

# OpenTheo

## Demon Possession



### Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg provides an in-depth analysis of the topic of demon possession. He notes that the term "demon possession" is not found in the Bible and discusses the distinction between being "demon possessed" and "demon oppressed." Gregg argues that while some cases of apparent demon possession might have a purely medical explanation, there are cases that cannot be explained away and are best accounted for as supernatural or caused by demons. He concludes that demonic possession requires careful study and consideration of the theological and personal factors involved.

### Transcript

The subject of our talk is demon possession. Now I just want to start out by saying the term demon possession is something of a misnomer. It is found in our English Bibles.

The King James uses the term demon possession and following the tradition of the King James, most English Bibles have used that term as well. Demonizomai is the word that is translated demon possessed in our English Bibles. Demonizomai.

So that the term demonized is a much closer term to the Greek term used in the New Testament than our traditional demon possessed. Now the reason I point that out is because there's much confusion among Christians as to what is meant by the term demon possessed. And many times distinctions are made which are really artificial by teachers.

For example, fairly often we'll hear Christians talk about there's a difference between being demon possessed and demon oppressed. Or being demon possessed and simply having a demon. Or being afflicted by a demon.

Some teachers make hairline distinctions between some of these concepts. Those words are not really distinguished in the Bible. To have a demon and to be demonized or to be demon possessed are the same expression in the Bible.

And the term demon oppressed is not found in the Bible at all. The closest thing you have is in Peter's sermon in the house of Cornelius in Acts chapter 10 where he says

Jesus was a man anointed by God who went about doing good and healing those who were oppressed by the devil. So Jesus healed people who were oppressed by the devil.

Peter might be referring to Jesus' healing ministry. And if not his healing ministry, then his exorcism ministry. What Peter referred to by being oppressed by the devil is not clear.

But he does not use the term demon oppressed and certainly does not use the term oppressed by the devil in a way that we could make any clear distinctions between that and the phenomenon of being demon possessed as Jesus encountered it and the apostles encountered it frequently. And frankly, which you may have encountered it. Because I have.

I certainly never expected to. I was raised in a Baptist church. Our church never talked about modern day supernatural things.

When I was about 13, I think, or 14, one Sunday evening was given to our missionaries from Africa who came home and reported what they were doing. Now, I was just a young teenager, but I remember hearing them say something about having cast a demon out of somebody that they encountered in Africa. They said there was this demon possessed person and we had to cast the demon out and they described it.

And then they went on and talked about other things. That's the only thing in their whole presentation that stuck with me. I thought, demon possessed? What? In this 20th century, demon possessed? Is there such a thing? And I realized when I thought about it, well, sure, you read about it in the Bible.

There's demon possessed people that Jesus met. There's demon possessed people that the apostles met. But it had never crossed my mind that there might be demon possessed people that I might meet in the modern world for the same reason that I read in the Bible of people working miracles and healings and prophecies.

I'd never seen any of that either. When the missionaries mentioned it, I thought, well, you know, it never occurred to me to think about demon possession in the modern world. But I remember thinking, well, I guess there's no reason not to.

It's in the Bible. Why not? But at least I was fortunate enough, I thought, to be living in another part of the world where the demon possession isn't. That's in Africa.

And so the first time I became aware that there was such a thing as demon possession, I was quite sure it was in Africa. And I was in California, so I was safe. I think the next time I knew anything about demons at all was I was in a band in Southern California, a Christian band, and we played at a Christian campground one weekend.

And after our first set of material, we took a break for a half hour or so. And when we

started to get back together to do another set, one of our band members was missing a girl. And we went looking for her and couldn't find her.

This is up in the woods in the mountains in Southern California. We actually notified people that she was missing. Everyone, the whole camp was out looking for her.

For a long time, it was dark by this time. And eventually someone found her and brought her in. And she was all shaken up, not herself at all.

She was certainly not able to play any music that night anymore. And she told a story. Now, I don't know what to make of the story today as I look back.

But I know that when she told the story, I took it with absolute seriousness at the time. I had very little experience, none, frankly, with the demonic realm. And she said that she had been out at the edge of where the artificial lighting was looking out into the dark woods.

And she had seen someone out there, a dark figure, like a silhouette, but had red eyes, she said, that seemed to glow. And it was holding something shiny. It looked like it might be silver or gold or something shiny, something valuable.

And he was saying to her, come over here. I have something for you. And she said, why don't you come over here if you have something for me, here into the light? He says, no, you come over here.

I've got something you'll like. And she wouldn't go, but she wouldn't leave either. She was just kind of mesmerized.

But when we found her, she was shaken. And you could punch holes in the story if you didn't believe in the supernatural. Who knows if she saw anything, hallucinated.

Whether there's a person out there, I don't know. But when she told the story to me, it seemed to me she had seen something demonic. And I remember it scared me to death for a little while.

I was thinking after that, well, I mean, I knew the devil was in Africa. I didn't know that he might be over here. And I certainly didn't know that he might appear to anyone I knew in such a scary way.

