

DEMONOLOGY
Message 10
Scripture: Matthew 8:28-34

INTRO: In the previous message we started what I would view as the second part of this series. We dealt in that message with the abode of demons and saw that some were bound in hell. We are not told what they have done that God bound them nor whether they will be released for a time later and then cast into hell again or not. But they are bound at this time. Then we considered demons that are on the loose. Some have access to heaven at this point in time yet, but the time will come when that will be changed. Others are on earth, or in the air, seeking to do damage wherever and whenever they can. Some of them find entrance into humans and some into animals. Some are cast out and sent to hell.

Then we spoke of the matter of exorcism. We considered that there are Roman Catholics and Muslims and others who claim to exorcise demons. I suggested that they do not cast out demons, but that the devil simply deceives them and sends those demons to someone else, not to hell. Jesus said that there would even be those who would claim they had cast out demons in His name, and He calls them workers of iniquity or lawlessness.

But now, before us lies the subject of demonic influence on people and the subject of demon possession. So, first we will look at what I call three levels of external demonic influence. We are all influenced by demonic powers to some degree. There are no exceptions. Second, we want to look at the phrase 'demon possession' and I want to define what I believe that is. Third, we want to look at various levels of demon possession or demonization, as I will call it. So we have our plate full again this morning.

Let me add something else this morning. When I did some messages on the doctrine of God, I felt I had at long last preached on the most important of all subjects. For anyone who was not here for those, there are 23 message available on sermonaudio.com/lhec on the doctrine of God. And as I have gone through this series, I think an understanding of demonism is also very, very important. Scripture says we are not ignorant of his devices, but much of the church is not only ignorant of his devices but of his ministers, the demons and of their very existence.

B. Demon Possession

1. Levels of demonic influence

So, first this morning, let us deal with important subject of demonic influence. You see, being inhabited by a spirit or spirits on the inside is one thing, but to be influenced by spirits from the outside is another. There are many people who do not carry spirits within. The spirits have not found entrance into such people, but these same people are troubled by spirits from the outside. And this external trouble from demons can have various levels. As I see it there are three levels of demonic influence. All of mankind is influenced in one way or another by either demons. Anyone lured into false teaching is troubled by doctrines of demons. Some people are very troubled by worldliness. Demons find they can influence some people by the things of this world or by worldliness of dress or thought and so on. Others are troubled by the flesh. The desires of the flesh put them under huge temptation. Not all temptation to worldliness or fleshliness is from the devil. Our sinful nature doesn't need help in order to tempt us in these areas. But the devil capitalizes on using the world and the flesh to cause us to err from the truth. So demons that cannot enter within us use the world and the flesh to mislead us from the outside.

In this way we are all influenced to some extent by demons. Merrill Unger says, "Believers who would be spiritual and live victoriously face tremendous conflict with Satan and demons, who vehemently oppose the true spirituality and Christian usefulness" end quote (Eph. 6:11-12; pg 11). Now this kind of demonic influence does not have to do with carrying spirits within, which we call demon possession. It has to do with demonic influence from the outside. This, I would see as the first level of demonic influence. None of us are exempted from this kind of demonic influence.

As I see it, a second level of demonic influence is when demons are especially sent to harass us

or seek to drive us from the faith or to destroy our ministry or marriage or family or to depress us or discourage us etc... For example, pastors or missionaries may be singled out by demons for special attack. In this way the spirits are around us seeking to destroy us from the outside through special forces. Such a person is not demon possessed, but harassed by demons.

Some might call it oppression but I think that is not accurate. Turn to Acts 10:38 (read). This passage speaks of those out of whom Jesus cast demons while He was on earth. The word translated 'oppressed' here is 'katadunasteeo'. It is to depress one's abilities. People who have a demon or demons within, to some extent have their abilities suppressed or held down, depending on how many, what size, or what kind of demon it is.

So, a person can be influenced by demons who are outside of one. For an example of this, look at Matthew 16:23 (read). Jesus did not cast out a demon here. Peter was getting his cue from the wrong source here. Look also at Acts 5 (read 1-4). Some would hold such passages as evidence that believers can be demon possessed. I would not say in this case that these people were what we call demon possessed, but they were heavily influenced by demons around them.

