he's stronger, and that's why when he says, "Go," they have to leave.

So when we read in the Gospels of these wonderful deliverances that Jesus brings about, we need to remember again that Jesus came to destroy the devil's work (1 John 3:8). Even before doing all of these deliverances, he himself faced Satan head-on with Satan's temptations, and Jesus rejected all those temptations using the Word of God to refuse and refute Satan. Then he does these acts of deliverance in all of the people whom he meets who are possessed—or, I just said it—who are demonized and not possessed. They're not owned by a demon. God owns them, and God's taking back what's rightfully his. So he kicks out the demons from those who have been demonized.

Jesus did not just accomplish these things during his ministry. He accomplished them supremely during the ministry of the cross. "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son...He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them by the cross" (Colossians 1:13-14; 2:15). His death and resurrection accomplished even more than his earthly ministry of commanding demons to leave. In his ministry, he expelled demons one by one, and that rescued and helped many people. But his supreme act of deliverance was to die on the cross and shed his blood so that demons have no claim whatsoever on us anymore, because that blood is enough to take away all our sins and wipe out any accusation of Satan or his demons against us.

When we think of deliverance, then, we think of Jesus' authority and power to command demons to flee. We also look at the big picture and say, from the cosmic point of view, something happened at the cross and resurrection of Jesus that crushes the overall kingdom of Satan and makes everything else a mop-up operation, where there may still be cases of individual affliction by demons, but Jesus has already conquered once and for all. So we need to live in his victory now.

Deliverance today

- **Power encounter:** using Christ's authority to order a demon to leave a demonized person or place.
- **Truth encounter:** renewing mind to trust Jesus' victory, realize who you are in Christ, be filled with Spirit, and leave no room for demons.

When it comes to deliverance from demons today, there are at least two different ways that this is spoken about, and I think that both are worthy of consideration. One is what you might call a power encounter. The other is what is sometimes called a truth encounter.

A power encounter is a head-on confrontation with a demonic force and using Christ's authority to order a demon to leave a demonized person or to leave a place where people have been afflicted by a sense of a demon being there. So in the name and authority of Jesus Christ, a direct order is given that any demonic power afflicting this person or inhabiting this place must flee. And in the authority of Christ, we have that authority as followers of Jesus, as believers in Jesus. We do have the authority and power from the Holy Spirit to give a command to which even

demons must yield.

I don't think it would be wise to eliminate entirely the idea of a power encounter. There is a good case to be made that a truth encounter is what should be practiced most of the time in dealing with most people. But there may be times when a person is not able to listen very well to the truth because they're so much afflicted and under the influence of a demon that they can't even begin to work through and understand the implications of the gospel for themselves until the demon is simply commanded to leave.

A truth encounter is the greatest need of most people. This means that you are renewing your mind with the help of a fellow believer and the help of the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures. You're renewing your mind, and as you renew your mind, you trust in Jesus' victory. And as you put your faith in Jesus' victory, whatever grip demons may have had on you is loosened. You realize who you are in Christ. You know that he shed his blood for you, and the demons have no claim on you. Most of the power that demons have over us is carried out through lies and deception, and the lies and deception fall away as you realize who Jesus is and who you are in Jesus and that you're filled with the Holy Spirit. There's not much room left for demons to operate, once you've put your faith in Jesus and realized your standing in Christ and realized the filling of the Holy Spirit in you.

This truth encounter is the more normal path of deliverance from demonic powers. Most people are not directly demonized. In the Bible, being demonized is quite recognizable—the directly demonized people do weird stuff. Some of them, in Jesus' ministry, are out of their minds roaming in a graveyard. Or you get these outbursts in the middle of a worship service, like we read about in the story today.

But that kind of demonization is not the main way the devil works. The devil works very often on seemingly well-adjusted, seemingly normal people. A lot of seemingly normal people need to be rescued from the grip of the evil one. They don't need to be rescued from really bizarre activity as such, but the devil and his demons afflict them and harm them in various ways. For such people, the normal path is to know the truth of the gospel, to take the truth of the gospel to heart, to have the Holy Spirit taking over more and more of your life.

Now, it is important to get rid of demons. If you have a rat infestation problem and you have a lot of garbage around, one approach is to get over there and wave your stick and chase away the rats. And then you and your stick leave, and not long afterward all the rats are back—because you didn't do anything about the garbage. If you want to get rid of the rats, clear out the garbage, and you'll find that your rat problem is largely taken care of as well.

