

Demonised Christians

by David Legge

David Legge's sermon explores the reality of demonic influence in the lives of Christians and emphasizes the victory found in Christ's redemptive work on the cross.

Duration: 53:38

Scripture: Mark 5:1

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Demonic Influence"

Description

This sermon delves into the topic of demonized Christians, emphasizing the reality of spiritual warfare and the need for believers to confront any demonic influences in their lives. It highlights the importance of complete surrender to God, repentance, renouncing sin, and resisting the devil to experience freedom and victory through the power of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Well, good evening to you all. It's good to be here. It's quite a different experience than the last time I was here for this Youth Rally, but praise God as he's increased your number, and I hope has been blessing you much in these gatherings together.

I hope tonight will be no exception as I share with you what the Lord, I believe, has laid upon my heart. I want you to turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 12, please. I want to speak to you this evening under the heading of something that will shock some of you, perhaps all of you.

The heading is Demonized Christians. I believe that you're going to hear some things tonight that you may never have heard before. You're going to hear stuff that you may not agree with, some of you, but there's a fraction of the crowd here tonight, I believe, that you're going to hear something that will change your life.

There's a real sense of occasion in a meeting as big as this, not that numbers matter, but we're all gathered here together, and we're such a sea of different experiences. We're all at different stages in our walk with God if we're Christians, and some of you perhaps aren't even believers in the Lord Jesus. And with such a hutch-putch of people, God's bound to do something tonight.

But I am looking for him to do something supernatural. So let's read together Matthew chapter 12, and do get yourself comfortable. Try not to keep you any longer than you need to be kept, whatever that means.

So if you're too warm, take your coat off, or loosen your tie if you're allowed to do that. No, I'm not allowed to do that, but loosen it anyway. You can blame me if you get into trouble.

We're going to read verse 22 through to verse 30, and then down verse 43 to 45. Verse 22 then of Matthew 12, and this of course is the Lord Jesus speaking. Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, or a demon is a better translation.

There is only one devil as such. That means the accuser, the adversary. There's only one, that's Lucifer, Satan, but there are many demons.

And this man had a demon, and was blind and dumb. This is how the demon manifests itself within him, in a physical ailment. It's interesting, and that happens many times in Scripture, that people who have a spirit or a demon, that it's manifested in them in a physical condition.

And he healed him. It's interesting the word he has used here. He healed him, in so much that the blind and the dumb both spake and saw.

And all the people were amazed and said, is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, this fellow doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself.

How shall then his kingdom stand? And if I, by Beelzebub, cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. This is a verse I want you to note. But if I cast out devils or demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house? He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. Down please to verse 43. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there.

And the last state of that man is worse than the first, even so shall it be also. Unto this wicked generation. Now we're going to pray.

I want you all please to come before the Lord in prayer, even if you're not a Christian. I want you to pray, and I want every believer in the Lord Jesus to pray. If you suspect that in some nature that you have come under the influence or oppression of the devil, if you're struggling with some kind of habitual sin or tendency or thought pattern that is ruling and wracking your life, I want you to pray that the Lord might reveal truth to you in such a way as the truth will make you free, and that you will have the bondage that you might be in tonight, mental, emotional, spiritual, moral bondage, broken.

So let us pray. O Lord, I bless you that the issue of the battle between yourself and Satan has never been uncertain. And I thank you that the Lord Jesus Christ, your blessed Son, your only begotten, won the victory over the devil at Calvary.

And I thank you that ultimately this great tension between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of God will end in victory for light and truth. I thank you, Lord, that Calvary broke the dragon's head. I thank you tonight that in this pulpit I contend with a vanquished foe.

I thank you that every believer in this meeting tonight, though they might know Satan with his subtlety and strength, they might know that he has already been overcome. Lord, we pray this evening together, collectively, we unite our hearts. We ask that all in this place who feel the serpent at their heel may remember him whose heel was bruised, but who, when bruised, broke the devil's head.

Lord, I pray that you will fulfill your word tonight and put all principality and power manifestly beneath the feet of Jesus in all our lives, we pray. Save souls tonight, Lord. Liberate your people, your children.

Bring backsliders home in Jesus' name and for his glory. We plead the blood and we bind the strong man in Jesus' name and declare the authority of the kingdom that is no right here. We pray, O God, that the power of the Holy Spirit will be released in this gathering now and in each of our lives to the glory of Jesus Christ, we ask it.

