

Systematic Theology: Demons

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Preached on: Tuesday, August 29, 2017

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I consider it a great privilege once again to open God's word here this evening as we continue our study of systematic theology. Last week, we considered the topic of Satan and we're going to kind of continue in that theme as we consider the related biblical doctrine of demons as we come to God's word here tonight, and there are a couple of words that I would just kind of put in your mind to start with to keep in mind as we go through a lot of material here this evening. I have no idea how we are possibly going to get through it all this evening but I think that we will one way or another. The two words that I would have you contemplate and remember as we're going through this tonight is, first of all the word "sobering," because this is a very sobering doctrine, sobering material that we are going to consider, but also secondly, the word "reassuring." It's reassuring to look into the demonic realm and yet see that Christ has made full provision and has completely delivered us from that realm and completely protects us from that realm. So it is sobering to realize what demons are and what they do and how they influence what's around us and yet at the same time it's reassuring to come back to the cross of Jesus Christ, to come back to our gracious Lord and Savior, and realize that he has delivered us to the uttermost from a supernatural realm from which we could never deliver ourselves.

So with that perspective, sobering yet reassuring, we happily turn to God's word here tonight and I want to address this matter tonight from basically five perspectives, basically asking four questions and one conclusion, I guess, and we're just going to kind of walk through it in this manner dealing with a lot of Scripture all too quickly, but this is what the Lord has for us here this evening.

The first question that I want to answer is this: what are demons? What are demons? I like to start with the simple foundational things. I've often said and I should say more often perhaps, that for anyone who teaches, especially who teaches God's word, it is very important to define your terms and say this is the word that we are going to be looking at or this is the topic at hand and to define your terms so that people know exactly what you're talking about.

What are demons? Well, we can answer it in a couple of different ways. First of all and simply: demons are angels who fell into sin and into judgment. They are fallen angels, in other words. We looked at the doctrine of good angels a couple of weeks ago and considered that, well, demons were angels that fell into sin and judgment and Scripture

alludes to this in Revelation 12 if you would turn to Revelation 12 as we begin. Revelation 12:3, it says,

3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. 4 And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.

So here is a picture of Satan falling, a recounting of the fall of Satan and drawing a third of the angels with him, "the stars of heaven" being a reference to angels. If you look at verse 7, you see a further explanation of this in Revelation 12,

7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, 8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down,

Who is this dragon?

the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

And so demons are fallen angels. "The stars of heaven" is a reference to the demons who fell with Satan. J. I. Packer, the noted Reformed theologian, says this and I quote, "Demons are spiritual beings, corrupt and hostile to both God and man. They are fallen angels, deathless creatures serving Satan who are permanently set to oppose God, goodness, truth, the kingdom of Christ, and the welfare of human beings." So they have supernatural power that they have perverted, twisted and turned against God and now use their power in order to wreak destruction, to oppose Christ, to oppose the Gospel, and to oppose the interest of God's people and the interest of humanity at large. This is quite serious. It's quite sobering.

In Revelation 5, it speaks about angels and the number of angels and says that there are myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands of angels. Well, if one third of the angels fell, the math simply means this: that countless demons exist with supernatural power. The invisible realm is populated with an immense number of demons who have supernatural power and whose goal is to thwart the purposes of God, hinder his purposes and to inflict harm on his people. That's a frightening thought, it's a sobering thought but that's what demons are and Scripture speaks to them and to their realm quite frequently.

So that's what demons are. Secondly, let's answer this question: what do demons do? What do demons do? Well, first of all and this might sound like a funny place to begin but it's important, I think it's an important starting point, is that first of all demons recognize Christ, by which I mean they know who Christ is and they also understand truth. Demons recognize Christ and they understand truth.

Turn in your Bibles to the Gospel of Mark, if you will, Mark 1. One of the things about studying systematic theology is you draw upon passages in numerous locations in order to try to bring it into a coherent whole. That's what we're trying to do in this extended series. Mark 1:23, simply reading this to point out to you, showing to you the fact that demons know who Christ is and in verse 23 it says,

23 Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24 saying, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!" 25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" 26 Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him.

So we see Christ in his earthly ministry confronting a demon and the demon knows exactly who he is up against, knows exactly who he is dealing with. You'll remember in James 2:19 that it says,

19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and tremble.

A mere bare orthodoxy is something that demons have and so there is in this invisible spiritual realm these wicked spiritual beings know who Christ is and they have some measure of true theology that is in their demented minds. So they recognize Christ and they know something about the truth.