And so it is in our own lives. Where we allow sin to get more and more of a grip on us, we do leave more of what attracts the rats. So it's not enough to say, "Be gone, demons." We need to have God clean up the sin in us—the failings of our flesh—and there will be less and less for the demons to be drawn back into.

Now, when we think of the activity of demons—even this analogy—I don’t want to get you on the wrong track. Remember what I said earlier: just because someone is especially attacked or afflicted by demons doesn’t mean their pile of garbage is way, way higher than the next person. Analogies always have their limits. But the fact remains that in a truth encounter, there is much to be cleared out so that room is made for God to do his work in us, and no room is left for Satan.

I mentioned earlier something that might sound a little controversial: even a Christian might face demonic activity. But I would remind you the Bible itself says to Christians: “Watch out, because the devil goes around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8), or, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Why are Christians told that? They aren’t told that because they now have immunity and a pass and the devil’s never coming after them again. The devil and his demons will come after Christians.

Sometimes their attacks are so severe, and the Christian might be in a state of such weakness that it maybe could be compared to what it’s like for a wife who has an abusive husband who, for a long time, is physically and verbally abusive. It’s not all her fault. It might not be her fault at all. But over a period of time, she begins sometimes to lose her sense of self, her sense of being able to be a personal agent who actually makes her own choices. Her whole mind and being and identity get crushed and warped by that activity. So maybe that’s one way of comparing what happens to even a believer who gets under the crushing oppression of a demonic power at some point in their life.

Now, Jesus says that he has the power to drive out demons. He also says it’s not enough to drive out demons. It’s not even enough to take out the garbage. Let’s suppose that you get rid of all the garbage and all the rats. Let’s say the house looks pristine. Jesus says, if that’s your situation and nobody else moves in, soon the rats and the garbage will be back.

He says that it is important that when there is a house that is held by a bully, the only way to free that house for its rightful owner is to tie up the bully—or bind the strong man, as Jesus puts it—bind that strong man, tie up that bully, and throw him out and take his house and his goods. And Jesus says, “That’s what I’m doing. I’m binding the bully. I’m taking back the house.”

But he also says, “Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest and doesn’t find it. 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—beautiful place, empty place. Then it goes and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first” (Matthew 12:43–45).

So that’s a sober warning to say, hey—the problem of any person is not so much the garbage. It’s not so much even the rats or the demons. The real problem is emptiness.

In order to be truly free, we need not only to get rid of the sin and get rid of the demons—we need to get full of God and of the Holy Spirit of Christ.

So when we think about deliverance, there are at least two parts to that. One is to submit to God, and the other is to resist the devil: “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will

flee from you. Come near to God, and he will come near to you” (James 4:7–8). That’s the two-part aspect. Or viewed from the negative side: “Do not give the devil a place,” and “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God” (Ephesians 4:27, 30). Those things go together—the not grieving the Spirit and not giving the devil a spot, a place, a location, a foothold, a stronghold—whatever you want to call it. The literal translation there in Ephesians 4:27 is, “Do not give him a place.”

Don’t give him room to work with. And don’t grieve the Holy Spirit of God, because when you’re grieving the Holy Spirit of God and the Holy Spirit withdraws in grief, there’s a place for the enemy to operate. So the positive side of that, then, is: submit to God, resist the devil, and when you resist, he’s got to flee, because you’re resisting in the power and authority of Jesus Christ. Come near to God, and he will come near to you.

Deliverance

- Idols
- Lies
- Curses
- Bitter
- Rivalry
- Pride
- Sex
- Drunk
- Anxiety

When we think about that in various aspects of our life, then, if we’re going to experience a fuller and fuller deliverance, I just want to give some of the areas that we experience that deliverance—where we give the devil no place and where we invite God to reign, where we renounce the devil and all his works, and where we repent and turn to God. I’m going to just take some passages that pair certain activities with the activity of Satan and his demons.

Idols

One is the whole area of idols. The Scripture says, “The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons” (1 Corinthians 10:20). Now, sometimes when we think of other religions or other kinds of occult practices, we may just think of religion that doesn’t have a truth to it—as an empty religion, as just believing in nothing. But here we see that that’s not so. There aren’t religions that just happen to be mistakes and have some incorrect teachings. Behind all religion lies personal powers.