Let me illustrate why it seems to me that the devil uses such tactics. Herbert Lockyer, in his book called "Satan" writes, "A legend tells of a high and mighty conclave Satan held in hell to receive the reports of his evil angels' work. After a while, one of the fiendish assembly arose and said, 'I saw a caravan of Christians crossing the desert, and I raised a terrible simoom and destroyed them all.' 'What of that?' responded Satan. 'Their souls were saved.'

Another demon rose to say, "I saw a ship conveying missionaries and their band of workers to another clime, and I let loose upon them the winds of heaven, and they sank into a watery grave.' 'What of that?' replied the tempter. 'There souls were all saved.'

There was a moment's pause in the ghastly company, and then another demonic spirit arose and hissed, 'I tried for seven years to send a Christian to sleep; and at last I succeeded.' 'You have done well,' returned the devil, and the vaults of the abyss rang with plaudits and fiendish laughter."

Then he says, "Beloved, it is no fiction that Satan laughs when Christians sleep. Lulled to sleep on the lap of some Delilah, a Christian will work more harm than a thousand worldlings. Prayerless and careless, we aid the devil in his work of deceit and destruction. Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober" (83 Satan).

Well, it seems to me that at certain times certain people are especially singled out by demons to destroy them, their marriage, their home or church etc..

But, there is a third, and last level of demonic influence. It is when demons find entrance into us and we carry them inside of our body, or soul or spirit. Through various things we can open the doors for demons and they are allowed to enter a person and work from the inside out. This is what we usually call demon possession. This is the strongest kind of demonic influence. So we will look at this under the title of demon possession.

2. Demon possession

In our discussion of demon possession we want to look at what that means and whether Christians can be demon possessed. It is most important for me to first define what the Bible talks about when it speaks of this subject we call demon possession. Now if you will have noticed I have mentioned demon possession like this: 'that which we call demon possession.' So, I want to start this subject by showing you something, that to me, came as a great surprise. I suppose it will come to you as a surprise and so I ask you to hear me out before you write me off.

When I studied the phrase, 'demon possession' or 'demon possessed' I found that the word 'possessed' nowhere occurs in connection to demons. The phrase, 'demon possessed' or 'demon possession' never occurs in Scripture in the original language.

Let me take you to the first place where it occurs. We turn to Matthew 4:24. It says, "Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them." It speaks of those 'possessed with devils' or 'demon possessed'.

Now you may find it as hard to believe as I did at first that the phrase 'demon possessed' does not occur in the Bible. So, for those of you who have access to Strong's numbers in the NT on your 'I phones', you may feel free right at this point to check that out. It won't take you long. What you will find is that the original word in all cases where it speaks about this is Strong's number 1139. This word you will find is, 'daimonizomai.' If we were to translate that word, which is a participle, literally, it would read, 'demonized'. The word 'possessed' never occurs in the text in any case. To put it in as translators have done is an interpretation, not a translation.

In light of that, let me read Matthew 4:24 like that, "Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demonized, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them."

So, let me ask this question: Why did translators translate this word as 'demon possessed'? Merrill Unger is a very sharp theologian, to which all those who have read his writings will agree. And he says, "The actual expression 'demon possession' does not occur in the New Testament, but apparently originated with Josephus, from

whom it has passed into ecclesiastical language. The New Testament speaks of those who 'have a spirit, or a demon or demons, or an unclean spirit,' but principally of people who are demonized (daimonizomenoi) as applying to persons suffering from physical disease or mental derangement, under the possession of demons or evil spirits" (90) end quote.

So he says that the NT speaks of those who 'have' a spirit, not of demon possession. Go to Acts 16:16. It says, "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying..." Twice the book of Acts speaks of this and both times it speaks of those who *have a spirit*, but it is translated, 'demon possessed'. It says in our translations that this damsel was demon possessed. But in the Greek it literally says she *had a spirit*. To translate it demon possessed is an interpretation, not a translation.