Now, during the earthly life of Christ, we read in the Scriptures that Christ is frequently and repeatedly encountering demons and demon-possessed people. There was a supernatural outbreak, you might say, of demonic opposition when Christ came for his ministry.

Go to the Gospel of Matthew. I just want to give you a handful of representative passages to just show that this was an aspect of the life of Christ and in his ministry. Matthew 4:24, actually let's start in verse 23. Matthew 4:23,

23 Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. 24 The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs [in other words demon-possessed people], epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.

In Matthew 8:16 Jesus had just healed Peter's mother-in-law of a fever and it says in Matthew 8:16,

16 When evening came, they brought to [Jesus] many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.

And you get a more extended illustration, an extended account of this in verse 28 of Matthew 8. Matthew 8:28,

28 When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs.

What was it like to be demon-possessed?

They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way. 29 And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" 30 Now there was a herd of many swine feeding at a distance from them. 31 The demons began to entreat Him, saying, "If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine." 32 And He said to them, "Go!" And they came out and went into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters.

You see demons possessing and controlling these two men, recognizing Christ, and their supernatural power as they possess these men made them extremely violent and dangerous men to deal with, and yet despite that supernatural power that the demons had, Christ was able to cast them out with a word. Reassuring to know that as violent and as supernaturally powerful as demons are, that Christ exercises control over them with the same ease of omnipotence that he does over the raging sea. He says to the raging sea, "Sh," and it goes still. He says to the demons, "Be gone!" and they go. So we see this aspect of their opposition to Christ and yet we are reassured by the fact that Christ has power over them.

Now, we kind of want to weave back and forth between the text and thinking about things today. In light of the Gospel accounts of demon possession and all of the demonic activity that you see in the New Testament, some who are careless in their theology will make the assumption that what is described in the New Testament Gospels is also the way that it is with us here today after the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, and they make an assumption that what you read in the Gospels is not simply descriptive of what happened in Jesus' day, it is an account of what it will be like for us now and that is not good theology and that is not the way that you should think about the demonic realm at all. The great theologian, Reformed theologian Charles Hodge, says this. He says, "The world belongs to the kingdom of Satan and to redeem it from his dominion was the special object of the mission of the Son of God. It is not surprising, therefore, that at the time of his advent was Satan's hour, the time when to a greater degree than before or after, Satan manifested his power thus making the fact of his overthrow the more conspicuous and glorious." The point being that the coming of Christ in his earthly

ministry and his redemptive mission while he was here on earth, was a time of particularly unique spiritual engagement so that the demonic realm, as it were, surfaced in order to oppose his public ministry but we are not to assume or to think that that is normative and descriptive of everything that we are going to encounter today. Scripture as you continue to read on in the epistles, does not give you that picture as I'll show later on in the message. It does not give that picture of that open demonic possession as being something that is a common everyday occurrence, especially in the life of the church. That's not what you get the picture of from reading the epistles and reading through the entire Bible.

Now with that said, let me hasten to add: demons still oppose the people of God today, they resist us, they make life very difficult for us, but as you read the New Testament epistles you find that it is not in the same open way of demonic possession that is so visible in the accounts of the person of Christ. Scripture, rather, points us to a more hidden warfare of philosophies and relational difficulties that we need to consider. Where is it that we see demonic activity today? Where do we find it manifest? Well, if you're just looking for drooling madmen with chains in graveyards, you're going to miss the whole point of what Scripture says. If that is your picture of how demons oppose us today, you're going to completely miss what Scripture says is the real threat and we need to know what the real threat is.

If you will, turn to 1 Timothy 4. You are going to be surprised, most of you I believe, you will be surprised to see where this consideration takes us, 1 Timothy 4, and remembering that the New Testament epistles were written after the ascension of Christ in order to give instruction to the people of God living in the church age, and how it is that we are to conduct ourselves as members of the people of God in the church today. That is the unique perspective and the unique purpose of the New Testament epistles. So what is it that they warn us about in these latter days after Christ has concluded his redemptive ministry in his first advent? 1 Timothy 4:1,

1 But the Spirit [that is, the Holy Spirit] explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,

What do these demonic doctrines look like? Verse 3.

3 men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

Those who would put you on a works based path to salvation that would turn us into ascetics and say, "Don't eat this and don't marry and don't touch, don't handle," trying to control and manipulate people with external regulations that have nothing to do with true salvation and are, as Scripture says elsewhere, have no power in restraining the human flesh.