And Paul says, if it’s not the personal power of the living God through Jesus Christ, it is a malevolent power—the malevolent, evil power of demons. And he says, “I do not want you to be participants with demons.”

So one of the things, if you want deliverance, is that if you’ve ever been involved in a different, non-Christian religion, you need to identify that and renounce it. Speak a word aloud: “I

renounce that. I renounce the devil.” If you’ve been involved in various kinds of activities—occult, getting involved with various kinds of fantasy games where you’re speaking words that have occult implications, or whether you’re just trying to get involved in certain kinds of magical powers—those aren’t things to trifle with. If you want to be free, you renounce that and you say, “I reject that.”

You also realize that idols aren’t just in the realm of what we might call religion and ritual worship. Sometimes idols come in the form of priorities that rank higher with us than God. Whatever it is in your life—even if it’s something good—that has become your highest and most important priority needs to be renounced. Because if it’s not, it’s becoming an idol for you.

The Bible even uses the word “Mammon” to describe money—Mammon as a false god. Somehow, the innocent money, in and of itself—it comes in handy, you pay your bills, you use it to live—but when it becomes your highest trust and most important priority, suddenly it is Mammon, the god Mammon, the demon. And demonic activity is at work in anything that we make our highest priority or our idol.

So one step in deliverance is simply to identify the idols in your life and then speak in repentance to God: “Lord, forgive me for that idolatry,” and speak a renunciation: “I reject all power and all priority that was not the true and living God.”

Lies

Closely related to that are lies. The Bible says that Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44). So it’s no surprise that deception, lying, is one of his main methods. And one of the main forms of bondage that we have is falling for his lies. “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons” (1 Timothy 4:1).

One realm of demonic activity is false teaching—heresy—that the devil keeps trying to sneak into the church one way or another to distort the true gospel, to distort the true way of Christian living. We need to renounce all lies wherever they’re detected, and realize that churches can be places of lies. We need to keep going back again and again to the Bible to evaluate where the lies are, and then to renounce them.

Another way that lies come to us may be a little more insidious and hard to notice. It’s not so much a doctrine that’s written down, and you can see that it’s a proposition that’s not true and it contradicts propositions that are in the Bible. It’s a sense that you have about yourself, and it’s almost something you hardly put into words—until you do, and then you notice what’s been going on.

It may be a feeling like, “I am worthless.” “God doesn’t care.” “I have no future with God.” “God doesn’t want what’s best for me.” “I’m going to have to take another route on this one.” So there’s a sense of God’s uncaring, your uselessness, your worthlessness. Or maybe it’s the lie, “I’m doing great! Who needs God?” It’s possible to be good, and it’s possible to prosper without

God. “It just feels good to be me today.” There are things—and nobody quite puts it in words most of the time, do they?—but there’s a false feeling, a misleading mood that comes over us.

We need to realize that lies are a primary tool of the devil. And to the degree possible, we need to pray, “Lord, show us the lies, so that we don’t believe them anymore—whether they’re coming as false doctrines or whether they’re coming as false feelings. Help me not to be misled and fooled by those.”

And then, specifically, whatever lies you do detect in your own heart and in your own moods or in your head—in your incorrect beliefs and ideas—reject them and renounce them. Say, “I renounce that lie, and I renounce that lie. I renounce the lie that I am worthless. I renounce the lie that God doesn’t care.” Speak those renunciations, and speak them as often as you need to.

When it comes to lies, the Bible gives us some interesting guidance. The Bible sometimes denounces liars pretty strongly. But it also says, hey, a lot of the time when you run into people who seem to be enemies of the faith, don’t pound your chest and flex your muscles and then come in and bash them. “Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will” (2 Timothy 2:25–26).

Sometimes, when you’re going to rescue someone from the trap of the devil who has captured them to do his will, it’s not going to come through direct confrontation or expelling the demon by a command, but by saying, “These people need to know the truth.” This is what I’m talking about, and what others talk about, when they speak of a “truth encounter.” Bring somebody to a knowledge of the truth. Oftentimes, the best way to get rid of a demon is to bring the gospel—bring the gospel lovingly, gently, clearly. As they come more and more to the knowledge of the truth, the jaws of that trap start to pry open, and they’re out of that trap. The gospel has given deliverance.

