

Unclean Spirits

As we return today to our study of these precious words in the gospel of Luke chapter 9, we are once again, brought face-to-face with the harsh reality that evil demonic spirits really do exist and that they are ever and always at work to invade the lives of common, ordinary people, even innocent young children, to bring harm and suffering to them mentally, physically and emotionally.

And no, as I have said to us so often, most of us don't want to be reminded that that "spirit world" really does exist, and especially that those demonic beings are involved within the lives and behaviors of people and circumstances all around us each day, even our own lives and the lives of our loved ones. We prefer instead to believe that the demonic activity is just "bad things happening to good people".

But folks, we really must not be naïve! As much as we might not want to believe that demonic activity is taking place, we really must accept that it is. And why would that need to be so? It's because these scriptures keep bringing that truth to us, time and time again, as do these words in front of us today. And we need to accept that these words of scripture are just as true and just as real as all the other words of scripture that we treasure so much, John 3:16 or perhaps Psalm 23, and others. And also, as we have read so many times before from the words of 2nd Timothy,

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

And for these reasons, we can never just pick and choose the scriptures that we like and study only those. All of these words are given to us by God and for His purposes.

So then, with that being said, may we pick up where we left off last week and read these precious truths given to us in Luke chapter 9, here, beginning in verse 37.

³⁷Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him. ³⁸Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, "Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries

out; it convulses him so that he foams *at the mouth*; and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him. ⁴⁰So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not."

⁴¹Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." ⁴²And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed *him*. Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father. (Luke 9:37-42)

Folks, again, these words truly do present us with a very harsh reality, the reality that there really are evil demonic spirits living within the unseen world all around us. And according to these words given to us here, those demonic spirits are able to live and move and have their being not only in their unseen world, but they are also able to reach over into this visible natural world that you and I live within, and are able to invade the lives and behaviors of many of us who live here, common, ordinary people, and even innocent young children, bringing us harm and suffering, physically, emotionally and mentally.

And no, their involvements didn't just take place during the days of Jesus, they are taking place right now, even as we speak, all across our world.

And as we can see from the words of this passage, unlike the people of our day, the people of Jesus' day readily accepted such things as a reality of daily life, and they spoke about it freely . . . but again, not so for our generation and not so for our modern culture! Unlike them, we in our day, are very uncomfortable and very unwilling to personally acknowledge and to accept such things.

And no, I'm not suggesting that all of the health problems, physical maladies and emotional behaviors that we witness taking place all around us each day are all caused by demonic influence and control. These scriptures do not tell us that. But folks, these scriptures do reveal to us that at least some, perhaps many of those diseases and those emotional behaviors really are caused by demonic beings that these scriptures call "unclean spirits". And because these scriptures tell us this, we really must give full consideration to those possibilities.

We really must not be naïve and join with the modernist mindset of our day and insist that all of the matters taking place in and around our lives each day are simply "bad things happening to good people", or that they are just "naturally

occurring" health problems, illness and diseases, emotional and mental problems, strife within our families, and even criminal behavior.

Because when we are drawn to believe that all those things are simply "naturally occurring", then we naively cast aside and reject the presence of that "spirit world". And then that, unfortunately, puts us onto a very foolish "slippery slope", a "slippery slope" that demands that we blame and attribute natural causes for all our troubles. And that keeps us depending solely upon the answers and the remedies available to us within our "natural" realm.

Turn back with me for a few moments and let's take a careful look at this passage of scripture given here in Luke chapter 9, and in doing that, let's ask God to enable our eyes to see those unseen spiritual realms in exactly the same way that Jesus saw them.

Here, an innocent young boy has been completely overwhelmed by a demon since his earliest childhood. His father said in verse 39,

³⁹ . . . behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams *at the mouth*; and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him. (Luke 9:39)

In the Book of Matthew, chapter 17, describing the same incident, we read where the father pleads,

¹⁵"Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. ¹⁶So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." (Matthew 17:15-16)

In both of these accounts, note that the man had, on an earlier occasion brought his son to the disciples to have them cast the demon out. But try as they may, they could not.

Knowing that this took place is important because too often we also search for a "quick fix" kind of answer, and often that is not possible. Some cures often require a great deal of long-term patience.

Let me restate the dilemma that this young boy is in. He has been suffering from a condition, here described as "epilepsy" for most all of his life. In the Book of Mark, describing this same incident, Jesus told us that the boy had a spirit that caused him to be "deaf and dumb", unable to speak or to hear.

The evil spirit would take control of the boy causing him to foam at the mouth. And in his “fits”, the boy would fall into water and into fires.

And please note that these words tell us that the boy’s suffering is not just a result of his condition. It is actually the demon causing the specific suffering. Listen!

³⁹And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; (the spirit) convulses him so that he foams *at the mouth*; and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him. (Luke 9:39)

And in Mark 9:22 we are told,

²²And often (the demon) has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. (Mark 9:22)

We need to be very careful to understand the impact of these words. We are being told here that the demonic spirits themselves are the direct cause of much of the pain and the suffering.

They are able to conceal themselves within some of our most common and naturally occurring illnesses and diseases and make us very sick, giving us all sorts of pain and suffering. But it is still their doing.

Note also a very important attribute of the demons. Some of them have a special strength and ability to resist being cast out.