So we see demonic activity in false doctrine and in doctrinal divisions that all done and conducted deceitfully in the name of Christ. That's where we start. That's what we see and that's why so much of the New Testament epistles is given over to doctrinal instruction. And beloved, again I want to just tell you how much I rejoice and how thankful I am that God has given us a people like you that gather together week after week to be taught on systematic theology because it is in a teaching of biblical doctrine that you find your fortress, one of your fortresses against demonic activity. The antidote to demonic activity is truth. When demons traffic in falsehood, you have to know truth in order to avoid their filthy and evil realm.

Now, we see demonic activity in another place. What do demons do? Well, they opposed Christ openly during his earthly ministry. Today we see what they do is they stir up false doctrine and confuse people on those matters. Secondly, and there is so much Scripture here that I am going to have to contain myself, but we see demonic activity also in divisive conduct and divisions within the church and Scripture speaks to this so very often. Again, coming to the New Testament epistles that instruct us about life in the church, turn to Romans 16. Romans 16 and there are four passages here that I want to share with you. Romans 16:17 he says,

17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

You know, there is this misapprehension, this misunderstanding that some people have that as Christians we're just supposed to be kind to everybody no matter what, and that no matter what a person is like, it's our duty to receive them and be nice to them. Scripture would not teach you that in the walls of the church. When there are divisive people creating divisions, Scripture tells us again and again, "Turn away from them. Watch out for them. Don't give them a foothold." That's what Paul is saying here. Look at it again in verse 17, "keep an eye on those who cause dissensions and turn away from them." Verse 18,

18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

Do you see the element of deception, the element of division here? Keep reading. Verse 19, Paul says,

19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

Notice the very next statement that he makes, having given this instruction on dealing with divisions and dissensions in the church, he says in verse 20,

20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

The context tells us to recognize and to be sensitive to the reality that there is an unseen realm, that there are spiritual influences at stake and in operation when divisions are taking place in the church. That's why, one reason among many, that Scripture elevates the priority of unity in the church. It is not a matter of casual indifference, division in the church is the gateway for demonic influence and demonic activity and that should sober us and make us realize how essential it is to protect the unity of the church and to be committed within our own hearts that we are going to be those who positively contribute to church unity, not those who undermine it. This is very serious. This is why I say this is very sobering.

Let's keep reading. Turn over to the epistle of James. We'll skip over a couple of passages and come back to them in our progress through. James 3 is explicit on this point. He says in verse 13,

13 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. 14 But [by way of contrast] if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

So Scripture points to division, jealousy, selfish ambition, disorder, and in the heart of it says, "This is the realm of the demonic."

Now, as I was thinking about this, you say, "Well, where is the line between somebody who is just a grump and kind of a pain in the neck to be around, and the realm of where you are dealing with actual demonic influence?" I don't know. I don't know where the line of demarcation is and how you attribute one to just being the product of selfish ambition and that which is energized more directly by demonic activity, but here's my question, when Scripture assigns this realm of division and dissension as being the realm in which demonic activity happens, let's ask a question: why would you even want to get anywhere near the area? Why would you even tolerate that? Why would you be a participant in that? We don't have to answer the question of whether a particular incident of things is demonic or not to realize that this whole area of division is a realm in which demonic activity flourishes.

So this has a very sobering and sanctifying impact on a congregation that takes it seriously and this is why church unity is such a priority for us at Truth. It's not simply because we want to have a pleasant environment, a pleasant social environment in which to interact and have fellowship, the reason that we take church unity seriously is because we want to protect our body from demonic influence and we have biblical justification for treating it that way. So that's why it's serious. That's why I preached for 75 minutes on

church unity back in March, I believe it was. This matters. In the words of James, we don't want to be so arrogant and so foolish and flippant and self-confident that we think that we are beyond that kind of attack coming upon us. Church unity matters. Divisive conduct is the realm of the demonic and so we want to turn away from that and stay as far away from that as we possibly can. And we know what it's like, people turn, people attack, people lie, people hide from accountability. Well, we have to recognize that that's not something that can be accepted and tolerated and consented to in the life of the body of Christ. I don't want to be around where demons have influence, do you?

So Scripture points us in this direction. In more direct interpersonal relationships, Scripture alludes to this also. Look at Ephesians 4. How does division come? Division comes when people get angry, people get selfish. Verse 26 of Ephesians 4,

26 Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,
27 and do not give the devil an opportunity.