Curses

Another area of demonic impact is curses. The Bible says, “The tongue is a fire, it sets the whole course of one’s life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell” (James 3:6). What a strong way to describe what happens when people speak in wrong ways. “With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father... and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness” (James 3:9). The impact of curses can be very devastating. Words spoken that degrade a child—especially if they’re spoken by a parent or somebody close to them or an authority figure—can have a lingering impact on that person’s mind and on their mood and on their heart. They can be heart-crushing.

The tongue has the power to give life, and it has the power to give death. When a tongue is set on fire by hell, there are others around who catch that hellfire sometimes. For some young people, and some older people, there are words that were spoken years ago—words of curse that still haunt and that demons will use to afflict you. Sometimes it’s with the help of somebody else—a counselor, a pastor, a friend—you start to understand what were some of those curses that were

spoken years ago but are still hammering you and ruining you. Once you know what they are and see them in the open, then renounce it: “That was a curse set on fire by hell. Satan, I reject you. I reject that curse.” It may have come through the mouth of somebody who maybe loved me—or at least somebody who should have loved me—but however the curse came, don’t let the curses, the words that were set on fire by hell, destroy your life.

One of the sad things—just heartbreaking things—about the way the devil operates is how evil begins to perpetuate itself. Have you ever heard of the Stockholm syndrome? The Stockholm syndrome refers to people who are captured or kidnapped by terrorists, and if they are held long enough by the terrorists and browbeaten long enough by the terrorists, they start to side with the terrorists. That’s the Stockholm syndrome. Some evil person kidnaps you, controls you, and after a while, you’re thinking and acting like them.

That’s one of the terrible things about demonic activity. A demon will twist ideas about God in a church or in a home, and kids will grow up with that distorted idea of God and with parents who have treated them maybe miserably. Then they grow up and say, “Forget God. There is no God—or if there is, I can’t stand him.” That’s the Stockholm syndrome. They’ve sided with the every demons who have been harming them. The demons were directing the activities in their home or church and how they were afflicted by them, and now these people have decided they want nothing to do with God.

You find the Stockholm syndrome in the area of sexual sin, of being sinned against sexually or committing it. I saw on a government website a study that found that 46 percent of homosexual men reported being molested by someone of the same sex when they were not yet an adult. That was true of only seven percent of heterosexual men. We’re in a situation where 46 percent of homosexual men have been mistreated while they were still minors, and we have a government that says they have no right to receive any kind of counseling to escape from homosexuality because it’s a wonderful, normal thing. And the government has the data right on their own website that says boys who grew up to be homosexual were almost seven times more likely to have been molested in childhood than boys who grew up to be heterosexual. That’s the Stockholm syndrome, where people who have been violated try to explain it away and say their sexual orientation is just a healthy variation.

Sometimes people who are beaten, who are cruelly treated by their parents, end up as grown-ups doing exactly the same thing to their own children. It’s the Stockholm syndrome. They’re taken captive.

We need to have compassion for people who are trapped in sin and sometimes been enslaved and controlled by evil power, because that is the nature of the demonic: to harm you, to fool you to do something bad, and then to fool you into thinking it’s normal. Whether it’s the lies, the curses, the idols, or anything—let’s not get the Stockholm syndrome, where the very mean, cruel power that’s been ruining our life is who we side with. Jesus is your deliverer. He came to set you free from all that, not to embrace and imitate it.

Bitterness

Another area where we open ourselves sometimes to demonic influence—or maybe have been poisoned—is in the whole area of bitterness, of anger. The Bible says, “In your anger do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no place to the devil... And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God... Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger... Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:26-32). When you continue in anger beyond sundown, you're setting up a spot and saying to Satan, “Come on in.” Do not give place to the devil, and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Remember, those two things go together. When you're giving a place to the devil, the Holy Spirit's being grieved. So, “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:31–32).

The apostle, even in dealing with very serious sin in the public life of the church, says, “Now that person repented, we've got to forgive.” He says, “Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes” (2 Corinthians 2:10-11).

You're playing right along with Satan's playbook when you keep on holding anger against somebody, when you keep on refusing to forgive. Forgiving does not mean that you say, “Oh, it's okay, it doesn't matter.” You're absorbing the hurt. You're not saying that it wasn't a bad thing. You're simply saying, “I'm going to wish good for you anyway, and I'm going to pray for you anyway.”

