**Freedom from Evil Influences**

***21****And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching.****22****And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.****23****And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out,****24****“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.”****25****But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!”****26****And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him.****27****And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”****28****And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee. (Mark 1:21-28, ESV)*

 Through Jesus, there is freedom from evil influences. Greetings in the Lord to all of you, as we read today about a miracle that shows our Savior’s power over evil spirits. We just heard how a demonized man revealed himself during a religious gathering and how he was freed by Jesus. However, this account is not only important to establish Jesus’ identity and authority, but also to cause us to believe that the same freedom is available to us if we suffer from the effects of the devil. Jesus’ authority was effective then, and still is now – let us take a look, then, at how this kind of freeing process takes place.

 Through the Lord Jesus, even someone who is demonized or suffering from evil influences finds freedom. Today’s Scripture passage is tough to understand for many. Many say that demonization was simply the presentation of a psychological issue for which there was no vocabulary back in Jesus’ day. However, the Scriptures clearly differentiate between the demonized, the epileptic, the insane, and the physically otherwise sick person. Even in those days, people knew that there were situations in which not a single chemical or medical solution existed for the suffering individual.[[1]](#footnote-1) The word “unclean” in the Greek of the day was sometimes substituted elsewhere in the Scriptures by the word “demonized” when referring to the intruding spirit. In this case, the demonized man had knowledge which was not easy to come by naturally. Given that Galilee was an economically depressed area, with much of the population either illiterate or in menial jobs, and especially given that they were under both Pharisaic and Roman cultural pressure. It was not easy for any old person to just get up and exclaim what that man did in the synagogue. The demon not only showed that it knew why Jesus had come (namely to destroy the demon and “its larger family”), but also who Jesus was.

 We see that Jesus forcefully quiets the spirit and drives it out of the man, even though the man was convulsed, and a scream came out of him as it left by compulsion, because of Jesus’ command.

 This is like a general who give an order to a group of soldiers. Which one is going to dare come against the superior officer? If they do, they can be punished severely and even condemned to jail or death!

 In the above situation, the one receiving the order is the disobedient and rebellious angel, which is what demons are, of course. The “General” of the whole universe gave an order to it, and it had no choice but to obey, since the General had authority to “jail” it and punish it forever.

 In our lives, evil influences can be present both directly and indirectly. When they show up directly, often you’ll have continuous evil things happening in the house. Or objects can start to move of their own, or family members begin to suffer from strange evens or accidents. When indirect evil influence shows up in a person’s life, they usually come through people. When people are driven to act and speak from worldly, humanistic, or even demonic ideas, that would be considered an indirect evil influence for a Christian.

The first type of influence is very clear – it is dealt with by prayer and commanding the entities to leave in Jesus’ name, all done in faith and trust in the power of the Lord to drive it or them out. That power or authority comes from being full of the Holy Spirit, something which we can ask God for every day. In the second case of indirect evil, the influence generally happens in the form of daily temptations, which are sometimes more difficult to notice because we may consider the temptations a result of the person’s weakness, and thus suppose that the ideas or deeds come from the person alone (with no demonic influence at all involved in the issue). Here you need the gift of spiritual discernment, which again the Christian who is full of the Holy Spirit can have, so that you can tell what is evil, what is weakness, and what is immaturity within a person. Unfortunately, and very often, the spiritually immature and weak can often work under evil influences until they grow to a certain level of understanding and teachability regarding their need for spiritual growth.

Having said all the above, it is important to understand that both types of evil influences, both the direct influence which we see in the passage, and the indirect evil influences that appear during a Christian’s faith walk are solved, driven out, and brought to order through Jesus’ Presence, through the Holy Spirit’s power. There is no other means of getting free from evil influences other than them.

Here, I need to stop for a moment and speak to you very seriously about those (of you, perhaps,) that trust in (protective) charms, decorations, and especially various fortune-telling, in other words witchcraft related objects for your spiritual freedom or answers. Any means to know the future, to solve problems related to spiritual matters or relational issues other than the God of the Bible, the Savior of the Bible (the Lord Jesus Christ) and the Holy Spirit of the Bible is forbidden for a Christian to use. If any of you use or decide to go to such a source, you will have committed the sin of idolatry. In that case, you will have given your trust over to a false god, which is simply a demon anyway, and that kind of connection brings curses into lives, your families’ lives, and makes your spiritual, psychological, and relational life even worse.

Today, if you have trusted in Jesus for salvation and all things, go to the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus, and let Him give you the discernment, the power, and the freedom from evil influences, so that you can help our brothers and sisters with their own issues, as the Lord leads you.

Look: Jesus can free you or the one you are praying for with one word or one intervention – just do not, under any circumstances, try any other means, any other custom or tradition to get free of evil.

Through the Lord Jesus, even someone who is demonized or suffering from evil influences finds freedom.

May God fill us with His Holy Spirit; may that fullness awaken gifts and abilities within us; may we have the discernment to recognize the work of evil and may we trust in the Lord and drive away the evil, whether direct or indirect. May the Lord bless you all. Amen.

1. Now, some of you may argue that the term “demonization” existed for lack of sufficient pharmacology – to that I would say to you that Jesus was the Son of God, who knew the future, who could call down 12 legions of angels to stop His arrest and crucifixion if He wanted to. He clearly knew what He was doing, and exactly what He was casting out – even the demon knew. Thus, only those who hold to an anti-supernatural and/or an anti-Biblical worldview can ever say that God, angels, or demons do not exist. For the Christian, they are part and parcel of our reality, whether we like it or not. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)