Do not give the realm of the demonic over which Satan, the devil is the head, don't give the demonic realm an opportunity by letting your anger nurse and cultivating it. Don't do that, he says, because that is an entryway for demonic influence.

One other area in 1 Corinthians 7. This becomes very intimate, actually. 1 Corinthians 7, Paul in these first five verses is talking about the nature of biblical marital intimacy and instructs husbands and wives not to withhold intimacy from one another, that there is a biblical duty and a biblical privilege of intimacy within the marital relationship. So he says in verse 3,

3 The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

There is a divine mutuality in the intimate aspect of the marriage relationship. Notice what he says in verse 5,

5 Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Don't allow your marriage relationship to become a scene of conflict and selfishness and pushing one another away in a divisive way because that becomes an opportunity for Satan to tempt, whether it's Satan himself or I think probably more likely, some of his subordinate demons. You remember that Satan can only be in one place at one time and there are like 7 billion people in the world. He's fast but he's not that fast.

So just to repeat, where do we see demonic activity and the demonic fight being brought to us in the New Testament era, in the church era? In false doctrine and in divisive ways,

in selfish anger and divisive ways in families and inside the church. Like I say, this is sobering. It does us all good in the room, it does us all good inside the room to just reflect on those of us that perhaps have tendencies toward selfishness or anger or all of that, this is a great reason to get serious about repentance in your life. Those of you that have a divisive impact on your relationships and you are known for that, this is a huge wake-up call. This is a resounding ringing of a spiritual alarm in the middle of the night, so to speak, saying, "Wake up and pay attention to this," because this is an area that demands your sanctification. This is an area that requires repentance and self-examination and this is no place for a sugary preacher to affirm you and stroke you, if that's the position that you find yourself in. If you are convicted about these words of divisive conduct, then it needs to let the conviction of the Holy Spirit have its work in your heart and change and influence you and sanctify you to be more like the Lord Jesus Christ who said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God." It is the mark of the Spirit of God that there would be love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. It is the mark of the Spirit of God, it is one of the primary intents of the establishment of the New Testament church by the work of Christ.

Look at Ephesians 4 again. In verse 3, it says,

3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Well, if peace and unity is the mark of the Spirit, what is the source of dissension and disunity? It's not the Holy Spirit. You're left with either the sin of man or the operation of the demonic perhaps working in tandem together. Any way you go, I go back to the point we don't need to know exactly where the line of demarcation is, we just need to see that realm as being wicked and demonic and saying, "I've got to stay away from that. I have to be in my family, I have to be in my church, in my workplace, I need to be an instrument of peace and unity because that is where the Spirit of God manifests his influence and his fruit." So it's sobering and there is no way to sugarcoat it. There is no way to turn this into a comedy act and to make a funny joke here and diminish the sobriety of what God's word is teaching us here this evening. This is serious stuff. The demons were cast out of heaven and are doomed for eternal judgment as we'll see because this is what is at the core of who they are. If the implications of it are cosmic and eternal, it behooves us to treat it with serious sobriety.

Now, one last thing, stepping outside of the church. What else do demons do? We see demonic activity in the persecution of the true church. The persecution of the true church. Revelation 2 and I'll just touch on this. Revelation 2:8,

8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: [the Lord Jesus speaking to the church in Smyrna] 9 I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that

you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Jesus telling the church, "You are about to suffer persecution. Understand that it is coming as a result of the activity of Satan but be faithful and persevere and I'll deliver you on the other side." That's all I'll say about that. It deserves a fuller treatment but we need to keep moving on here.

What is it that demons do? Well, we've seen it in the time of Christ, we've seen it in our realm and realize that it has sobering implications for us. Well, let's pivot and kind of look to the provision that the Lord has made for us and the warning and instruction that the Lord gives us. Question 3 here this evening: what do we do about demons? What do we do about demons? We answered the question what do demons do, well, what do we do with demons? What do we do with this realm that Scripture reveals to us? Well beloved, let's just start by saying this: that you and I must avoid the demonic realm in its every manifestation completely and without exception.

Turn to the Old Testament to the book of Deuteronomy 18, and as we said last time as we looked at Satan, we talked about the demonic realm, the spiritual world and the occult and Ouija boards and mediums and fortunetellers and tarot cards and all that, well, in Deuteronomy 18, it addresses the people of God speaking to the nation of Israel in that dispensation, and in Deuteronomy 18:9, it says this,

9 When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. 10 There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.