For some, it might mean reconciliation and being friends again. For others, it might mean you still regard them as enemies. Jesus says, “Pray for your enemies.” He doesn't say, “Pretend your enemies are your friends.” Sometimes if people remain your enemies, if they don't repent of the thing that you needed to forgive them of, you can forgive them, you can pray for them, but you're praying for them as your enemy rather than as your friend or beloved reconciled family member.

If you have a father who treated you terribly and then continues to treat you terribly, for instance, you don't have an obligation to pretend that you're getting along well. You say, “I forgive. I'm going to let go of what he's done, and I'm not going to pretend that he's not my enemy. He's an attacker. He assaults me. And until he repents of that, I really can't have a whole lot to do with him. But I am going to pray that God will give him repentance and lead him to life.” If you don't forgive or pray for him, you become entrapped in the devil's scheme, because his evil is matched by your resentment. You know the old saying: when you forgive somebody, you find out that a captive has been set free—and that captive was you.

So when we're dealing with freedom in Christ, we need to be set free of our own offenses against God. And we come to God repeatedly. The Bible says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). “The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). So where sin has been committed by you, bring it to God. Apply the blood of Jesus to it. Renounce the effects of Satan and receive that full forgiveness. And then, in the power of that forgiveness, give forgiveness to others. We don't

want Satan to trick us. We don't want him to outwit us. We're not unaware of his schemes. We know how he uses anger and bitterness and unforgiveness, so don't let him fool you that a grudge is okay. Let it go.

Rivalry

Closely related to that is ongoing rivalry, competition, always having to be top dog. “If you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts”—that desire to always be better than the next person, to always rise above them, and maybe by stepping on them on your way up—“do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such ‘wisdom’ does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic” (James 3:14–15).

You're starting to get the idea that there are a variety of strategies the devil uses. And as you enter into deliverance, you recognize what those are, and you look into your own heart: “Where am I trying to one-up somebody else? Where is my feeling of worth coming at somebody else's expense and knocking them down?” When I'm doing that, it has a demonic source.

Satan can't bear to be second or third or fifth. We don't know exactly where he ranked in the angelic hierarchy before he fell, but it was very, very high—but not at God's level. Well, that wasn't good enough for Satan. He had to be above God's level. So the unwillingness to accept where we are, and the need to be better, more important, exalted, and more powerful than everybody else, is of the devil. It's one of those things that we need to identify and renounce in our lives.

Pride

The core sin of Satan was pride. The Bible warns that when we're looking for people to be leaders in the church, “Such a person should not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap” (1 Timothy 3:6–7). Part of wisdom in choosing church leaders is, don't promote people too rapidly.

We've seen that in wider Christian circles sometimes, where a very famous person gets converted, they come to Jesus, and within one month they're being asked to give their testimony everywhere and speak everywhere. They're spiritual babies. They're famous babies, but they're babies. And the wreckage of promoting babies to the great spokesman within five minutes of conversion is a disaster. You have to look for spiritual maturity, not for celebrity status or anything else in a leader that is being chosen.

Sexuality

Satan will exploit when things in our sexual lives are amiss. The Bible warns husbands and wives, “You should not refuse each other, except by mutual agreement and for a limited time” (1 Corinthians 7:5). Because if you do refuse sexual intimacy with your partner, you're asking for Satan to tempt you, or to tempt your partner from a lack of self-control.

Overall, this whole realm of sexuality is an area where Satan likes to really harm us. Some people grow up being exploited sexually by someone who is close to them—by a parent or a trusted teacher or a neighbor—and that can haunt and harm for years and years. Part of your deliverance is coming to God, and sometimes coming to God with somebody else to guide you, help you, and encourage you in that, and to renounce what was done unto you and the manner in which you were violated. The devil will use the evil that was committed against you to make you ashamed. Why are you ashamed of what somebody else did in wronging you? And yet that is how the devil operates.

“Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body?” (1 Corinthians 6:16). There's something about sexuality that unites you, and therefore, if there's been a wrong sexual uniting, part of being set free is to renounce—to identify and then renounce—and say, “I reject and renounce that action, and I claim freedom in Jesus' blood from that.”

We live in such a secular age that everything is considered a matter of hormones and urges and so on. The Bible says not so quickly. Bodily purity aids spiritual liberty. And the downside of that is: bodily impurity contributes to spiritual bondage. We need to keep coming to the Lord and his truth and find freedom in all of these areas.