Amen. I want to direct your attention to verse 20, please, of Matthew 12. Jesus said, but if I cast out devils, we've seen that means demons, by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

Now, you've got to understand something in the context of the whole biblical time-space. Jesus cast out demons and that was characteristic of his ministry as Messiah, the promised Christ of God coming to Israel. And he went beyond all precedence that may have been in the Old Testament Scriptures.

So, what I mean by that is you can search the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi and there are several examples of great miracles and we could name a number tonight. There were the feeding of the hungry, various prophets stemmed the forces of nature. You can think of Moses reaching out his staff on the Red Sea, parting, you even see men being raised from the dead.

Wonderful miracle. But I think I'm correct in saying that you will never find in the Old Testament a demon being cast out. Never.

It was as if that act was being reserved for Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Messiah manifest in the flesh. And the act of casting out demons was particularly a demonstration that the kingdom of God had come to be among the Jews, the people of the day. Verse 28, read it again, If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

And of course, as you read the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus as he called the twelve to him, he gave them power over demons and unclean spirits and sent them out. You read according to the same pattern when he called the seventy disciples, he gave them power over demonic spirits and he sent them out. In fact, at the end of Mark's Gospel, chapter 16, one of the characteristics of all believers is that they will be given power over evil spirits.

And I still believe that applies to today. In fact, I don't think there's an occasion where Jesus Christ sent anybody out to preach the gospel without giving them authority over demonic forces. You see, Satan has always been the archenemy of God and therefore it follows that those who follow in God's ways, he will be their enemy also.

And from the beginning of time, even before the fall of man, Satan has sought to distort the image of God in mankind. He wants us basically to believe that we're just a part of the animal kingdom. What does it mean to be made in the image of God? Well, to be made in the image of God means several things, some of which are these.

It is to be made with dignity. Humankind has a certain dignity that the animal kingdom doesn't have. To be made in the image of God is to be made with a certain amount of control, self-control.

Whether or not we use it all the time, we still have it. Animals generally are driven by instinct. We have instinct, but we can control instinct by the human will.

We have personality. Animals might have personality, but they're not self-aware of their personality as we are as human beings. We have reason and rationale in a way that the animal kingdom does not have.

But most importantly of all, what it means to be made in the image of God is to be made a spiritual entity. God breathed into Adam and he became a living soul. God breathed spirit into man.

We are spiritual beings. We're different than the animal. Now, if we had time, we could turn to Mark 5 or Luke 8 and we could look at the demoniac of Gadara, the madman of Gadara, the maniac of Gadara, whatever you want to call him, who was possessed with a legion of demons.

A legion was something between three thousand to six thousand soldiers in the Roman army. So this guy had round about that number of demons, enough to be possessing 2,000 pigs and drive them to drowning in the Galilee. In one man, by the way, all in one man.

And you can look at this man as an example of what the devil wants to do to you. And when I say to you, this is what the devil wants to do to you, Christian. I'm talking tonight about demonized Christians.

Not saying the demoniac was a Christian, he wasn't. But what the devil did to this man, he wants to do to every person on the face of the earth made in the image of God. He wants to distort God's image in mankind.

And the devil stripped this man physically of his clothes. It says he wore no clothes. And effectively, the devil stripped him of his dignity.

That's what he wants to do with you. He wants you to run around as if you're an animal and behave like an animal with animalistic instincts. That's why nakedness and the kingdom of darkness are so closely associated.

There's nothing wrong with nakedness, by the way. God created the human form, both male and female, and it's pure and it's good. But the problem is with our fallen minds and hearts.

And Satan knows there's a great power in sex. And so he's using sex and he's using nakedness today, a \$13.3 billion industry of Internet pornography that some of you are up to your neck in. He is using it to strip you of your dignity.

He stripped this man physically of his clothes, his dignity. He stripped him personally of his character, his personality. Did this man know who he was? Well, when Jesus asked for a name, the word comes, Legion, for we are many.

And the demon speaks, not the man. If you'd have gone to school with this man, you wouldn't recognize him now. He took a step on a downward spiral and he ends up where he is today.

How it started, I don't know. Whether it was a pleasurable sin that he thought he was in control and that eventually got control of him, or whether it was some kind of supernatural occultic power that the devil promised him and he sold his soul to him. I'm not sure.