(Let me just mention here that I have heard it said that I have said the ESV is a good translation. Let me correct that. There are two major issues with Bible translation. There is the manuscript problem and the method of translation problem. I approve of the method of the ESV, that is literal, but not the manuscripts it uses. It uses the same manuscripts as all modern versions. The ESV seeks to help our understanding of the word daimonizomia by translating it as demon oppression, but the word 'oppression' is no more in the original than the word 'possession'.)

Secondly, Unger says that principally the NT speaks of people who are demonized, not demon possessed. As a matter of fact, not in all the original language of the Bible does it ever use the phrase, 'demon possessed'. Unger then answers how we got the phrase 'demon possession'. According to him there is indication that the phrase 'demon possession' originated in Josephus. Unger gets that information from Alfred Eedershiem, a very highly esteemed Jewish writer of years ago. And Eedersheim says that we owe the

phrase 'demon possession' to Josephus. Josephus was a Jewish historian some 2000 years ago. Furthermore, Eedersheim also prefers the translation 'demonized' and uses it extensively.

Now, why do I take so much time to explain this? What is the difference between translating it 'demon possessed' or translating it 'demonized'? First, in the original language there is no word 'possessed' in the phrase. That is an interpretation and an addition that is not in the original.

Second, it seems to have originated with Josephus, not from Scripture. And third, whenever we think of a demon possessed person, we get the wrong idea simply because of the word 'possessed'. When we think of a person who is demon possessed, we think of a person like the man at Gadara that was naked and could not be chained, and one with hands like claws and a contorted face making shrieking sounds. That is a very wrong picture and it comes from the phrase 'demon possessed'. So, if somebody does not look like a maniac, then we think they are not demonized. We do not think of someone with a suit and tie who is seemingly 'normal' as possibly being demonized.

So, immediately when we think of demon possession we think of a mad-man or a lunatic, or someone not in control of him or herself. But, I would say that those under almost complete demonic control like the man at Gadara make up a relatively small percentage of people who are demonized. But when we use the word 'possessed' we automatically think it speaks of all of them. Thus we get the wrong idea from the phrase 'demon possessed'.

And last, when we use the phrase 'demon possessed' we get the idea that a demon or demons possess the persons they indwell. The reason this is important is because the phrase 'demon possessed' means to us that such a person is *owned* by the devil or the demon. And since God and Satan cannot both *own* one person, then we

conclude that a Christian cannot be demonized. That also is an error. We will talk more about this later.

So, why is this so important? In our Sunday School class some time ago I asked the class, "What does a demon possessed person look like?" Then I said, "Look around you." Many people who have spirits look no different than those who do not have a spirit. The amount of control demons have over a person depends on the number and kind of demons they have. We will talk more about this in a moment.

Now, I have given you all of this so that we might define that which is normally called 'demon possession'. That which we call demon possession is not demon possession. The closest translation that could be given is 'a demonized person'. A demonized person is a person who has one or more spirits within. This person carries one or more of the powers of darkness. This kind of person is very, very common, but we often fail to recognize it because we use the phrase, 'demon possessed' or 'demon possession.'

3. Levels of demonization

That brings us to one more point that I feel is important. Just as there are levels of demon influence or opposition from the outside, so there are levels of demonization on the inside. Let me say this about demons. Just like there are different kinds of people with different abilities so there are all different kinds of demons. There are very smart demons and demons who are not so smart. There are demons who like to affect people's physical organs and cause sickness and so forth, and demons who specialize in devious doctrines. There are demons who are put themselves forward as friends. My wife and I dealt with a lady who did not want to get rid of the demons she had within. She said they were her friends. She talked to them and they to her. And yet she was dying physically from their presence within. There are demons that try to get people to kill themselves or kill others. There are

demons that get people to cut themselves. No doubt many cases of suicide are due to demonization. Many cases of mass killings like we hear of today are doubtless by demonized people. By the way, when this lady was set free from those spirits she was very relieved and then she wanted to remain rid of them.

Then there are some demons who are more wicked than others. Consider Matthew 12:43-45 (read). You see, the man in his first state was demonized, and in his last state he was also demonized; but the last state was worse than the first because the demons were more wicked. So I conclude there are different levels of demonization.