Drunk

Drunkenness is another area that grieves the Holy Spirit and also makes us vulnerable to demonic spirits. “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms and hymns and songs from the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18–19). When we're under the influence, it's not just something that happens to our body—it opens up our spirit to invasion from evil spirits. Demons will exploit addiction, and they will exploit when we're not in our right mind, when we're under the influence of something besides our own soul and our own spirit and the Spirit of God.

Part of addiction, then, is putting your full trust in God and renouncing the bondage. Being free from addiction is trusting God, recognizing the addiction for what it is. I know the disease model of addiction has a lot to be said for it, but I'm not sure whether just calling it a disease is quite adequate. One of the most terrible things about addiction is the inability to see it for what it is. People in Alcoholics Anonymous have a saying, “The stinking thinking causes the drinking,” or make other statements like that. The inability to see your true condition as it is—and your need for God, your desperate need for God—is part of the deadly power of addiction. Something is lying to you. You can call it your disease. The Bible might call it something more than just a disease, but something is lying to you about your current condition.

If I'm addicted, I need to acknowledge that, of myself, I can't overcome this addiction. I can't overcome evil powers. But I do know somebody who can. And so I invite in the power of God, and I reject all other power that Satan claims to have over me.

Anxiety

Anxiety is another area that Satan would exploit. The Bible urges us to trust the Lord. “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith” (1 Peter 5:7–9). You might think that those commands are just strung together but unrelated. However, when you don’t cast all your anxiety on God, knowing that he cares for you, you’re going to be more vulnerable to the roaring lion, Satan, who is eager to gobble you up.

You might think that talking about the devil just makes your anxiety worse. But the Bible never gets rid of our anxiety by pretending the situation isn’t serious. It gets rid of our anxiety by telling us that we have a great God, and by telling us that by Christ, we can do all things. So, cast your anxiety on him. “Don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself” (Matthew 6:34).

In connection with this, I should add a couple of comments. Sometimes people will be too quick to attribute a mental illness or emotional vulnerability of one kind or another to demonic activity. Don’t be in too big a hurry to say all mentally ill people are more demonically controlled than others. Sometimes, mental illness is just mental illness. You have anxiety or you have anxiety attacks, or you have a biological reason why your moods are down and your anxiety is up. Maybe you need more medication and not someone to direct you in how to deal with the devil.

There are biological problems that affect our moods. Some of the greatest Christians are people who have struggled with mental illness and whose own capacity was pretty weak—trembling people, maybe anxious—and yet by the power of God, they had the courage to do what needed doing. So if you happen to be one of those who are weak, remember the Bible says Jesus doesn’t crush the bruised reed or snuff out the smoldering wick (Isaiah 42:3). He doesn’t say, “Oh, that person’s kind of anxious, that person’s kind of weak—I want the strong, brave, happy, hearty, healthy ones.” Is that how Jesus operates? No. He takes us where we are, and then, bit by bit, he makes us more and more what he wants us to be.

Key to victory

When Jesus comes into your life, he gives you a power greater than the power of the evil one. I’ve given nine examples in the Bible of areas where the devil or demons are active. Others could be mentioned as well. Whatever the area of demonic attack, Jesus brings victory.

This victory enters into your experience as you are working through a truth encounter toward freedom, whether that’s with a pastor or counselor or just in your own prayer life. Some people need help from another person. Others can spend time in personal prayer and identify the areas of vulnerability or where the devil was given a place, and renounce it and take away that place in the authority of Jesus. You can command all evil powers to leave you. You can receive power and authority to do that simply by praying and receiving help from Jesus.

If you find that your mind is muddled and your heart is downcast and you don't know how in the world you can even start on that, then it's important to go to somebody else and pray through it with somebody else and walk this path. But the good news is that Christ brings deliverance. That's the short version of this message: Christ brings deliverance.

Sam Storms writes, "The key to victory in spiritual warfare is knowing both **what Jesus Christ has done for you** and **what he has done to Satan**. Christians too often live in fear of what they think the devil might do but can't, and in ignorance of what they can do but don't." So don't overestimate the devil and what he can do to you, because Christ has triumphed. And don't underestimate what you can do when Christ is living in you and giving you his power and his authority.

