

Authority Of The Believer

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"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places." Ephesians 6:12

I knew in my spirit, when I came to the close of last month's letter, that I was not finished. There is so much that the Holy Spirit wants us to understand about our authority and about the all-out war that Satan has declared on the saints that I could not leave the subject alone. So, let's take it a little further ...

Through revelation knowledge of God's Word, we understand that spiritual realms exist such as the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. But we also understand that spiritual wickedness exists in realms where Satan has declared himself the absolute authority.

From time to time, we see God perform miracles and healings as the Holy Spirit moves through the congregation. But, from time to time, we also see the operation of wicked spirits manifesting themselves through human beings. They scream and cry with loud voices as they come out of people when they are forced to relinquish their hold on them by the power of the Holy Spirit. And, we see many different kinds of manifestations with our naked eyes.

Have you ever wondered what is taking place behind the scene . the one you cannot see with your natural eyes ... the one where angels reside and minister? Even though we cannot see them, we know they exist and frequently visit our services.

Hebrews 1:14 says: *"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"*

What happens to the devils that come out of people? where do they go? Is there a sophisticated chain of command that constitutes a Satanic government that devils report to and that adopts strategies for their operations? Yes, there is.

In a previous study, we took a look at Satan's chain of command from the top to the bottom. we found out that Satan issues orders to "principalities" who in turn instruct "powers" who in turn instruct *"the ruler of the darkness of this world"* who in turn instructs *"spiritual wickedness in heavenly places."*

Ephesians 6:12 says: *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places."*

Now, the only operation we are really familiar with in Satan's four levels of government is the last one. This is because it is the one on a direct level with humanity.

Spiritual wickedness in heavenly places are the wicked spirits (demons or devils as Jesus called them) that do the dirty work of possessions, afflictions, torments, perversions, etc. Oftentimes it is on this level devils manifest themselves through people by not wanting to come out. They scream with loud voices and beg for mercy as they are forced to come out by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And, it is right here that revival takes place ... on the level of humanity where the forces of darkness are attempting to keep men bound and the forces of light that are attempting to set them free. God will use Holy Ghost-filled men and women, who are yielded to Him, to execute authority over devils and to preach the word with mighty signs and wonders following.

Satan would deceive us into believing the real war is fought with the territorial prince residing over the city. We would be foolish to think that, in Satan's government, he does not have a class of wicked spirits who reside over people. I'm sure he does.

But, there is no use in people going up in an airplane or to a tall building or to a mountain top overlooking the city and binding the strong man when the same people have deaf sections in their churches and people bound by diseases to wheelchairs and every Sunday new people come, many bound by disease-causing spirits, and leave just as bound as they came.

What good does it do to go upon a mountain to bind the strong man when authority cannot be executed over low-level, second-rate, expendable devils that have people bound who visit their churches WANTING TO BE SET FREE FROM THEIR AFFLICTIONS but who seldom are.

This is how Philip brought revival to Samaria - by executing authority on a direct level with humanity and not on a mountain top screaming at the strong man. He did it by a supernatural invasion into the sense realm where people lived by hearing and seeing and touching the Word and the miracles that were done in their midst.

Acts 8:5-8 says: "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city."

For the sake of teaching, let's just say Philip's meeting in Samaria filled up with all lame, sick, demon-possessed people and he preached but nothing much happened. A few people went out under the Power, maybe a few backs were healed as well as a headache or two. Sounds pretty much like the revivals we have these days.

The question is, "What should Philip do to help bring revival to Samaria under these circumstances?" Should he find the highest point overlooking Samaria, climb to the top, and bind the ruler of darkness over Samaria? Or, should he go to Jesus, in prayer, and ask Him, "Why aren't the lame walking and why do most of the people who come into my services in wheelchairs leave in wheelchairs? How come schizophrenic demon-possessed people experience very little help when I pray for them?"

I can tell you what Jesus would say. He would tell Philip the same thing He told His disciples when they could not get an unclean spirit to come out of a boy ... "IT IS BECAUSE OF YOUR UNBELIEF." In other words, there is no use binding the ruler of darkness who resides over the city until you can deal with the class of wicked spirits that affect men directly.

what caused revival and great joy in the city of Samaria is when the lame walked, when the mothers received their deaf and dumb children back again whole, when the town maniacs, like Legion, who were chained in someone's backyard, were suddenly strolling down the street worshipping God and laughing with children.

This is the kind of outpouring that brings revival to a city. If these things are not happening in our churches, it is not because Jesus didn't make provision for them ... He did. In fact, He said, "Behold, I give you power over all the power of the enemy." This being the case, the devil cannot be our problem nor can the many diseases caused by spirits of infirmities or insanities.

Jesus wants to empower every evangelist and every staff member in every church with the miracle working power of God. He wants the teachers to be able to teach the people who have been saved, healed, and delivered how to stay that way.

Now, hypothetically speaking, if Philip would have gone to Jesus and asked Him, "Why could not we cast him out?", He would have told Philip the same thing He told His disciples.

