

What Do Demons Do?

Spiritual Warfare Session 3

After leaving the United States and arriving in England in 1981 with my American wife, Sandy, we were both thrust into our first encounter with a demonized person. It happened about the same time we and another couple started gathering people into small groups in my home town of Harwich, Essex, England. We met a person who had grown up under the influence of his mother who was a practicing Jehovah Witness, and his father who had been into Spiritualism. We both felt that there was something odd or different about him. At this time in our lives Sandy, my wife, and I were quite naive to such things as demonization, but felt that we knew a Person who could help him, so we decided to take him to church with us. We had a little mini at the time so we started driving with him in the backseat the twenty eight miles to the church we were attending. As we were driving he started opening up about himself. First of all he told us that he was the Antichrist, the evil world ruler that is prophesied will rule on the Earth in the last days. Then he went on to tell us that there were male and female voices inside him telling him that he needed to persecute Sandy and myself, "to drive us closer together." When we got half way to church I remember it became quite foggy and he said that something could happen to us on the way. Right after he said that, a car hit us from behind and totaled our car. None of us were hurt and we still managed to get to church with him, where he was ministered to by the leadership, but I remember that we didn't want to return to our home town with him. One of the ministry team took him home. I realized that I needed to learn how to help people in need like him. So I began to read all kinds of books on the subject. This is a topic that we all need to learn more about, so in this session we want to take a closer look at demons and what they do.

Warm-up Question: Share with one another a book or movie that scared you, or a time when you had something that happened that scared you.

Where do demons come from?

Last week we looked closely at Ephesians 6:12 and discovered that Paul the Apostle taught that Satan has with him at least four different classes of evil spirits that do his bidding. The lower levels of Satan's hierarchy of evil, the demons that have the task of hindering people from coming to Christ, if they can, are also given the assignment of impeding the growth of Christians. Scripture does not clearly tell us where demons come from. There are a few theories, some from scripture and some from tradition. Josephus, the Jewish historian that lived just after the time of Christ, believed that demons were the spirits of wicked people who had died.¹ Another traditional theory is that demons are the disembodied spirits of people that lived before Adam, I hasten to add that there is no supporting scripture to back that tradition. Some people believe that Revelation 12:7-9 indicates that demons are unconfined fallen angels. Others say that they are the offspring of fallen angelic beings who mated with women before the flood and were killed by the flood (Genesis 6:1-8). I personally don't worry so much about where they come from. Those things that scripture says little or nothing about are of no great concern. I want to know how to release precious people that God cares greatly about, from the clutches of the enemy.

What are demons like and how do they express themselves?

1) **Demons are evil, unclean and wicked.** They are personal in the sense that they have intelligence. They are also purposeful and have their own will about how they do things. Their longing and desire is to have some kind of host to express their will, mind and emotions. Without a host they have no rest until they find one:

²⁴ "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes

¹ Notes from Spiritual Warfare seminar with John Wimber on Demonization.

through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.'²⁵ When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order.²⁶ Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first" (Luke 11:24-26).

Why is the final condition of this man worse if the house was swept clean and put in order?

A clean house speaks of self-reformation, the cleaning up of one's life by stopping certain habits that brought a person on a downward spiral in the first place. The trouble with just cleaning up our lives is that a person often feels 'empty' and unfulfilled. We are created with a God shaped void in our lives and only the Lord sitting on the throne room of your life will satisfy. Once the natural barrier (The hedge as in Job 1:10) over our lives is broken down by sin and infestation of demons, the only spirit that will bring wholeness, cleanness and holiness is the presence of the Holy Spirit within us. The Holy Spirit dwells within us when we receive the Lord Jesus Christ into our lives. Self reformation is not enough. A demon that has had to leave can come back with one or more stronger spirits. These spirits can gain access into our lives if we don't have the Spirit of God ruling and reigning in the temple of our hearts. Paul the Apostle says:

¹⁹ "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received of God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

You were created with a place for God Himself to rule and reign in the temple of your spirit. Until we meet Christ, self is sitting on the throne of our lives, and I don't know about you, but I did a poor job of directing and managing my life before Christ came in to sit there on the throne (Galatians 2:20).