One thing sure is the devil wanted to strip him of his character, personally, his personality. The devil also stripped him psychologically of his consciousness, his sobriety. In other words, this guy, did he know who he was? Legion replied, if he knew who he was, he certainly was in control of what he was doing.

And the devil wants to rob you of sobriety. Well, he uses alcohol, drugs, power, money, whatever your buzz is, he will use that, even pride, and he'll use religion, by the way, if he can get you to buy into that one, to take away your sobriety and your consciousness of who you really are before God and in yourself. The devil also uprooted him from his family.

He uprooted him from society. And you see, right at the very beginning of time, the Bible says that God set the solitary, that means the lonely people, in families. And Satan is not just attacking the image of God in mankind, he's attacking the family nucleus and he is trying to cause it to implode.

We're seeing this more and more in Christian circles. The devil was stripping him. The devil was uprooting him.

The devil was also trying to kill him. Do you know the devil will try to kill you? And this was evidenced in his lifestyle. He was living among the tombs.

And I asked you tonight, is your lifestyle, I don't care whether you call yourself a Christian or not, is your lifestyle evidencing bad habits or good? Or to put it another way, is your lifestyle a highway to heaven or a roadway to hell? But also the fact the devil was trying to kill him was manifest in his tendencies. He was harming himself. In Mark 5 and verse 5, we read that every day, night and day, he cut himself and he wailed like a wild thing, harming himself.

The statistics would probably indicate that there's folk in the meeting here tonight and you're engaging in self-harm. Maybe your form of self-harm is bulimia or anorexia. You're believing the lies of the devil that you're ugly, that you don't measure up to the airbrush pictures in the magazines.

And so you're starving yourself. I don't know how you might be harming yourself. Maybe it's thoughts of suicide.

But ultimately, what the devil wants to do to those who don't believe in Christ is damn their soul. Let me show you this from Ephesians 2, verse 2, if you turn with me, please. Ephesians 2, verse 2. The devil wants to distort the image of God in you as you were created in order to gain control over you to take your soul to hell.

Now, if you're an unbeliever in the place tonight, you need to waken up and realize this is what is happening in your life. Ephesians 2, verse 2, speaking to Christians of the way they were before they were saved. It says, wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world.

Watch this, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. The amplified version translates that like this. You were obedient to and under the control of the demon spirit that still constantly works in the sons of disobedience.

In other words, demons are influencing unbelievers in the way they live their lives. If you're an unbeliever tonight, whether consciously or unconsciously, you are dancing to the beat of the devil in how you live your life. He is influencing you in more ways than you could think.

I wonder, do you believe in the devil? Do you believe that there's an actual personality, a spiritual entity behind sin and temptation? Do you believe in demons? The terrible thing, if I had to ask Christians, do you believe in the devil and do you believe in demons? But most Christians, I think, don't even think about the devil or demons half of their life. We're practical unbelievers as far as the devil and demons are concerned. Look at verse 29 of Matthew 12, please.

Jesus uses a parable of a strong man. He said that if he casts out demons by the Spirit of God, the kingdom has come unto you. And he explains that, expands on what that means.

Or else, verse 29, how can one enter a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man and then he will spoil his house? Now, Jesus is depicting himself here as the stronger man. Stronger than the strong man, and he's going into Satan, the strong man's house. He's invading his home, he's binding him, he's overcoming him, and he's taking his weapons and he's now claiming his spoils.

Now, that's what happened in the demoniac's life. The demoniac fell at the feet of Jesus. Jesus delivered him.

And we read in Mark 5, he came to Jesus and he was sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And everyone was afraid because they knew what this guy was like before he met Jesus. And then there was an incredible deliverance had taken place.

Now, often we understand the Savior and his cross, his work of redemption in regard to sin, the wrong that we do and the broken law of God's commandments that we have transgressed. And that's about as far as it goes for us. We think the cross is all about having our sins and the past cleansed and maybe even present and future.

But we feel often to appreciate the extent of the victory of Calvary, namely regarding the satanic realm of darkness, Satan, Lucifer, principalities and powers, demons and evil spirits. Because Calvary, its victory is supreme, its victory is eternal, it is unlimited in its scope and capacity. Let me show you a couple of verses.