There may be times when you or somebody you know is overwhelmed, and what they need is direct power and direct command, on the authority of Jesus Christ, to simply order a demon to leave. If that sounds weird to you—well, too bad. But that's the way we find things in the New Testament, and that's the way we find things in various people's lives. Sometimes they need help and need orders to be given with power and authority that demonic activity be banished.

More frequently, we just need to keep being fed on truth, keep being rescued from lies, keep being transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). I need to realize that in Christ, I am a new creation. I am beloved of God. I am a chosen person, a royal priesthood. I belong to him who rescued me from the domain of darkness and transferred me to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:13–14). And in him I'm filled with the Holy Spirit. There is no room in my life for Satan to operate. Wherever he does get a foothold, as soon as I notice it, I am going to renounce it and ask the Holy Spirit to take over that part of my life as well.

May God give each of us grace to live in the freedom of his deliverance. If you want help in this, talk to a pastor or fellow believer whose judgment on this you trust and who is powerful in prayer, and work through it with that person. There's no reason to go on living in bondage or fear when victory and freedom are given to us in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank you for your wonderful and mighty ministry. We praise you again when we hear of how, at a word, you expelled demons and unclean spirits from those who were so oppressed by them. And we praise you above all for that great cosmic deliverance in triumphing over Satan and all his powers at the cross. We praise you that you have put those powers to open shame, that you, Lord Jesus, are head over all rulers and authorities and principalities and powers, that you have supreme authority and unlimited power.

Lord, may we avail ourselves of that power, and may that power be applied in our own lives by the Holy Spirit. Help each one here to know greater freedom, to know a greater sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit, to know that the truth sets us free, that if the Son sets us free by the power of the Holy Spirit, we will be free indeed. Help each one here, Lord, who may have a struggle, to find that deliverance.

If you bring someone to mind who needs deliverance, help us to be that helper you've put in their life. Help us to minister to them, to love them, to gently instruct, and—where necessary—to speak the word of rebuke to the power of evil and to bring into the glorious freedom of the children of God those who are yours. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Deliverance from Demons

By David Feddes

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³¹ And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, ³² and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. ³³ And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ³⁴ “Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” ³⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. ³⁶ And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!” ³⁷ And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

³⁸ And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. ³⁹ And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.

⁴⁰ Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. ⁴¹ And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ. (Luke 4:31-41 ESV)

Deliverance

- Churchgoers can be demonized. (4:33)
- They need deliverance, not blame.
- Demons know and fear Jesus. (4:34)
- Jesus rejects demonic testimony. (4:35)
- Jesus banishes demons by the power and authority of his command. (4:36)

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son...He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them by the cross. (Colossians 1:13-14; 2:15)

Deliverance

- **Power encounter:** using Christ's authority to order a demon to leave a demonized person or place.
- **Truth encounter:** renewing mind to trust Jesus' victory, realize who you are in Christ, be filled with Spirit, and leave no room for demons.

Evil spirit must be replaced with Holy Spirit

“Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will 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, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation.” (Matthew 12:43-45)

Submit and resist

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. (James 4:7-8)

Do not give the devil a place... And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. (Ephesians 4:27, 30)

Idols

The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. (1 Corinthians 10:20)

- Non-Christian religions; occult
- Higher priorities than God

Lies

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. (1 Tim 4:1)

- Believing false doctrines
- Absorbing false feelings

Gentle deliverance

Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:25-26)

Curses

The tongue also is a fire... It sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell... With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. (James 3:6, 9)

Bitterness

In your anger do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no place to the devil... And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God... Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger... Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:26-32)

Forgiveness

Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes. (2 Corinthians 2:10-11)

Rivalry

But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. (James 3:14-15)

Pride

He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap. (1 Timothy 3:6-7)

Sexuality

Come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1 Cor 7:5)

- Demons exploit sexual abuse
- Impurity opens door to slavery
- Bodily purity aids spiritual liberty

Drunk

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. (Eph 5:18-19)

- “Under influence” opens door
- Demons exploit addiction

Anxiety

Cast all your anxiety on him because ^[1]_{he} cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith. (1 Peter 5:7-9)

Deliverance

- Idols
- Lies
- Curses
- Bitter
- Rivalry

- Pride
- Sex
- Drunk
- Anxiety

Key to victory

The key to victory in spiritual warfare is knowing both **what Jesus Christ has done for you** and **what he has done to Satan**. Christians too often live in fear of what they think the devil might do, but can't, and in ignorance of what they can do, but don't. (Sam Storms)

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