Not one. Don't ever go there, Scripture says. Verse 12,

12 For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you.

Now, we'll look at a New Testament passage in just a moment but, beloved, let's just be really clear, candid, blunt and direct with each other here this evening. You should and you must as a professing Christian, turn away from any person or any activity which claims to communicate with the spirit world or to receive knowledge from it. You should avoid at all costs mediums, witchcraft, Ouija boards and tarot cards. Christians should avoid games and entertainment that use spirit world themes. This is not to be trifled with. You are not to put yourself in a position even if you think, "Well, this is just a game. This is just fantasy." You are not to put yourself in a position where you get comfortable with thinking about a spiritual world that is on the other side that is demonic in its orientation, even if you think this is just fantasy. You are not to engage that and to enjoy it as though

it is something that you can use for entertainment any more than you can use pornography as entertainment. And if you have any of that stuff in your possession, you should destroy it immediately. That's what they did in the New Testament in the book of Acts 19. You don't need to turn there, I'll just read it for the sake of time. Acts 19:18-19,

18 Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. 19 And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

And beloved, let me ask you: what else could a true Christian do except respond in exactly this way? When you understand that the Lord your God is holy, that Christ came in part to defeat the works of Satan, to destroy the works of Satan as it says in 1 John 3, he is holy and lofty and is opposed to the demonic realm, and when you remember that the demonic realm is directly in opposition to Christ and to his work and to his people, that they are evil fallen beings that want to destroy his work, to defame his name, to persecute the people of God, to divide the church, how could any Christian in their right mind think that there is any association with that that is acceptable in any measure whatsoever? I'll answer that question: there is no justification for it. And a person who has the true Holy Spirit dwelling within them would just be so animated, especially once the truth has been put in front of them to say, "I must purge myself of this!" Perhaps somebody is a new Christian and doesn't realize the full implications of all of these things and now it has been presented to them, the way to respond to that is to say, "Yes, I'm taking an ax to these things tonight," and the urgency of the response showing the sobriety of the topic matter at hand. They went out and burned them at great financial loss in Acts 19. Now so you separate yourself from it; you destroy it; you don't read the astrology things in the newspaper, you know, give your mind over to an entrée for that stuff.

Now, let's go to a different extreme here. Some people will make a display of binding Satan, binding demons, binding their demon of lust and their demon of chocolate or whatever. Are we supposed to bind Satan? I alluded to this last week. There is a painful memory in my past. I may have told the story before. I used to tell it thinking it was funny, now it just appalls me as I remember it. As a very young Christian before I was married and I was a student at Indiana University leading this little Bible study, so I thought. I had no idea what I was doing. I had no business leading a Bible study at that point in my life. But it was just me and this middle-aged woman and we were in a room that was divided simply with a divider and there was a class meeting on the other side and we were by ourselves on the other side but they could hear everything that we were saying, and we could hear everything that they were saying. Just so you have a sense of the acoustics that were going on.

Well, I went through my little Bible study and said, "Well, you know, let's pray and close our time together." So I said this little condensed Scottish prayer, by what I mean, Scottish, there's no emotion to it. And I said amen and I thought we were done, well, I

can't remember her name, I want to say Edith... I remember her name now but for the sake of the internet, I won't mention it. Let's call her Edith. Edith grabbed hold of my hand and said, "I want to pray." And so she starts praying in kind of a loud voice and the volume just continues to increase as it goes along, that she got more and more worked up, no doubt being fueled by things that she had heard in charismatic churches. This is in law school, by the way. And so on the other side of the room are all of these serious minded up and coming future lawyers and all of that and Edith, I'm going to slip and tell her true name if I'm not careful, Edith just starts getting revved up and she got herself worked up and she just started loudly binding Satan. "Satan, I bind you in the name of Jesus!" And she went on and on for five or ten minutes and at the time I was too young and I was too immature to know that what I needed to do was to grasp her hand and say, "Edith, stop. We need to leave now."

So I just kind of went along for the ride and that's why I say it used to be funny to me, now it's painful. And she just made a spectacle of herself and when she finally spent all her energy, Satan having been bound in her mind and she is feeling pretty good about it, we had to exit. Well, the only exit was through the back of the class that had heard everything. It's amazing to me that the law professor didn't come over and say, "Would you guys stop?" He was trying to teach through that as she was shouting at the devil. Well, this was an embarrassment, this was a shame and a reproach on the cause of Christ for a woman professing the name of Christ to behave in such an uncontrolled manner.