Turn with me to Colossians 2 and verse 15, please. There's one word in particular I want you to note, but the whole verse is very important. Colossians 2, 15, having spoiled principalities and powers.

There's that parable the Lord used, going into a strong man's house, binding him and then taking his goods, his possessions, spoiled principalities and powers. He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Isn't that wonderful? In the cross, he triumphed over the powers of darkness.

Here's another verse I want you to turn to. 1 John chapter 3 and verse 8. 1 John 3, 8, it'd be good if you could note some of these. John says, for this purpose, the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy, and I want you to remember that word destroy, the works of the devil.

That's why Jesus came. Yes, he came to put away sin, but what good would putting away sin be if we still had to succumb to the lies, the schemes and the methods of the devil, if he still had power over us? But in the cross, we can know potentially power over the devil and power over the realms of darkness, because Jesus came to destroy, it's a strong term, the works of the wicked one. Hebrews 2 and verse 14, please, talks about how he was made flesh and became the incarnate Son of God.

That, Hebrews 2, 14 says, through death, he might destroy, there's that word again, destroy him who had the power of death or over death, that is the devil. There's that word destroy again. Now, the Greek word for destroy there, it literally means to loose, to loose us from the works of the devil.

It also can mean to dissolve, or it can mean to sever or demolish. It is the Greek word leu, the root meaning is to come unstuck, to come apart at the seams, to become unplugged. And what the New Testament teaches is that through the death of Jesus on the cross, through the shedding of his blood, through the glorious triumph of his resurrection from the grave, in bodily resurrection, he has caused the work of the devil to become unstuck.

That's what he was doing in his life as he was walking around, casting out devils, looking towards the cross, expelling demons, showing that he had come to overcome the powers of the devil, to destroy his work, to demolish his kingdom. And now, post-cavalry, we can know confidently that we too can overcome the devil, Revelation 12 and verse 11, by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony. We are meant to share the victory of the cross over darkness.

But my question to you tonight, Christian in particular, is how much victory do you know? Turn with me to Ephesians 6, please. You might say, well, yes, if you're unsaved, all that you've been sharing with us tonight is relevant, but I don't understand. If I'm saved, if I'm born again, I'm possessed by God, I have the Holy Spirit, how can demons affect me? Well, let me ask you a few questions and see what your answers might be.

Ephesians 6 and verse 10. Having set down all that we have in heavenly places in Christ as Christian believers, all the blessings, all the privileges, all the positions, then at the end of the epistle he talks about the devil. And in chapter 6, verse 10, he exhorts us.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. And he's talking to Christians now. That's obvious.

Put on the whole armor of God. Why? Why do I need to put on armor of God? That you may be able to stand against the wilds. That means the schemes, the methods of the devil.

Why do I need to stand against the schemes of the devil? Because, Christian, the devil's out to get you. Demons are out to get you. 4, verse 12.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God. Why? That you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

I will not read through the list of the armor of God, but it would do well for you to do that. So, the devil is a threat to the Christian. Will you agree with me on that much? Demons are a threat to Christians.

And let me ask you, why would Paul exhort this, if there was no danger of Christians coming under the influence of demons? Can I tell you, the New Testament categorically teaches that Christian believers can come under the influence of demons. Turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 11. 2 Corinthians 11, verse 1 and 2. Paul, again writing to believers, says, Would to God that you would bear with me a little in my folly, and indeed bear with me.

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy. For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled he through his subtlety, so your minds.

And if you mark your Bible, circle the word minds. Should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Now, can I say to you, that the first communication between the kingdom of darkness and humankind was via the mind in the Garden of Eden to Eve, the first woman.

Satan spoke first to a human being through the mind. And that's always the way he works. And if you have compulsive thoughts.

If you have chronic anxiety. If you have crippling fears. If you have thoughts that are popping into your head and you're saying, Where on earth or beyond earth has that come from? You are being subject to demonic spirits planting thoughts in your mind.

And I know out of the heart comes all sorts of thoughts. Jesus taught that. We are depraved and we don't need too much encouragement often.

But there are thoughts, and you've got to admit this, that come into your mind that haven't come from you. And you need to waken up to this. And sometimes they come in the most holiest of moments.

Out of the blue. And the devil starts in the mind and he wants to affect the mind in order to stir up the emotions so that we'll feel towards sin. And when he stirs up the emotions, then they'll come into the outer extremities of the body and we will execute the will and commit some sort of sin.