And I remember thinking for some weeks, probably two weeks after that, that what if the devil appears to me? I was actually very much afraid, very afraid. In fact, even in broad daylight, I didn't want to be alone at home. I was like 17, 18 years old, I think.

I shouldn't have been afraid of anything. But it seemed to me that I might look over in the corner of the room and there'd be the devil leering at me. I actually thought maybe I'd look into the bathroom mirror and this monster face would be looking back at me.

I was actually irrationally afraid of the demonic. And I think it went on for about two weeks. I remember thinking, I can't live the rest of my life being afraid that the devil's going to appear to me.

And I just asked myself, what if he did? What's he going to do? What can he do to me? Greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world. The Bible says, resist the devil, he'll flee from you. So obviously I don't have to be afraid of him, he's afraid of me.

The scriptures just kind of put my mind in the place it was supposed to be and gave me perspective and I was never afraid of demons again. Demons have just never been scary to me since then because the scriptures make it very clear that I don't have to be afraid of demons. In fact, they have to be afraid of me, unless they can make me afraid of them.

I actually think that that's one of the main objectives the devil has is to make us afraid of him so he won't have to be afraid of us. We're the only people on the planet who actually can do some serious damage to him. We are the body of Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ's body has his authority over the demonic, just like Jesus had when he was here.

When I came to understand that, the demonic ceased to be scary. Well, only probably two years after that I'd say. I was in another Christian band at that time and we were playing not at the same but a different Christian campground in Southern California in the mountains.

I was the main preacher in the band as well as in the band. So after the concert, I gave an invitation. I gave a gospel presentation, invited people to come forward if they wanted to know the Lord.

A few people did. Five people came forward and I said, okay, we've got about that many band members. Let's go into the side room with these people and we'll counsel them and see if they want to receive Christ.

So I took these people in the back room with the rest of the band members and as I was talking about what it means to receive Christ and be a Christian, they were all listening fine but there was one girl, a young Hispanic girl, probably 17, 18 I would guess, maybe 16 even. And the whole time she was listening, her face was contorting. I was talking to all of them but my eye kept being drawn to her.

This face was doing things that faces can't do usually. I mean, it's not just like she's wincing. It was more like the muscles in her face were all in motion, contorting continually.

It was eerie. But I was still unfamiliar with the demonic enough that it didn't really make - I just thought she must have some nervous condition or something. And anyway, I eventually asked these people one by one, would you like to receive Christ? Each one

said yes.

But when I got to her, she said I can't. Now I didn't have any experience in those days but I have found out from some fairly extensive experience and research now that that's a fairly common thing. When people are demon possessed, they often say I can't believe, I can't receive Christ.

And I didn't count her to be demon possessed at that point. I said, no, you can if you want to. You can receive Jesus.

You just have to make a decision to surrender to Christ. And she said, no, I can't. You don't understand, I can't.

I thought, well, kind of nutty girl. But I kept talking and kept asking her. And finally I said, well, I'll tell you what, why don't each of you five people go out with one of the band members out separately to pray? And there was one of the guys - we didn't have enough girls to send her out with the girls - so one of the guys in the band went, took her out to outdoors to pray with her.

And I saw them go out the door and I turned around and it seemed like two seconds later the door opened again. He came in and he was really wide-eyed. He's bringing her in and he says, Steve, I think you ought to deal with this one.

I thought, me? I didn't know any more than he did probably. But as soon as he said, I think you need to deal with this one, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, she's demon possessed. I'd never encountered a demon possessed person.

And I thought, well, what do you do? This time I wasn't afraid, except I was afraid of my own inadequacy. I'm not afraid of demons, but when someone puts it on me to help someone who's demon possessed, I just knew, I don't know anything about this. So this other guy who brought her back in and I sat her down on a chair and we began to do whatever we just prayed and we asked God to guide us and we didn't really have any methodology for this.

We asked her to confess that Jesus is Lord and whatever else we thought you should do. And it took, I think, 15 minutes or so. The whole time her face was contorting like crazy.

And then at one point she just broke free and her face relaxed completely. For the first time I could tell she was actually quite a pretty girl, but you wouldn't have known it because her face never was itself before that. But she had tears coming down her eyes, she began to speak with tongues and she said, wow, what a rush.

And she looked like a different person. Now the demons didn't go out screaming or anything like that, but she was released visibly in that particular moment. And she remained that way and I and another band member drove up to the mountains there to

see her again because she was there for a week.

And we went up to see her again a few days later. She was still doing great. She'd had some drugs in her cabin that she'd flushed down the toilet and she's wanting to serve God and she was normal.

That was my first encounter with a demon-possessed person. I've had some since, but I want to make it very clear. I don't have anything like a deliverance ministry at all.

In fact, I think, possibly, I have been unsuccessful in casting demons out of demon-possessed people more often than I've been successful. Now a preacher's teaching on the subject isn't supposed to say that. I'm supposed to encourage you that any time you run into this, it's going to be a piece of cake.