2) **Demons can cause physical sickness.** Not all physical sickness is caused by demons but there are scriptures that indicate that in *some* cases there are more to the physical condition than is seen from a surface view of the symptoms. For instance, in Mark's Gospel, chapter 9, Jesus casts out a spirit from a child whose father

testified that his son was "possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech." Today most people would say that the father was blaming the boy's condition on some unexplainable phenomena but the boy was also foaming at the mouth and gnashing his teeth and becoming rigid while laying on the ground. How did Jesus handle the situation? He rebuked the demon saying, "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you to come out of him and never enter him again" (Mark 9:25). It is easy to go by the word "rebuked" without taking a look at what it means to rebuke. The Greek word that Mark uses when he writes (The New Testament was written in Greek) is the word *Epitimaō*. My Key Word Study Bible says that this word means, "to blame, censure, chide, rebuke, warn or berate. It is an abrupt, curt and biting charge, pointedly expressing disapproval, the taking to task of someone for a fault, and connotes a sharp or harsh tone."²² So what is my point? I can't ever imagine Jesus speaking in such a way to any boy, in any case the boy was deaf as well as dumb. The spirit that Jesus was speaking to sure heard Him and came out at His word of command. He wasn't talking to the boy at all! He was taking authority over an evil spirit that had robbed him of the ability to speak and hear. When the evil spirit came out, the boy was healed. We will come back to this passage at a later session for there is much more for us to learn than time will allow today. Let's look at another passage:

³² While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. ³³ And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." ³⁴ But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons" (Matthew 9:32-34).

It doesn't say that Jesus healed the man. Christ cast out the spirit and the consequence of the spirit departing was that the man could talk again. How does a spirit manage to hinder a person from speaking? I don't know. All I can tell you from scripture is that spirits are able to affect physical bodies. Let's look at another example:

¹⁰ On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, ¹¹ and a woman was there who had been **crippled by a spirit** for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. ¹² When Jesus saw her,

² Key Word Study Bible, AMG Publishers, Page 1626.

he called her forward and said to her, “Woman, you are **set free** from your infirmity.”¹³ Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.¹⁴ Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, “There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.”¹⁵ The Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Doesn’t each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water?”¹⁶ Then should not this woman, **a daughter of Abraham**, whom **Satan has kept bound** for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?”¹⁷ When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing (Luke 13:10-17).

What things stand out to you as you read this passage?

This wonderful deliverance did not come about by the evil spirit manifesting itself and drawing attention to the woman. The spirit that had access to this woman’s life was letting her attend church (synagogue) and as far as we know, there were no other manifestations of the spirit’s presence in the life of the woman. It was Jesus who saw beyond the physical condition to a spirit that was causing this deformity. He went to her. He saw her ailment and even though He knew that it would open Him up to attack by his religious enemies, He still bravely ministered to the woman’s need, speaking a word of wisdom to those who opposed healing on the Sabbath at the same time. If this woman had been in one of our churches today most would blame it on the person’s DNA or even a disease that was causing the problem. Jesus told us that it was a spirit that had kept her bound up in her spirit. He didn’t say, “Woman, you are healed from your infirmity,” but, “Woman, you are **set free** from your infirmity” (Verse 12). The Greek word that is translated bound means to bind, fasten or to tie as with a chain or rope. Obviously these were unseen bonds that were holding her down.

Have you ever had a time in your life where you felt under a cloud of depression, doubt or darkness? What caused it? Could there have been a spiritual root?

This was more than something physical; the spirit that had managed to gain access into her life had tied her up spiritually from being the person God created her to be. Not all spiritual bondage is because of

being demonized by a spirit that has managed to gain access within us. Sometimes there is an oppression that is heavy on us attacking us from the outside. In this particular case, the spirit had gained access and was causing deformity of the spinal column. One further thing that Jesus mentions is that the woman was a believer; He calls her a daughter of Abraham that Satan had bound (Verse 16). Paul the Apostle is very clear that all those who believe are children of Abraham, Jews and Gentiles (Galatians 3:6-9). This raises a big question:

Can a Christian be demonized? What do you think?

I do not believe that a spirit can gain access into a Christian that is walking in the Spirit, and whose life is laid down at the foot of the cross. Not all Christians live their lives in such a way though. There are some who are led away from the purity and holiness of a godly life, either that or they have never been taught how to live a Christ centered life with God. When temptation is listened to and obeyed we are open season to the enemy who seeks opportunity through our sin and darkness to lead us away from Christ. Don’t get me wrong, I believe in the eternal security of the believer (John 6:39; John 5:24) but the enemy is able to limit our effectiveness as we live as believers in this world. I don’t believe that a Christian or a non-Christian either, can be possessed in the full sense of the word. Possession gives us an image of a person under complete and absolute control by demons. Even the most terrible demonic case in the scripture, the man under control by Legion (Mark 5:1-20), was able to run to Jesus as soon as he saw Him. If the demons were under full control, they would have run the opposite way! They are terrified of Jesus! John Wimber, the man whom God used to start the network of Vineyard Churches, taught that:

“I do not believe that demons may own people absolutely while they still live on earth; even when demons gain a high degree of control, people are still able to exercise a degree of free will that may lead to deliverance and salvation. The Greek word used for having a demon (daimonizomenoi) is more literally translated “demonized” (See Matthew 4:24; Mark 1:32; Luke 8:36; John 10:21), which means to be influenced, afflicted, or tormented in some way by demonic power.”³

I believe that there are different degrees of demoni-

³ Power Healing, John Wimber, Harper Collins, Page 109.

zation starting with:

1) **Foothold.** Demons tempt us with lures that draw us away in the hope that we will bite on the temptation. Temptation can be resisted and rejected. Failure to resist and reject the enemy's temptations will allow the enemy a foothold to ramp up his attack on a person's soul to the next level.

Do you have a strategy that you use when tempted in a certain area of your life? Share your strategy with one another.

When I have been under spiritual attack by temptation I have often formed a picture in my mind of walking Satan to the end of a pier by the scruff of the neck and kicking him off the pier by a big boot to the rear end! These days I kind of wonder if demons can see our thoughts and mind pictures, I surmise not. But the mind picture seems to break a hold on temptation that comes to me. Other times I have simply said, "Get out of here, Satan," if I am alone, that is. I don't want people thinking I am crazy! When I am around people I will just think the thought and imagine grabbing the thought in the air and throwing it to the ground. Do whatever works for you! The Bible tells us to resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7). There is the great story about Martin Luther, the great reformer of the Christian faith in the 1400's, when he was under spiritual attack in Wartburg Castle translating the New Testament. The Devil did not want the scriptures read by the common people and wanted to disturb the sacred work, but when he tried to tempt and distract him, Luther grabbed the ink pot from which he was writing, and threw it at the Evil One's head. Still today they show the room and the chair where Luther was sitting, and the spot on the wall made by the flying ink.

2) **Manipulation.** In this stage demons have made a foothold to be a knee hold in the door. The door is not yet open to demonic control but if not checked, repented, renounced, forgiven and forsaken, it becomes increasingly harder to resist. It may be alcoholism, drugs, pornography, pride, you name it! There has been a trafficking in the darkness and a level of obedience to the voice of the evil one. This is the stage where habits are formed along the lines of the temptation to which one has given into. What we give our will to can be manipulated by dark, evil forces which make it difficult to say no.

3) **Oppression.** If a person does not cast down thoughts and imaginations of the mind that we know are bad, the enemy manages to get a level of control of us. Whoever we choose to obey is the one who will rule our lives. You become like the one you listen to and obey. A person that is oppressed often has negative and somewhat pushy thoughts that are suggestive in nature to go down a particular avenue of sin. Thoughts are more compulsive in nature. We could use the Star Wars movies as an analogy to describe what happens to a person who is oppressed by demons. The Jedi knights dropped suggestive thoughts into the minds of their enemies that made them do what was suggested. A person does have power to resist, but finds it harder to say no.

4) **Obsession.** In this stage a person has become the slave to sinful habits and demonic control. When a person has come to this point it is quite noticeable to those around him or her. There is often a breakdown in sanity and reason due to the compulsive nature of the person's character. The demons have control to a degree where thoughts of harm to others and to self come to the mind.

5) **Demonisation.** Certainly the demons in the man called Legion (Mark 5:1-20) had brought the man to this point. He was driven by demons. Demons at this point have such a degree of control that at times their spirit is set to one side and bypassed completely. A stronghold of demonic control is within the person often driving him or her to suicide. Sometimes a different voice is heard as the demons use the vocal chords of the individual. It can be quite scary to hear a man's voice coming from a woman! People that are demonized to this degree often report that they hear voices, destructive voices, although they are not quick to share this with a counselor. The demons often claim that the person belongs to them at this stage. Demons are liars and not to be trusted. I don't believe a person is ever too far under Satan's dominion that he or she cannot be brought back.