But you see, Paul was worried about the Corinthians. But just as Eve was deceived in her mind, so the devil would deceive them. Turn with me to 1 Peter 5, verse 8 and 9. Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.

Whom resists steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. Now let me ask you. If it is impossible for the Christian to be demonized, to be affected by demonic spirits, why is Peter describing Satan as a roaring lion desiring to devour you? Why? See, the Bible teaches that believers can come under the influence of demons.

But I hear the retort from some of you, ah, but Christians could never be demon possessed, could they? Well, the word possessed is found in our English translations of the Bible. But it is a translation of a Greek term, demonizo, which doesn't really mean possessed in the truest sense. Now let me explain that.

The word possessed in our English language gives the sense of possession, of ownership. So if you possess something, you own it. And if you're possessed of the devil, we think immediately, well, then the devil owns you.

And we say, well, a Christian isn't owned by the devil. The Christian belongs to God and is owned by God, and the Holy Spirit has been given to the Christian. Possessed is an unhelpful term because it conjures up ownership.

But the Greek word underlying this English word could be better translated demonization, which means coming under the influence of a demonic spirit or an unclean spirit. Now when you talk of it in those terms, what that simply means is there could be a scale of influence that a demon or demons could have on anybody's life. The small influence that he has on all of our lives where he plants thoughts in our mind from time to time, desperately wicked thoughts.

And then it can go right to the very end of the scale where we're so overcome by the devil that the devil is actually dictating our behavior in some shape or form. He's controlling it. Now if that's what the word means, and I believe it is what it means, Christians in that sense can come under demonization, the influence of the devil.

You don't need to turn to this verse. 2 Corinthians 2 and verse 11 says that we ought to be careful. Paul says, Less Satan should take advantage of us.

Now that has been translated in Jung's literal translation like this, that we may not be overreached by the adversary. Now he's talking to Christians. That we can be overreached by the adversary.

In other words, the adversary should sort of blindside us and ambush us. Ephesians 4 and verse 27 Paul says, Neither give place to the devil. And that literally could be translated, Do not leave room for the devil.

One translation puts it like this, Do not give the devil a foothold. See the picture being painted here? This is all the Christians. The Christians can leave a loophole in their life.

Christians can leave the door of their heart and life ajar, so that the enemy can put his foot in and get a foothold in our lives as Christians. We can become demonized. We can come under the influence of demonic unclean spirits.

And here's the problem. If you give Satan a foothold, that foothold will not be long until that foothold will become a stronghold. And then that stronghold will become a stranglehold.

Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 10 for a moment. Putting as much Scripture into this as possible, so as you know what I'm saying is from the Word of God. 2 Corinthians 10 verse 3 and 5, For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh.

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, not fleshly, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down every imagination and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. So Satan will plant thoughts in our minds. Satan is propagating a proliferation of propaganda all around the world.

Thoughts to infect our minds in order to get strongholds in our lives. Now listen Christian, if you give Satan a foothold in your life, he will build a stronghold upon it. If you give Satan ground, he will claim that area of your life.

And if you let him, he will camp upon that ground. It is possible for spiritual influences, if you like, to take up residence in an area of your life that you have not surrendered over to Jesus Christ. And particularly if

you're dabbling consciously in some sin or some occultic practice.

You think that's beyond Christians. But there was a medium in the town hall in Port-au-Dain not that long ago, and I know some friends who were giving out checks outside the door, and they saw Sunday school teachers from local churches going into that seance and coming out again. Christians are reading horoscopes.

Christians are visiting fortune tellers. Christians are having charms done. Christians are taking blood oaths in organizations and bringing curses upon their family.

I know this is shocking perhaps, but this is what God's led on my heart. If you want an example of how this can happen, look at Acts chapter 5. Acts chapter 5 is the story of Ananias and Sapphira, two believers in the church, and they sold a piece of land and they gave the proceeds to the new church in Jerusalem, but they made out that they were given everything to the church and they held back some of the proceeds for themselves. It wasn't because they kept it that was the problem, but they made out and they lied, telling that they gave it all.

And we read in Acts chapter 5 in verse 3, that Peter said to Ananias, now watch the words here, Why hath Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? And after that he fell down dead. Now what was the lesson here that the Holy Spirit is trying to teach us as believers? Is it that you shouldn't lie or you shouldn't steal? Well of course it's those things. But is that all? Surely there's more to it than this.