Matthew 17:18-21: *"And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples apart, and said, why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, BECAUSE OF YOUR UNBELIEF: ..."*

I used to think the devil would have discernment to monitor my words, to somehow gauge them for fear or unbelief and, if my words had fear or unbelief in them, he would simply say, "I do not have to come out." So, I would try to muster up great authority in my words ... maybe yell a little ... put some emotion into it.

The devil is not gauging the unbelief in our words to decide whether or not he is coming out. He is not impressed with screaming nor does whispering in a super-calm voice melt him down into a mass of quivering nerves. what does make him come out is when something greater and more powerful than himself forces him to get his grubby, disease-causing, tormenting hands off of that person and that something is the power of the HOLY SPIRIT!

As a human being, I do not have the supernatural power to back up the authority Jesus has given me as a believer. The devil does not look at me and say, "I think I had better come out because he looks and sounds like he has authority." The reason devils scream and cry with loud voices is because the Holy Spirit is putting pressure on them and forcing them to come out. And, some that I have heard sound like they are in extreme pain. Like in Samaria, *"Unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed by them."*

This is why Jesus said in Matthew 12:28,29: *"But if I cast out devils 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."

Jesus was saying, "Look, let Me prove to you that I am of the kingdom of God. Where do I get the power to bind the strong man if I do not get it from the Holy Spirit. And, if I get it from the Holy Spirit, then the Kingdom of God has come unto you."

Jesus called the blind and dumb spirit that had the man bound a strong man because he is like a palace guard. He is standing guard over the person he is possessing, like a sentry and in the same way that a palace guard would protect all the goods that are in his palace against invasion. The strong man considers the person he is possessing as his property.

Because he is a hideous landlord, unclean spirits impose fiendish, diabolical sub-human standards on the people whom they possess. Blindness, deafness, dumbness, homosexuality, schizophrenia, inability to consciously discern right from wrong, imprisonment in their own bodies by crippling diseases, are just part of their nature. People possessed by these unclean spirits love to molest and kill little children. Because of these demon spirits, these people are rotten to the core and the only answer is JESUS.

The term, "spoil his goods", is Old King James English which meant that, when one army conquered another, they went home with the spoils of war which were the possessions of the army they had just conquered. So, when Jesus said, "How can you enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods unless you first bind the strong man?", He was saying that the devil considers the person he is possessing as his property and, if you are going to take that person away from him, you had better be stronger than the strong man.

This then is where Jesus introduced the power of the Holy Spirit as the power behind the exorcism of devils. That is why He said, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then the kingdom of God has come unto you or else where do I get the power to spoil his goods (set the man free) and lest I first have the Power to bind the strong man?"

When Jesus told His disciples the reason devils will not come out is because of unbelief, He was saying that you and I are the Body of Christ upon earth and Jesus is the Head. The Holy Spirit works through us as the members of His Body. He works through our faith and, if a person is full of unbelief, the reason the devils will not come out is not because the devil is monitoring the unbelief in our words but because the Holy Spirit is RESTRICTED by our UNBELIEF and is unable to work through us to make the devil come out or to heal a crippling disease.

Believe me, Van and Angina, the devil is not going to come out unless the Holy Spirit shows up and makes him! You can scream, jump, or whisper but it will not make any difference. The same thing is true in our services where creative miracles are called for and do not take place. It is simply because the Holy Spirit is not able to work through us to cause them to TAKE PLACE.

But, thank God, Jesus told us what to do about it in the same verses. Matthew 17:20-21 says: "*And Jesus said unto them, because of your UNBELIEF for verily I say unto you, If you have faith as a*

grain of mustard seed, you shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; AND NOTHING SHALL BE IMPOSSIBLE UNTO YOU. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by PRAYER and FASTING."

If the primary reason the devil would not come out is UNBELIEF, then the praying and fasting that Jesus was talking about in verse 21 was not to move God. He is not the one who is stuck. It was to move us from a place of unbelief to a place of authority where the Holy Spirit can move through us and execute the victory that Jesus has obtained over Satan at the cross.

It all begins when we refuse to accept things as they are, refuse to allow our loved ones to go on, year after year, unsaved. Jesus said in verse 20 that, if you ever learned to deal with this particular kind of unbelief, "NOTHING WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO YOU ..." Then He said, "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by PRAYER and FASTING."

So, it is at those times when we come before God to worship Him and pray in tongues that, from time to time, we need to add FASTING. When we do, the combination of those things gives us GREAT AUTHORITY in the realm of the Spirit because it opens our reservoir to give us the capacity to understand our ability to recognize, neutralize, and subdue the evil spirits' ability in our lives and the lives of those we love and come in contact with.

We then allow the Godhead to move through us and do what He has wanted and intended to do the whole time and that is TO MEET THE NEEDS OF HIS PEOPLE, NO MATTER WHAT THEY ARE!