Furthermore, levels of demonization can be affected by how many demons a person has. Listen to Mark 16:9, "Now when *He* rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons." Here is a woman who had had seven demons.

When Jesus dealt with the demoniacs at Gadara, He asked the one his name, Listen to Mark 5:9, "Then He asked him, 'What is your name?' And he answered, saying, 'My name is Legion; for we are many.'" A legion of the Roman army in full strength was about 6,000 (Zond. Pict. Bi. Dict.). The herd of swine into which these demons fled was 2,000 strong. So this man was loaded with demons. From such people we get our idea of 'demon possession'. But he is simply demonized to a greater degree than say, Mary Magdalene who had seven demons.

Let me try to illustrate this. Here in northern Alberta we have a bird called a magpie. When we first came to Alberta we thought, "Oh my. Look at how pretty that bird is." Then we lived here for a while and heard their annoying screeching in the morning until we were so annoyed we tried to shoot them, only to find they seem to have a sixth sense, or 100 eyes. Just before you shoot they fly away.

Since we have been here I have heard that Magpies can be a very nasty bird. Listen to this internet article: "Magpies are often found near livestock where they feed on dung-and carrion-associated insects. They also forage for ticks and other insects on the backs of domestic animals. Perhaps the most notorious magpie behavior is the picking of open wounds and scabs on the backs of livestock. If they find an open wound, such as that from a new brand, they may pick at it until they create a much larger wound. The wound may eventually become infected and, in some instances, may kill the animal. Magpies, like ravens, may peck the eyes out of newborn or sick livestock"

(<http://icwdm.org/handbook/birds/Magpies.asp>)

Now consider, say one of those wild buffalos we have not far from us. And it has an open sore on its back. And one magpie is on its back pecking away, with its bill picking into raw nerves. Without doubt, the animal will find that annoying, and maybe roll in the dust from time to time. But consider that same beast with a big open sore and fifty magpies on its back, pecking into the raw nerves. You can see an animal like that would act 'possessed'. It could go berserk! That is how I picture demonized persons. Such was the case of the demonized man at Gadara. So the amount of control a demon has over a person would depend on the strength of the demon or the number of demons present.

So, the behavior of the person depends on the kind, size, and number of demons the person has. Someone who has hundreds will certainly act differently from a person who has one. I have no doubt that you and I have met many people who are demonized but they may have one or two spirits.

CONCL: So, let us conclude. Maybe today you say, "I wonder if there really is anything to this subject? I wonder just how relevant this subject is?" Go to any hospital, go to any psychiatric ward where the more heavily demonized people go and you will see. Right now there are men and woman and even children in this community suffering from the spirits they carry within.

So, what have we covered this morning? We have looked at different levels of demonic influence against us from outside. We said that we all face demonic influence from the world and the flesh. We battle worldliness and fleshliness and we are often challenged by doctrines of demons. That is doctrines, not about demons, but which originate in the demonic realm. Every cult and false religion I see as a doctrine from demons.

But some people are especially attacked by demons. Maybe it is a marriage, or a pastor, or any such thing. Maybe the demonic forces have found a foothold and extra effort is exerted by the demonic forces to destroy a marriage or church or family etc...

Then we dealt with demon possession and I said that phrase does not occur in the Bible. A better description would be demonization. Because a person is demonized does not mean he is possessed. He or she may have them within but he or she is not necessarily owned by them nor necessarily controlled by them. I view this as very important.

And last, we saw that it simply makes a difference what kind of demon a person has or how many. A person infested with many demons will, without doubt, give greater manifestation of this. Then a person who has a spirit that causes physical ailments will manifest that in a different way than a person who has an indwelling spirit that is constantly seeking to cause the person to commit suicide. So, there are different levels of demonization.

And so, to conclude on a more positive note, let me close with Revelation 12:11 and 1 John 4:4. First, Revelation 12:11, "And they (the Christians in the tribulation) overcame him (the devil) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death." Now 1 John 4:4, "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."