Surely it's to show us that there is a battle over the inner territory of our hearts. And they had kept a part of this land and it showed that their whole heart was not given over to God. And the problem was that Ananias and Sapphira believed that you could be 95% obedient to God and remain safely disobedient in one small area of their life.

And this is what happened. Peter said, Satan filled their heart. Now don't spiritualize it.

Is there an area of your life that you think that you can safely keep for sin or for self? You think you're okay and you're coming to meetings but you're dabbling in all sorts of sins, unmentionable things in this place tonight. And if there's a patch big enough, Satan will pitch his tent. He will gain control.

He will build a stronghold and he might even fill your heart. Going back to Matthew 12, I'm almost finished. Matthew 12 teaches us that neutrality is not an option.

In this spiritual war being waged today, you're either for or against Christ. Verse 30 of chapter 12 of Matthew. He that is not with me is against me and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

So what the Lord Jesus is teaching is you're either for Christ or against. You can't stand in no man's land and think the devil's not going to get a hold on you. And Christian, you can't have one foot in the world and one foot in the kingdom of light and think that the devil can't touch you because I asked Jesus into my heart.

Look at verse 43. Jesus is teaching beware of an empty life. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walks through dry places seeking rest, findeth none.

Then he saith, I will return unto my house from whence I come out. And when he is come, he findeth it empty and swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself and they enter in and dwell there.

He's worse off in the end than he was before. And an empty life. Listen, if you're not saved tonight, your life is an invitation for the devil to come in and set up camp.

But can I tell you, believer, if you have not surrendered everything over to Christ and if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit, you're inviting the Satan to have a foothold in your life that might build into a stronghold. Satan is a legal expert. If you've given ground to him, he has a right to retain it.

He has a right to retain it until you deal with it before God. What ground have you given over to him? Lust, pride, sectarianism, bigotry, bitterness, jealousy, envy, occult, idolatry, chronic anxiety, fear, religion, legalism. I could go on and on and on.

I want to finish on this note, how to deal with it. Acts chapter 19. All Christians are demonized to some extent, even if it's only the thoughts that come in.

Now, we can't do anything about thoughts that are dropping their head, other than ignore them and replace them with the truth and the truth sets us free. But if you've given over a foothold to the devil, you could be coming under a demonic influence that's even greater. Because you've given in to a certain sin, there could be a demonic stronghold in your life.

How do you deal with it? Well, verse 11, we need to read the run-up to this incident. God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul so that from his body were brought unto the sick like handkerchiefs or aprons, and diseases departed from them, and evil spirits went out of them. Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, these are unbelievers, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preaches.

In other words, they were mimicking Paul and thought that it would have the same effect. And there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jew and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, Paul I know, but who are you? What a statement.

And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them. He jumped them and beat them up and prevailed against them so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. Now, this is what I want you to see.

This was known to all the Jews and the Greeks, also dwelling at Ephesus. And fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. Now note this.

And many that believed came and confessed and showed their deeds. Now, that indicates that up to this time some people had believed and it is quite possible that they had believed and yet apparently they thought that they could live with one foot in the kingdom of God and the other foot in the kingdom of darkness. And it appears that they were still dabbling in their pagan, dark, occultic arts.

They were convicted when they saw what had happened, these false exorcists. And verse 19, look at what they did. Many of them also which used curious arts, occultic gifts, brought their books together and burned them before all men and they counted the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

Can I tell you Satan pays well on earth. Eternity is the problem. Fifty thousand pieces of silver.

Do you know what this piece of silver was? It was a drachma. A drachma was essentially a day's wages. So, what's it saying? One silver coin is a drachma, a day's wage, and there were fifty thousand silver coins worth of books.

Fifty thousand times a day's wage. I looked up on the internet what a day's wage is in the United Kingdom, now you might say amen to this, but it came up as ninety-five pound a day. And I imagined a five day week multiplied ninety-five by fifty thousand and the figure I got was four million seven hundred and fifty thousand pound.

That's how much these books were worth. But what did they do with them? They didn't sell them and give the money to charity. They brought them together and they burned them because there was a price to be paid for their release.

There was a price to be paid for their freedom. And look at the result, verse twenty, so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. That's what happens when you get real with God and you get radical with the devil.