You just say, go out in the name of Jesus, the demons go. Well, that hasn't always been the case. Sometimes it's more complicated than that.

There are factors even in the person himself or herself that may determine whether you can easily cast a demon out or not. In fact, my suspicion is that if a person wants their demon, you can't do a thing to get it out anyway. Jesus never went to the demon-possessed.

They came to him and indicated that they apparently wanted free. I remember back when I was first baptized in the Spirit and when I first discovered the spiritual gifts and stuff when I was 16, before I actually ever met a demon-possessed person, to my knowledge, I remember thinking, I wish I had the gift of discerning of spirits because then I thought that meant you'd be able to tell when people have demons. I'd go into a mental institution, I'd find all the demon-possessed people and I'd cast the demons out and let them go.

I thought that'd be so glorious. But when I actually had chances to deal with demon-possessed people, it wasn't that simple. And I have been pleased to be involved in the deliverance of a number of people who have been set free and a number who have not.

Maybe an equal number, I don't know. I don't deal with demons all the time. It's not the main focal point of my ministry at all.

I'm a teacher. And so running into demon-possessed people is just kind of random. But the point is that my awareness of the demon possession as a phenomenon developed rather gradually.

That it even existed in Africa was the first thing that shocked me. But now, of course, I've had, I won't say a lot of experience, but I've had some experience. I don't pass myself off here as an expert based on my experience at all.

But I'm a student. I'm a Bible student. And I remember that the church I was in growing up, well, not the Baptist church, but in the Charismatic church I was in, they were very strong on the idea that a Christian cannot really ever be possessed.

They said a Christian can be oppressed by demons but not possessed by demons. And it sounded good to me. And once when I was traveling cross-country, I was 19, traveling cross-country preaching on my way to Europe, where I was going to Germany to preach for a while.

I stopped in New Jersey with a family and stayed with them for a while. They were a very zealous Christian family, charismatic people. And they were one night around the dinner table telling me about a friend of theirs who had gone with them to some deliverance ministry meeting and had demons cast out of her.

And I thought, wait, wait, wait a minute. You just said that that woman was a Christian friend and she had demons cast out of her? They said, yeah, that's right. And I said, well, from what I understand of the Scripture, Christians can't be demon-possessed.

Now, this couple were not theologically sophisticated. They were surprised. They said, oh, well, she sure seemed like a Christian to me.

And I thought, well, that's interesting, because I had some proof texts that my pastor had given me years earlier to prove that Christians can't have demons. And so I thought, well, that's kind of interesting. These people had seemingly a Christian friend who seemingly got delivered of demon possession, though she was already a Christian.

So I decided to study this out in the Bible, because I thought, well, I want to make sure I'm not being presumptuous about anything here. And I literally spent two years. I mean, I taught on other things during those two years, but I made it a determined study.

I was going to go through the whole Bible with a fine-tooth comb, pull out everything I could find about demon possession, especially about this question of whether Christians could have demons or not. I wanted to see anything in the Bible that could answer that particular question, as well as anything else. Now, I'm not obsessed with demons at all.

In fact, they don't come up in my teaching very often, but they are a reality. So since we do run into it, it's a biblical phenomenon, and it's something that is mysterious to many Christians. I thought, I think I should share once in a while at least what I have found the Scripture to teach.

There are people who don't believe in demon possession as a phenomenon today at all. They believe that demon possession in the Bible is simply evidence of the superstitious nature of the ancient world, that societies throughout history, of course, have believed in demon possession, including biblical society, and even Jesus apparently did. But they say he was mistaken, or else if he knew that it was really just a psychiatric problem, he must

have just kind of kept that to himself and accommodated the superstitions of people and acted like it was demon possession and fixed the problem.

Of course, most seculars today believe that what we might call demon possession are simply some kind of a psychiatric ailment. And you have to understand that those who argue for that position are not speaking from objective evidence, because there's too many evidences that have been studied that cannot be explained that way, but they're speaking from a worldview commitment. They're committed to a naturalistic worldview, which by definition does not allow for anything that's not part of the natural world.

That means there's no supernatural. There's no God, or if there is a God, he's out there and doesn't interfere ever, doesn't work miracles, doesn't do anything, he never messes with the laws of nature. And everything in the universe has got to explain, including creation and everything else, in naturalistic terms.

And when you see bizarre human behavior, those who are of a naturalistic view, they have to, of course, argue that this is a medical condition. It's a human mental health issue. Now, I do believe there are mental health issues that perhaps are not directly related to demons.

I'm going to allow for that. I mean, I'd be crazy not to, because we do know there are people who have various kinds of chemical imbalances in their bodies and some of those affect their brains. In fact, the second person I ever dealt with who claimed to be demon-possessed was a guy in the Navy in San Diego who used to drive up to Orange County where I was ministering in a house, an outreach house.