On at least one other occasion, perhaps more, the disciples had prayed over this boy, but to no avail. The demon was able to hang on and continue to torment the boy. In Matthew chapter 17 we read,

¹⁹. . . the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?”

²⁰So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. ²¹However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” (Matthew 17:19-21)

No folks, we don’t understand much of this, but it’s still very true. Some demons are very, very strong. And it is only as we by faith draw ourselves up near to God that those strong demons will loosen their hold and flee.

And in James chapter 4, we are clearly told to do that. There we're told to
7. . . submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8Draw near to
God and He will draw near to you. (James 4:7)

But again, drawing near to God when we, or a loved one is sick is not usually our first thought. Yes, we quickly pray, but mostly we pray that the natural remedy that we are getting ready to pursue will relieve our suffering, the doctor, the barrage of tests, the therapy, the medication. And yes, sometimes those are appropriate and they work, but just as often, those remedies fall short.

And folks, please realize, the same demons that seize control of us in our sicknesses also seize control over our minds to keep us confused as to what is really taking place. And, in our dilemma, we simply continue to reach for the next and most logical solution, another doctor, another medication.

But Jesus' words, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you?" Those are words of strong rebuke, both to those people then and to you and me now. Jesus is saying here that faith should and must be our first thought and our first response.

But how can we completely change our manner of thinking and understanding? How can we begin to understand and to accept that the demonic world really was then and really is now very actively involved in so many matters of our daily life, especially within some of our most common health problems.

The resistance to such beliefs begins within our powerful public media who convince us that it is too embarrassing a thing to utter such words as "demonic influence", and that those things are for foolish catholic priests doing exorcisms on late night B movies.

Recently, we have been learning from portions of that same news media that all the suffering that has been taking place from the COVID19 virus originated within a chemical laboratory in China. Why do we assume it was only the Chinese lab techs, or even their government that were responsible for the suffering. Why not also believe that strong demons influenced and controlled those people into creating and releasing that awful virus.

And on another front, is all of the anger and unrest, rioting and killing that is taking place so freely within our cities across our nation each day really just simply some bad people doing bad things?

And another, even more recent tragedy that we have witnessed is the one involving the woman who went into that Christian elementary school in Nashville, Tennessee and killed those three little children and those three workers.

Are we to believe that the young woman was simply a bad person doing bad things. Or as so many of her supporters have suggested, perhaps she was simply suffering from some mental disorder.

Or is the real truth more likely to be exactly what these scriptures are telling us here in these words, that unclean demonic spirits took control over that woman and guided her behavior.

And what were some of the possible contributing factors. She was said to be a "transgender", a woman who came to think that she was supposed to be a man. And though it has not been said in the articles I have read, she most likely was taking strong medications to enhance her to have male behaviors. Such medications surely must cause corruption within a female body and mind.

But as we saw with this young boy in this scripture passage, it was specifically the demons causing the behaviors of the boy. And we must assume the same to be true for this woman.

We know from other scriptures that demons of this sort have violent behaviors. Recall that the sin of the people in Sodom and Gomorrah was homosexuality and that they were violently attacking Lot and the visiting angels to force them to have homosexual sex with them.

Folks, I personally don't know what caused that young woman to do those awful things to those dear people in that school, but for myself, I truly do believe that it had its origins within the unseen demonic world.

One more example . . . the intensity with which the homosexual world is forcing their sin upon our nation is their insistence on presenting "drag queen" shows to our children, and that should be beyond alarming to us within the church.

All of that kind of behavior is so obviously perverse. And folks, on the authority of the simple truths we read within these scriptures, you and I need to realize and accept that much of these evil behaviors and events are first originating with the “unclean spirits” within the demonic realm as they come over into our natural realm and invade the souls of willing participants.

But the question that we as believers and we as a church need to consider is, “what is to be our response to all of this? What are we to do about such things?”

We know that just standing around and complaining seldom accomplishes anything. We’ve learned from these scriptures today that sometimes, perhaps often, demons can hang on tightly, and that the only remedy might be “prayer and fasting”. And perhaps that is where we must begin, and step out of the comfort zone of our natural thinking, away from the world’s remedies into some of God’s remedies?

What real harm can prayer and fasting do to us? Hunger of that sort is not usually harmful. Yes, our pursuing help through prayer and fasting might cause some nosey neighbor or one of our know-it-all relatives to belittle us. But how harmful is that?

As we mentioned a few moments ago, some demons really are very, very strong. And it is only as we by faith draw ourselves up near to God that those strong demons will loosen their hold and flee.

And in James chapter 4, we are clearly told to,

⁷. . . submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. (James 4:7)

This really is our answer folks. You and I need to draw near to God in this matter of demonic influence and control. It is only then that those demons will loosen their hold and leave.

And so, may I ask us again, do you, do I really believe these words that we’re reading here today?

Here, in this circumstance, the father of this boy was faced with that very question and listen to his precious and humble response given in Mark chapter 9.

²³Jesus said to (the boy's father), "If you can believe, all things *are* possible to him who believes."

²⁴Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:23-24)

And folks, once the father said those words, look at what Jesus did. In verse 42 we are told,

Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father. (Luke 9:42)

Praise the Lord! Let's pray!