And we walked out and all of the eyes of that classroom just kind of watched us go. And I look back on that and say I was a part of that embarrassment to the name of Christ. It grieves me now. It used to be funny. It's not funny anymore. But that's what, as you know if you watch any charismatic TV, that's what they do. That's what they live on. That's what they thrive on. "This is how we fight the devil," they say, "we get ourselves worked up into a lather and we pronounce our binding upon him." Well, is that what Scripture teaches us to do? Well, let me show you some things that show clearly that that is not the case. We resist Satan and his demons but we do not bind them. That authority has not been given to us and we are not commanded to behave in such a foolish way.

Look at 1 Peter 5. I want to show you something here that in my mind settles it once and for all without reference to any other text. This settles it and proves conclusively that that's not what God has called us to. In 1 Peter 5:8 it says,

8 Be of sober spirit,

Right there it stops us in our tracks.

8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Now stop and think about what that means. These are present tense verbs in the Greek language indicating that this is an ongoing, repeated, continual action by Satan. He prowls about. He is continually seeking someone to devour. Now if that's true, and it

absolutely is because this is the word of God, that means that no one is binding Satan on human authority or in human words because if you were able to bind him, he would not be continually prowling about as Scripture says he's doing.

So what's going on when people are binding Satan? It's just a show. It's just the blind leading the blind. It's people acting out of ignorance and acting out of emotion, not in accord with biblical truth. God has determined and it has pleased God to allow Satan to prowl in this age and he has not given it to his people to bind him and to stop it. Think about it: before Edith went off and started binding Satan, 1 Peter 5:8 said, "the devil prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." As soon as she said, "Amen," 1 Peter 5:8 says, "the devil prowls about seeking someone to devour." She didn't change anything. You can't change God's word with your supposed magical incantations against the devil. If we could actually bind Satan and stop him, we would turn Scripture into a lie. We would make a liar out of revealed Scripture saying, "Well, Satan isn't prowling about." And the foolishness of it is seen is if you bind him, how is it that he got loose so that you have to do it again the next day? When did that wear off? People are just making this stuff up in their minds with no biblical basis whatsoever.

How is it that we resist the devil? Look at Ephesians 6:12. It says,

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore,

And then he goes on and explains the provision that has been made for us in Christ and in God's word to stand firm and to resist. There are no commands about binding Satan whatsoever. 1 Timothy 4:6 talks about the importance of true doctrine.

Now, let me take you to some other Scriptures that will also help your perspective on this. What do we do? Again, here's the question that we're at in our time together tonight as we're talking about demons. We say what do we do about these demons that are all about us that are intent on our destruction? What do we do with this? How are we to respond to it? Well, go to Matthew 6. This is so plain and obvious. Matthew 6:13. We'll look at this passage next Sunday, not this coming Sunday but the following Sunday. Matthew 6:13, Jesus in teaching us to pray says,

13 And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

It could be translated, "from the evil one," as you may see in your margin. You go to God and you say, "God, deliver me. Rescue me. Protect me. Help me in the midst of this." Watch it, I try not to pound on the pulpit too much but I don't know how else to emphasize something that is just so critically important. How is it that you find protection from the demonic realm? Let's ask the question this way and this can all be reduced to such simple principles: who do you talk to in the light of a demonic realm that exists

that's after your destruction? Who do you talk to? Do you go and talk directly to the demon and try to get Satan's attention by raising your voice? Jesus says, "Go and talk to your heavenly Father. Father, protect me. Father, deliver me. I can't see this realm. They have supernatural power that I don't have. They know things that I don't. Father, I can't see them, touch them, smell them, hear them. I can't do anything like that. I cannot see a demon. They are invisible, God, and therefore I am asking you to exercise your superior spiritual power and your superior righteousness to shield me as one of your children from a demonic realm that is after me, from a demonic realm that would undo me if they could. Father, deliver me from evil." You go and you ask God for protection.

Look at 2 Corinthians 12. Even with all of that, it might please God to allow us to suffer under the affliction of demonic realms, demonic forces. It might please God to allow us to suffer under that in order to teach us a thing or two. That was Paul's experience. Paul, you remember, had great surpassing revelations, went up to the third heaven and said, "I can't talk about it. It's so great." In 2 Corinthians 12:7, he says,

7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me--to keep me from exalting myself!