And he used to come to my Bible studies there in the 70s. And he acted really weird. And people who spent more time with him than I did would report to me really weird things he said and did that sounded really suspiciously demonic.

And this was after I'd cast the demon out of that girl up at the camp. So I was kind of, my radar was up for this kind of thing. I might have even been a little more suspicious than balanced on that at the time.

But when people were reporting to me the things this guy was saying and doing, which I won't go into right now, they were strange. They were irrational. They were surprising.

And I remember in my heart thought, I wonder if the guy has a demon. Well, interestingly enough, he came up to me after Bible studies and said, I think I need to talk to you privately. So I said, okay.

And he said, I think I have a demon. I hadn't said anything about it, and I don't know if anyone else had. But he said, I need to meet with you sometime alone and I'd like you to pray for me.



So we set a time, and we actually later that week got together. And I doubted that he had a demon when people told me that he actually was hypoglycemic. Because he was.

He was hypoglycemic. He was hypoglycemic, and I had heard reports from people about really bizarre behavior when people's blood sugar is out of whack. And I thought, okay, he's probably not demon possessed.

He's just hypoglycemic. It's just a chemical imbalance, not a problem. But that was before he came to me and told me he thought he had a demon.

I thought, well, even if I suspect he doesn't have a demon, even if I suspect it's just a medical condition, I'll go ahead and pray. What's it hurt to pray? And so I prayed with him, and he got a breakthrough too. And he felt like something left him.

You know, I didn't see any supernatural phenomena or anything like that, so I wasn't sure what to think. But he believed. He said he felt like he'd come out of a long, drunken state when he got delivered.

I thought, well, that's possible. I mean, maybe that was demonic. And next time I saw him, I said, how's your blood sugar? He said, oh, it's normal.

It's normal now. They've had it tested. It's normal.

So I thought, well, okay, was it the hypoglycemia making him act weird, or was it a demon making his blood sugar abnormal? Now, you might say, how would a demon, a spirit being, have anything to do with your chemical imbalances? Well, we don't know as much as we'd like to about demons, and the Bible doesn't give us a thorough theology of demons, but it does give us anecdotes. Most of what we know about the demons from the Bible is anecdotal. Jesus met demon-possessed people, the apostles did, and a number of the cases of the demon-possessed people that Jesus met are not described as having particular any behavioral issues but physical issues.

There was a woman bent over who couldn't straighten herself for 18 years, and the Bible said she had a spirit of infirmity, and Jesus said she had been bound by Satan these 18 years, and he delivered her, and she was able to stand up straight. There's nothing wrong with her behavior or her mental activity as far as we know. The only thing described that was out of whack that got fixed when she was delivered was she could stand up straight, she had curvature of the spine or something before.

In Matthew 12, it describes a demon that Jesus cast out of a man, it says a blind and a mute demon. And when Jesus cast out the demon, the blind saw and the mute spoke. The effects of that man's demon possession was merely physical.

And, of course, there's times when Jesus would cast demons out of people and they seemed to have epileptic fits. Actually, they begin to have a fit, and he'd cast the demon

out and they'd be fixed. Like the boy whose father brought him to the disciples and they couldn't cast the demon out, and then Jesus cast the demon out.

The boy was having a seizure. Now, I want to make this very clear. I've just suggested that certain physiological or seemingly physiological problems may be demonically caused.

But every one of those conditions can be caused without demons. Jesus did cast a blind demon out of a man and the man could see, but he also healed a lot of blind people who didn't have demons, just by putting mud in their eyes and having them wash it out or something like that. Not every blind person has a demon, but if a person has a blind demon, they're going to be blind, and they're going to need that cast out.

Not every epileptic has a demon. In fact, there's one place in Matthew that lists all the different maladies that Jesus healed as he traveled around, and it mentions epileptics separately from demon possessed. Demon possessed and epileptics and so forth.

So, obviously, there's a condition of epilepsy that's merely physiological and not demonic. Yet, many of the seizures that demonic possession seems to cause, it'd be hard to describe them as anything other than what looks like a grand mal seizure at the time. So, what I'm saying is there is physiological cause for many physical maladies that people have, and it'd be wrong to assume that demons are causing them all.

Many times you need to find medical help for those things because they're strictly physiological medical conditions, but not always. A demon, apparently, from Scripture can cause conditions that look to us as though they're only medical conditions, and in those cases, probably nothing except getting the demon out is going to fix the problem. I don't know what the full range of those conditions might be.

Hypoglycemia might be among them, and if so, then that young man from San Diego, maybe he had a demon that made his blood sugar up, made him act weird, and then when he passed out, he was normal. I don't claim to understand the anecdotes. I can tell them because they're true and I saw them.

I don't always know how to interpret them, but I can tell you what the Bible says about many of these things. But for those who think that demon possession in every case, even the kind that leads to bizarre behavior, is strictly a medical issue, strictly a chemical problem in the brain, I'd say that's too reductionistic. It's supposing that everything can be explained by a narrow range of considerations that are all material and all natural.