There are different degrees of bondage to Satan and his demons but every person on Earth is able to call on the name of the Lord and be delivered. Those that are in the early stages of being demonized are, I do believe, able to cast down evil thoughts, temptations and habits. The prophet Isaiah says: 2 Shake off your dust; rise up, sit enthroned, O Jerusalem. Free yourself

from the chains on your neck, O captive Daughter of Zion (Isaiah 52:2). In the early stages of demonization I believe it is possible to free yourself. In the later stages this can become increasingly harder due to the level of spiritual bondage. It is always best to have a trained team of individuals minister deliverance to you. The scripture is never without hope and deliverance: 'And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved' (Acts 2:21). This word 'saved' is the Greek word *Sōzō*, it means to be safe, delivered, made whole, preserved from danger, loss or destruction. If you feel that you are demonized, you are never without help! Call upon the name of the Lord. Call urgently and with great pathos, feeling, seeking to lay down everything that has got you into this condition. Renounce every dark deed that has allowed the enemy to gain territory in your life. Repent (Repent means to have a change of mind concerning your sin, to turn around and live your life toward Christ) and make no excuses to God. Ask Him to forgive you for whatever is heavy on your soul. I don't believe that God ever leaves us without help. He chooses to use people in the deliverance process, and if you are in a condition where you are demonized, I would counsel you to seek out a gifted prayer team of people in your church that are trained in deliverance prayer.

3) Demons are able to manipulate the power of nature.

³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" ³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. ⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" ⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" (Mark 4:35-41).

Let me ask you a question—Have you ever spoken to an inanimate object before? Don't you think it is kind of odd to have a chat with the wind and the waves? Being an ex-fisherman from England, I can confidently tell you that there are many days when it was stormy on the North Sea, and yet I never told the wind and

the waves off for blowing hard. The word rebuked is the same Greek word *Epitimaō* that Jesus spoke to the demonized boy in the passage of scripture that we mentioned earlier. Why would Jesus use such strong words to speak to the wind and the waves? It was because the Father had sent Him to deliver the man called Legion in the following passage, and the enemy guessed that he had better try and stop Jesus from the deliverance that actually happened (Mark 5:1-20). It was so supernatural that even the waves became instantly still. That is not natural phenomena at all. When the wind stops the wave movement still carries on for several hours depending on the strength of the wind. Four of the disciples, possibly five, were fishermen who had fished that water for some time and yet they were terrified at such a supernatural thing as the waves becoming still. This was a resistance to demonic attack by Jesus.

4) Demons can give supernatural physical strength to the people they inhabit.

Let's now take a look at the passage of scripture just after the supernatural stopping of the winds and the waves.

¹ They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. ² When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. ⁴ For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵ Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones. ⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. ⁷ He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" ⁸ For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!" ⁹ Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." ¹⁰ And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. ¹¹ A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. ¹² The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." ¹³ He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. ¹⁴ Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. ¹⁵ When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by

the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ¹⁶ Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. ¹⁷ Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region (Mark 5:1-17).

What do we learn about the destructive life this man was experiencing?

Why did the people of the nearby town plead with Jesus to leave? What causes people that see a power encounter like this respond with fear?

I notice that Jesus commanded the spirit to tell Him his name. Those that have a lot of experience in ministering deliverance feel that this weakens the demon to have light shed on the name of the spirit. Luke in his Gospel also mentions the story about Legion adding that this man for a long time had not worn clothes or lived in a house (Luke 8:27). He had lived naked in the tombs. Mark tells us that night and day among the tombs he had been crying out and cutting himself with stones in order to destroy himself, such was the torment of the man. I love that the Lord had heard his cry and went across the Sea of Galilee to minister to Him. I love the fact that as soon as the man saw Jesus he ran to Him. There was a battle going on for the man's soul, for as soon as he came before Jesus he fell on his knees recognizing his need. It seems to have been the demons that spoke through him though, begging that they wouldn't be tortured. I notice that they still wanted to reside in a host even though it was pigs, two thousand in number (Verse 13). I do not know why Jesus allowed them to go into the pigs, except that perhaps it was a visual re-

minder to the man delivered that the spirits had indeed left him—he saw what happened to the pigs. It is likely that the Jews in the area were compromising God's law for economic reasons. Jews were not allowed to eat pork. 2000 pigs is a lot of bacon and would be worth a lot of money. It is a possibility that they were not eating it themselves but selling it to the Gentiles (non-Jews) in the area. The city of Damascus, the Syrian capital, was just a few miles away. It would have been a good reason why the people in the area did not want Jesus around but asked him to leave, they were afraid of more loss of revenue. Unfortunately, there are many that reject Christ for economic reasons, putting money as more of a priority in their lives than Jesus.

What about you? What or who comes first in your life. Is Jesus your Lord? He left the safe shores of Western Galilee to release a man who was naked and crying out in torment. He cares what each one of us is going through. What need do you have in your life that is causing you pain and torment. Call out to Him with all your heart. I am convinced that He will leave the 99 that are safe and look for the one who is lost:

⁴ “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? (Luke 15:4)

You are never beyond our Lord's eyes or the compassion of His heart. He sees, He knows, He loves. Cry out to Him with all your heart and if you are not in the family yet, come to Him and learn of Him, for He is gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your soul (Matthew 11:29).

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