Concerning this, what did he do? If ever a man was going to bind Satan, it would be the Apostle Paul directly appointed by Jesus Christ. If the authority to bind demons and to bind Satan was given to men in the purposes of God, Paul of all people would have been the one to do it and what did Paul do? He prayed like Matthew 6:13. He says in verse 8,

8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.

"Father, protect me. Father, protect me." A third time, "Father, I say protect me. Help me." And God's response was not to bind the demon, not to send it away but to point Paul to the sufficiency of his grace. He says in verse 9,

9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you,

"I understand that there is a messenger of Satan afflicting you," something that perhaps these were the false teachers that were afflicting the church at Corinth and were causing so much heartache to Paul. Whatever you believe about that, whatever the messenger was, whatever the thorn was, Paul recognized it as something that was coming at the hands of Satan or a messenger of Satan more accurately, he cries out to God and God says, "My grace is sufficient for you." God chose not to take it away at that time and we have probably more people than not in the Christian church today telling us you can bind Satan, you can bind demons and Paul found that that wasn't true. Paul didn't even try it. He cried out to the Lord and the Lord himself said, "I am content to leave you just where you are. I know it will humble you and in the midst of the humbling and in the midst of the affliction, Paul, my grace is sufficient for you." And Paul having come to understand that said,

10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul says, "I've been under the affliction of this messenger from Satan, whoever, whatever it was, but do you know what? I'm content even with that because it has just made me conscious of my weakness and in my weakness I have turned to Christ and found a greater abundance of grace available to sustain me through it. So even as I am humbled in the midst of it, greater grace is made manifest." That's what we do.

What do you do? What do you do in response to demonic activity? First of all, truth, biblical truth to refute the falsehoods and biblical trust that says, "God, protect me and, God, here I am in the midst of the affliction, I can't begin to attribute it to men or to Satan like Paul could. I can't begin to do that but here I am in the midst of this affliction and this conflict, Lord, and I just trust you that your grace is sufficient for this day." That is far more profound, far more biblical. Truth and trust as our weapons of warfare against this, our weapons of protection, our weapons of sustenance through it rather than high volume displays of emotion that Scripture has nothing to do with. And what this should do in part for you is this: it should make you realize how precious and how great and how lovely our Lord Jesus Christ is, how lovely truth is, how wonderful and precious the Gospel is, how precious truth is, that it is sufficient to show us the grace of God that can protect us from every supernatural demonic influence, even Satan himself who would array himself against us. This is precious.

Now, another question comes up: what about demon possession and Christians? I'm going to fly through this. I ask you to bear with me in advance. What about demon possession? What is demon possession? This is our fourth question: what about demon possession? One author, one theologian defines demon possession like this, he says, "The demon exercises control and dominion over the victim and apparently cannot be successfully resisted and it indwells him." A demon takes a person over.

Now, sometimes the question is asked: can that happen to a true Christian? Can a true Christian be possessed by a demon and under the control of a demon? Well, the answer to that is absolutely not. Absolutely not. Scripture knows nothing of such a thing. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who is greater than demons. 1 John 4:4 says, "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." Every true Christian has the Spirit of God dwelling within him. And beloved, here is what you must understand, here is what you must understand and what you think about this tells you volumes about what you think about the work of Jesus Christ on Calvary and his work in redeeming your soul. What does Scripture teach us? Scripture teaches us as believers that Christ has saved us and he is not giving us back. If Christ has saved you, he's not going to give you back so you can be possessed and owned by the devil or one of his demons.

Look at Colossians 2. Now obviously as you're turning there, there is a difference between God allowing a demonic influence to afflict us and to trouble us, Paul went through that, that's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about possession and

control and a demon forcing you to do things against your will. Colossians 2:13 says...we're going to look at about three passages here. Colossians 2:13,

13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

Christ disarmed the demonic authorities. Christ when he brought you into himself, he brought you into union with himself and there is victory over the demonic realm in Christ.

In Hebrews 2 it says this, Hebrews 2. Again, this goes to what you think about the atoning work of Christ. In verse 14, Hebrews 2:14. I realize we are going kind of quick here. It says,

14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Christ has freed us from the power of the devil and has rendered Satan powerless over his people.

And in 1 John 5:18 it says this,

18 We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.

A verb meaning to grab hold of.