There has never been any scientific experiment that has ever proved naturalism. Naturalism is a prejudice of the secular world. It means they have just decided that they only accept the natural world.

They do not believe there's any supernatural world. That's not a conviction that science

leads you to. That's just a philosophical choice.

That's a religious choice. It's an atheist choice. They don't want to believe there's a God or supernatural, so they're forced to explain things naturalistically.

And when they do, they often argue that all these cases of demon possession, and there have been many, many studied, that they're all related to some kind of mental problem. However, there's just data that they have to ignore. Like when a demon-possessed person speaks with several voices simultaneously out of their mouth in languages they never learned.

Or when they levitate. Yes, it does happen. Demon-possessed people have often levitated, and sometimes other things in the room with them levitate.

That's not caused from schizophrenia. That's not a medical problem. That's a supernatural problem.

Now, of course, some might say, well, you're just too quick to give it a supernatural label. Someday scientists will understand what makes these things happen. Well, until then, I'm going to go with the evidence and say it's not natural.

If, you know, a hundred years from now they come up with some way to prove it's natural, I'll retract my statements. But the Bible indicates there are supernatural forces, and I believe the Bible. I believe the Bible itself is a product of supernatural inspiration.

And I believe that Jesus' ministry is full of supernatural phenomena, including supernatural healings and exorcisms. Now, I said the word demon-possessed can be misleading. The word exorcism can be misleading too.

Exorcism just means to expel or to cast out. However, the word exorcism has come to have a lot of religious rigmarole attached to it, partly because of the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, which has recognized demon possession as a real phenomenon from the beginning, and they actually have orders of priests who are trained in exorcism. They have an exorcism rite, and it involves, you know, crucifixes and holy water sprinkling and saying certain things out of a book and so forth, and sometimes it really works.

And sometimes it doesn't. I don't know if you ever saw the movie *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*. That's based on a true story of a girl in Germany who died while she was under the care of an exorcist.

She could have died just from the demons if the exorcist wasn't there. In fact, it was certainly the demons that killed her. It wasn't the exorcist.

But the truth is that the exorcist was not able to prevent the demons from killing her, a

Catholic exorcist, Roman Catholic priest. And the story that was behind the exorcist movie, there was a true story there, though Hollywood dressed it up quite a bit. In the exorcist movie, the victim was a young girl.

In the real story, the guy was a 14-year-old boy, and he and an aunt had gotten involved in something, Ouija boards or tarot cards or something like that. His aunt got him involved in that, and then she died. And shortly after she died, he started hearing sounds in the room, knockings and scratchings on the walls and so forth, but there was no one there.

Other family members came in and saw it too. Eventually, because they were a Lutheran family, the Lutheran pastor invited the boy to come stay at his house, and the phenomena continued at the pastor's house, only worse. The bed began to vibrate and move across the room.

Other furniture would move around the room while the kid's just laying in bed still. If the kid sat in a chair, it would tip over. Of course, that could be faked, but they were watching carefully, and these were not people who believed in the supernatural very much.

You have to realize that many mainstream denominations have given up their belief in demon possession long ago, and they were not thinking of it as demon possession, but the things were so uncanny, they finally, though they were Lutherans, asked the Roman Catholics to do an exorcism, and so he was taken off to a Roman Catholic hospital where exorcism was performed, but only after one of the priests got almost killed by a seemingly supernatural thing that happened in the process. I won't go into it now. I've read the story, but I don't have time to go into it all.

The point is that there really was an exorcism in which, and this was in Maryland. Actually, it was in a suburb of Washington, D.C., Mount Rainier, Maryland is where it took place, in 1949. The book, *The Exorcist*, and the movie were based on it, but they changed the gender of the victim and a few other things, and in order to make it more sensational, they had the priest get possessed at the end and jump out the window, but that didn't really happen.

What really happened is the boy was delivered. He grew up, he got married, had kids, lived a normal life, but before he was delivered, the strangest things were happening. He did speak out in languages he never spoke.

He could speak Latin to the priests, and of course they know Latin. He didn't, but the demons did, and one of the strange things that happened to this boy was that as they would watch on his bare chest, the priests, there were three priests there most of the time, they would watch, and these bloody scratches would appear on the boy's chest as if a sharp finger inside his body was, you know, drawing on his chest. They'd watch the

letters spell out words, and by the way, that is another phenomenon that has been reported in quite a few different cases of exorcism, but the point is there were really strange things that happened in that story.

You can't explain those things naturally. There was levitation. There was speaking in languages that a person has never learned.

That's not schizophrenia. That's something else, and the Bible tells us what it is. There are demons in the world who are malicious.

They are apparently under the command of Satan. We deduce this because the Bible talks about Satan and his angels in Revelation 12, and also because Jesus spoke of Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. But the point here is there's these demonic beings which are spirits.

They're evil spirits. Probably the main theory among Christians is they are fallen angels. The Bible does tell us that some angels have fallen, though it doesn't tell us if those fallen angels are the demons.