Is that how you're living? They confessed their sins, they repented, they renounced the works of the devil and they resisted the devil and he fled from them. I'm going to ask you to do that tonight. You know, I preached about the devil this evening, but I don't want to give any glory to the devil or glory to demons because Jesus is stronger than Satan and Satan to Jesus must bow.

Jesus the name high over all, in hell and earth and sky, angels and men before him fall and devils fear and fly. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Westminster Chapel, before he was there he was in the Welsh Valleys and there was a medium, lived a couple of doors up from his church and she used to watch out her front window, people going to church morning, Sunday morning by Sunday morning and she was so intrigued she went in and she was saved. Martyn Lloyd-Jones asked her, what was it that impressed you? And he thought it was something he said in his sermon and it wasn't.

She said, what impressed me was when I came into your church, I felt a power similar to that power that I experience in my seances. Now what she meant by that was a spiritual power. She sensed a spiritual power.

But this is what she said, and it's wonderful. The difference was your power was a clean power. There's power in the blood of Jesus.

There's power in the cross of Jesus. There's power in the resurrection of Jesus. There's power in the Holy Spirit of God.

And if you surrender completely to him tonight I don't care what is in your life. You will have freedom. If you confess, if you repent, if you renounce, maybe you need to forgive someone.

Two of the biggest barriers to deliverance is an unwillingness to repent and an unwillingness to forget. Who will do it tonight? Let us pray. Now I don't know how you normally wrap up, but you're going to eat in a wee while and we'll give thanks for the food, but we want more important things just at the moment.

I said at the outset of my message that tonight might be monumental for some of you folk. Can I share something with you? I believe that I was demonized. I believe that.

Particularly through my adolescent years. It manifested itself mainly through chronic anxiety and fears that would drive me batty. But I got the victory.

And Jesus delivered me. He delivered me through the truth, through the power of the gospel. But there's a choice that has to be made.

And whatever extent your demonization might be, and whatever's got control of you, I want to ask people tonight to deal with God. I'm going to ask you all to stand, please. I want everybody to close their eyes, please.

And if you feel at liberty to do this, and if you feel that God has spoken to you this evening, I want to lead you in a prayer. And if you're not saved, you can pray this prayer and get saved. If you mean it.

If you are saved, or were saved, and are backslidden and need to get right with God, you can pray this. If you're a Christian but you know you're being demonized in some shape or form, and you've given in, and you've given a foothold that has become a stronghold and it's now a stranglehold, you can pray this and you can get free if you believe it and resist the devil. And to make it easy for everyone, I would ask you all to pray.

All to pray. But those who need to go through with God, let it out. And give it up.

And surrender completely to the will of the Lord Jesus Christ. Repeat after me. Father, I come to you in Jesus' name.

And I confess that I have sinned. And I confess that I have dabbled in darkness. And I repent of my personal sin.

Now you name it in your heart to the Lord if you have to do that. Name it in your heart now. I repent of giving a foothold to the devil.

And I renounce his stronghold in my life. And any foothold that he desires to have. I renounce Satan and his works.

And I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. And I trust in the blood of his cross for deliverance. If you need to forgive someone tonight, we're all going to say this.

You put the name in. Let us cause the bitterness that is binding you. Lord, I forgive.

Lord, I forgive. As you have forgiven me. As you have forgiven me.

I submit myself to God. I submit myself to God. And I resist the devil.

And I resist the devil. And I choose the truth. And I choose the truth.

That will set me free. That will set me free. And the devil must flee from me.

And the devil must flee from me. In Jesus' name. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Now we're going to pray and close our meeting. If any of you want to talk with me, I'm doing nothing too much tomorrow so I can hang around a while.

If any of you need help, I would like to help folk if I can. It's really God will help you, but if you're confused or anything, we can talk. I don't really want to argue with anybody tonight.

If you have a debate to have with me, I'll have it, but not tonight. I want to help people tonight. Let's just ask the Lord to bless our homeward way and our fellowship.

Father, we thank you that Jesus is all victorious. And I thank you that I truly believe tonight that in people's lives here, he has manifested victory. And I pray that that will be evidenced in their lives now and always.

Thank you for what you have done tonight. In Jesus' name, we give thanks for refreshments and pray that you'll bless our homeward way. Amen.

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