One writer says this, he says, "While Satan and his minions unceasingly attempt to assail believers, it is unthinkable that they could come in and possess, control or victimize the saints with the apparent benign acquiescence of the indwelling God." The Holy Spirit indwells us. The Holy Spirit is there to sanctify us, to keep us. The seal of our inheritance, the promise of the glory that is to come, and we're to think that the Holy Spirit just stands by and says, "Sure, that's okay. Have at it. You can possess him now." It's foolishness.

Along with that, beloved, consider it from this perspective: there is no biblical instruction whatsoever in the New Testament epistles to identify or correct demon possession of believers. There is nothing like that in the Bible, especially in the New Testament epistles. You see Christ doing it during his earthly ministry, that is different than what we

are dealing with today. If believers could be possessed by demons against their will, if there was a means to exorcise those demons, beloved, Scripture would tell us, and the fact that there is nothing about that in Scripture is unthinkable if demon possession of Christians was a real threat. Not true. The Spirit of God saved us. The Spirit of God keeps us.

Now you say, "Well, what about an unbeliever? You know, people on mission fields dealing with unbelievers, what do we do about that? Can they be possessed?" Yeah, I suppose. The means of their deliverance is the same means of deliverance that was your spiritual deliverance, it is the preaching of the Gospel. It is preaching Christ as Lord and calling people to repentance. It is the truth. It is the Gospel that delivers, 2 Timothy 2, 2 Corinthians 4. It is the power of the Gospel, not stupid incantations that frees men from Satan. It is in the Gospel that we bring Christ to men and it is in the Gospel where men find their deliverance from the demonic realm. It is Christ who delivers us from the kingdom of Satan and delivers us over to the kingdom of God and that is done through the preaching of the Gospel and that's a point to fight over if it came to that.

Well, fifth and final point here. So much for 60 minutes for these theology messages. Fifth and final point: the doom of demons. If you want to keep the question format: what happens to demons? Demons face the same end of judgment as Satan does. Matthew 25:41, Jesus speaks of sending away Satan into the eternal fire. Verse 41 he says,

41 ...'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

The ultimate outcome of this entire evil invisible realm is going to be eternal judgment and the glory of Christ will be exonerated. And not only that, beloved, the strength and the power and the might of Christ is going to be exalted even more supremely as we see him bringing about final victory over a supernatural realm that men could not stop on their own. The strength of the enemy showing the greater strength of the one who conquered them.

So beloved, let's wrap it up. We've got to bring this plane into a landing. We should not ignore Satan or his demons, be aware of how they influence things today, especially in the life of the church, but beloved, none of you should be consumed by them or paralyzed by fear over a demonic realm. We are protected by the power of God. The Son of God has come, he has delivered us, he has saved us, he keeps us and he will bring about our final deliverance. We have nothing to fear. It's those who are outside of Christ that Scripture says are held captive by the devil; that are subject to his malevolent evil, wicked, sadistic influences, the blinding force of them. And to anyone that may be listening over the live stream or here in the room and you know you're not a Christian, you belong to your father, Satan. You should cry out for mercy to the one who can deliver you, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, what can we do except echo the words that you have already given us in Scripture. We ask you that you would lead us not into temptation but that you would deliver us from the evil one, that you would protect and keep us all the way into glory. Father, help us all to respond rightly to what your word has shown us here tonight, to apply it appropriately, properly in our lives. If changes need to be made, Father, that we would be willing to do that and that we would act upon it before we put our head on the pillow tonight. And Father, for those that are outside of Christ in this room and outside and we look at a world that is lost in darkness and we realize the spiritual reality of what that means, that these sadistic demonic forces have full sway, have blinded their eyes to the Gospel, and that they are dead within and they are under the power of Satan and all of his demons, O God, how much we realize that for them all we can ask is for a supernatural act by you to deliver them from his hand, and may you bring the Gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit to men who are in darkness that they might be saved and escape from the doom that awaits Satan and his hosts. And Father, we pray that you would be pleased to use our church as a part of that, to that end. Father, use our individual witnesses, use the testimony of the wonderful people that are in this room to advance the cause of your kingdom, use the feeble words of this pulpit, O God, to bring light where darkness has prevailed. So Father, we are humbled, we are chastened. We realize what a gift we have in our salvation and we thank you for it and we ask that what you have begun you would complete in us and ever protect us from this demonic force that we might dwell in the safety that you have provided to us in our Lord Jesus Christ. With gratitude and, Father, a humble spirit, we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

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