The Bible doesn't anywhere directly identify the demons with fallen angels, but it's a theory that Christians often hold. Others feel that the demons are the spirits of very wicked people who, in their lifetime, bound themselves over to Satan for power or for some privilege of some kind, and after their death, their spirits are forced to serve Satan, though not happily, which is why demons often sound like they're tormented themselves and terrified of Satan himself. But the point is we don't know where the demons came from.

The Bible doesn't apparently want us too obsessive about that question, or else it would give us the answer. What we do know is that they are there. They are the enemies of our souls.

They do seemingly do the bidding of Satan, and he's the main enemy of our souls, so we have to be locked in battle with them. Now, what we have to understand, and many people do not, is that this life is an actual warfare. I'm sure many of you have heard the term spiritual warfare.

Maybe you've even studied spiritual warfare, but it often slips our mind that the problem with demons is not just the demons don't like me, and I don't like them, and so from time to time I'm going to have to be in an argument with them or try to cast them out or do something or protect myself from them, but that's not what the Bible is primarily talking about when it talks about the demonic. There's a demonic kingdom, and there's another kingdom under the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus mentioned both of these kingdoms in one passage in Matthew 12 when he had cast the blind and mute spirit out of the man, and the blind saw and the mute spoke.

Some of his critics there said he's casting these demons out by the prince of the demons, Beelzebub, and Jesus said, well, if Satan casts out Satan, then his kingdom cannot stand. So he said Satan has a kingdom which is currently standing, but will not stand if he casts himself out. Notice also the usage of the term.

They said it's Beelzebub casting out demons. Jesus paraphrased it. That's Satan casting out Satan then, right? Beelzebub is not Satan himself probably, but he's part of Satan's organization.

The demons are not Satan himself, but they're part of his organization, so Jesus spoke of Beelzebub and the demons as Satan if Satan casts out Satan, just like anything that's accomplished by the U.S. military could be attributed to the president, who's the commander-in-chief. So also the demon activity can be attributed to Satan. They're the extension of his work.

I'm not saying they're everywhere, but they're around. There's lots of them, the Bible indicates, and certainly every continent and every country that missionaries have gone to, they have found demon-possessed people to deliver, and that's exactly what missionaries usually do. They deliver them.

You see, the demons cannot successfully resist the power in the name of Jesus if other conditions are present. I mentioned, it is my conviction from reading Scripture, that you cannot cast demons even in the name of Jesus. I don't think you can cast demons out of someone who wants them in them.

If they invite them in, even God does not violate that free will, I believe. Jesus never did go, look up the demon-possessed people so you can cast the demons out of them. Only the ones who came to him, God helped.

Even the man of the tombs who had a legion of demons in him, thousands of demons in him, when he saw Jesus in the distance, he ran to Jesus and worshipped him. It's clear that the man wanted freedom. The demons in him didn't.

They screamed out and said, what have we to do with you, Jesus? Have you come to torment us before the time? That's actually always encouraging when the demons talk that way. They're afraid of Jesus, and he's with us. We're with him.

The demons are afraid of him. But notice the man who was demon-possessed, though he was probably as much under the control of demons as any man in Scripture ever described to be, having a legion, he was still able, if he wished, to run to Jesus and worship and seek help from Jesus, and Jesus helped him. The only other case we know of is when parents would bring their children who were demon-possessed, and Jesus would deliver them too, but the parents are the spiritual covering of their child, I believe, and I think that the parents wanting it was good enough.

If the person who's a victim wants to be helped, they can be helped, they can be delivered, and the name of Jesus is more powerful than anything the demons have to resist. But Jesus said there in Matthew 12, if Satan casts out Satan, his kingdom cannot stand. But then he said a couple of verses later in verse 28, he said, but if I'm casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has overtaken you.

Now Jesus said there's two kingdoms here. There's the kingdom of Satan, and there's the kingdom of God which has overtaken you. The kingdom of God arrived with Jesus.

Jesus said his first message, recorded in Mark 1 15, is the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Later he said to the Jews who said, when's the kingdom of God coming? He said the kingdom of God doesn't come with observation. You're not going to be able to say, lo here, lo there, but the kingdom of God is in your midst already.

And now in Matthew 12, he says the kingdom of God has overtaken you, and it's visible by the fact that I'm casting out demons. What's he saying? This demon conflict with humanity is not a conflict just between you and the demon. We're so individualistic, it's all about us.

It's about a global conflict that has been going on since the Garden of Eden and intensified 2,000 years ago when Jesus landed with his troops. Because the kingdom of Satan had controlled the world without any serious challenge for 4,000 years at that time. Jesus landed, and he planted his kingdom.

And his kingdom was like a mustard seed. It started out really small, but it spreads through the preaching of the gospel. It spreads to be a great tree.

It's like a little stone, it says in Daniel chapter 2. This little stone, but it grows to a great mountain to fill the whole earth. That's the kingdom for the past 2,000 years. Through the preaching of the gospel, Christ's kingdom has expanded and supplanted the kingdom of darkness.

Wherever the kingdom of God advances, the kingdom of darkness loses something. You were once part of the kingdom of darkness. Now you're part of the kingdom of God.

Satan loses one, and God gains one. Every time someone comes to Christ, it's at the devil's expense. And the kingdom of God expands while the kingdom of Satan is driven back.

Now you might say, well, as I look at the news, it doesn't seem like the kingdom of Satan is being driven back very bad. Well, maybe you're just looking at the American news and the Middle Eastern news. Check out Africa and China and South America, where people are being converted at rates that exceed the birth rate of those nations.

The kingdom of God continues to expand. It's just that in some places it recedes because Christians become lukewarm and have to wake up and say, Oops, I think I'm supposed to get serious about God again, because the devil has taken over this ground that God used to control. The warfare is dynamic.

It's not static. It's not just about accept Jesus so you can go to heaven. It's about accept Christ as your Lord so you can be recruited into the warfare that's been going on for thousands of years and is going to end up, as it says in Revelation 11, 15, where there's proclamation, The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever.

Christ's kingdom is going to spread. I sometimes liken it to the movie I saw when I was a kid that terrified me. It was called The Blob.

The movie was scary. This blob came down from space, and it moved about as fast as a snail, but it caught up with everyone it was after and ate them. As an adult, when I came to understand the kingdom of God, I thought, I wonder if that movie was meant to be a parable, because this meteorite falls from heaven in a farmer's field.

How many of you have seen the movie? They made a remake of it. I haven't seen that. I saw the original.

This meteorite, maybe the size of a soccer ball, fell in the field. The farmer comes out with his stick, and he sees it there. Smoke is coming up from it because it just fell through space.

He hits it with his stick, and it cracks open like an egg. There's this jelly-like stuff inside it. He sticks the stick in there and picks up that jelly stuff.

He picks up the stick, and this thing rolls down the stick onto his arm. He can't get it off his arm. He goes to the doctor.

By the time he's at the doctor, it's eaten his whole body up. Then it gets to the doctor and the nurse, too, although, like I said, it moves at the speed of a snail. They just stand there and scream as it's coming.

Every time it eats somebody, it gets bigger because they become part of it. Before the movie is over, it's big enough to eat a whole diner. In fact, the good guys, the heroes, are in the basement of the diner, and the whole diner is being covered with the blob.

It's eaten that many people. If nothing stops it, it can eat the whole world. That's a scary thing for a five-year-old.

When I got older, I thought, that's kind of the way the Bible describes the kingdom of God. It's like a little stone. It grows into a great mountain to fill the whole earth.



How? By consuming it. It says in Daniel 2, it consumes all these kingdoms, and it itself becomes a great kingdom. This is how it is.

As Christ was here, it was just him and his disciples, a little mustard seed-sized thing. But, you know, the day of Pentecost, it got a lot bigger, 3,000 in there, and then eventually there's gazillions. Right now, one out of four people on the planet call themselves Christians, though they're probably not.

But the point is, it has spread like the blob. When it eats them, they become part of it, and it gets bigger. Now, this is a good blob, but the demons are terrified of it, like I was of the blob when I was five years old.

The demons are like me. They have bad dreams about this kingdom of God growing and spreading, and they're in danger. They screamed when they saw Jesus.

If you know Christ, you don't have to be afraid of demons. But if you know Christ, you'd be crazy not to pay any attention to them, because they know you, and they will, the devil has devices, and we're not supposed to be ignorant of them. Let me just say, there are many psychiatrists that do believe in demon possession.

This comes from John White. He's associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Manitoba. He wrote this, quote, As a psychiatrist, I'm as much a scientist as an artist.

I'm trained skeptically to examine hypotheses and to subject them to experiment. But the scientific method, limited enough in dealing even with material realities, collapses altogether in the face of the non-material. To deal with demons, I must know that they exist, and I must also know that they are a factor in Joe Smith's distress, unquote.

And as a Christian, he's not a materialist, so he can actually let the evidence point where it really points to, and he doesn't have to be restricted by the reductionistic materialist worldview. Basil Jackson is chairman of the Department of Psychiatry, Lutheran Hospital in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He wrote, quote, Demonic states, whatever they may prove to be, are presumably to be recognized in their phenomenology by symptoms and signs, which, together with the course of the condition, make up the clinical picture as a disease or demonic entity, unquote.

By the way, we're going to talk about the symptoms here, because, of course, you want to know, how do you recognize it? This is a dean of psychiatry at a Lutheran college, and he basically is saying, there are times we have to know what the syndrome is that reveals that it's a demonic problem instead of something else. Not everything is, but some things are, and the psychiatrist who doesn't know anything about the supernatural is not going to recognize them when they exist. Dr. R. Kendall McCall, consultant psychiatrist in Hampshire, England, was previously a missionary surgeon in China.

He wrote this, quote, There is no doubt that the need to recognize cases of what he calls

demonosis and deal with them in the appropriate manner is greatly on the increase throughout the modern world. The examples I shall give, he says, come from over 150 documented cases in which exorcism has been used. In the 1930s, when I was a missionary surgeon in the interior of China, devil possession was not uncommon.

Though the diagnosis could sometimes have been in question, the only treatment offered to those possessed was death by stoning. Unless the case occurred within the reach of a Christian community, in which case the villagers would send for the highly trained and extraordinarily fearless Bible women who would lay hands on the victim, pray, and release him. The effect was always immediate, unquote.

A lot of missionaries to China have had experience encountering the demon possessed. There's a man named John Nevius, a Presbyterian British medical doctor who became a missionary to China in the 1800s, about 1850 or so, went to China. His training in England had led him to believe there is no such thing as demon possession in the modern world, but he encountered such unusual cases in his medical practice as a missionary in China that he began to suspect that they were exactly the kinds of things that the Bible described as demon possession.

He was slow to accept the conclusion, but he sent out questionnaires to all the missionaries he knew in all of Asia and any other part of the world where he had friends. Questionnaires about have you met anyone who did these kinds of things and what was your experience and what did you find out? He collated all the information and put out a book in the 1800s called Demon Possession, still in print, John Nevius. It's one of the really great books on the subject because it's written by a medical doctor, a Christian, but one who did not really easily come to believe in demon possession, but he did correlate a lot of valuable data for those who are interested in a very objective study of that subject.

He described some of the things that the questionnaires that came back said helped him identify actual demon possession. He said, number one, the chief differentiating mark of so-called demon possession is the automatic presentation and the persistent and consistent acting out of a new personality. A, the new personality says he's a demon.

B, he or she uses personal pronouns, first person for the demon, third person for the possessed person. C, the demon uses titles or names, as they usually actually have names. He says the demon has sentiments, facial expressions, and physical manifestations that harmonize with the above.

These, of course, are manifested through the face and the mannerisms of the possessed person. He said another differentiating mark of demon possession is the evidence it gives of knowledge and intellectual power not possessed by the subject, like speaking in languages they hadn't learned. Another differentiating mark of demonomania, immediately connected with the assumption of new personality, is that with the change

of personality, there's a complete change of moral character, aversion and hatred to God and especially to Christ.

Just one other quote here. This is from Dr. Gary Collins, professor and chairman, Division of Pastoral Psychology and Counseling at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. He said, quote, A perusal of the literature in this area would suggest, for example, that demons might produce trances, visual or auditory hallucinations, obsessive thoughts, bad language, extreme discomfort in the presence of discussions about Christ, an inability to say the name of Jesus, special powers of telepathy or clairvoyance, instant lying and mocking at the mention of Christ, and all can be evidence of demonic involvement, unquote.

Now, these are all statements from medical doctors, psychiatrists, and psychologists who happened to be, in those cases, Christians. There's another author who's written quite a bit on this, named Kurt Koch. He's written quite a few books on the demonic, and I was looking at his books recently, and he said there are nine evidences that a problem that a person has is demon possession as opposed to some physiological or mental problem.

He took all nine of these from the case of the demoniac in the tombs. But you can actually, I've done this myself, I've gone through all the cases in the Bible of demon possession and kind of cataloged all the different things that are described as behaviors or whatever that indicated the person had a demon. So I've got a complete list.

This is a good summary just from this one case. He said, number one, the demons actually reside in the person concerned. They have unusual strength exhibited as the man of the tombs could break chains.

So many people who've dealt with demon possess have found to their chagrin that it takes a great number of full-grown men to hold down a demon-possessed person while they're being exorcised. Even if it's a child or a woman or a slight person who's not real strong, sometimes it takes a whole bunch of people to hold them down. Supernatural strength is one of the things.

Fits of rage is another one. Splitting of personality, the person is visibly in conflict. That is, the person himself is not the same person as the demon.

You can tell them being split. There's the personality of the host, we could say, and the personality of the demon that manifests separately, and they're not friendly with each other generally. Resistance to the things of God.

Clairvoyance is another one. That is, knowing something you can't possibly otherwise know. Many of the reports of dealing with demon-possessed people, this is a factor.

The demon-possessed person knows something that happened, maybe even at that same moment in another place, and they later find out that did happen. Sometimes the

demons actually tell the person who's trying to cast demons on what their own secret sins are. That makes it a little scary to get involved in this kind of ministry, by the way.

The demons sometimes know stuff that they'll reveal through the party that is possessed. The ability of the person to speak with voices and languages that are not his own. Sometimes female-possessed people speak with a really deep male voice when the demon is speaking, or several different voices, and frankly, sometimes several voices at the same time, something that cannot physically be done.

Then, of course, the suddenness of deliverance. With real mental illnesses, you don't get delivered instantly. There's no psychologist or psychiatrist that can claim instant cures for people who have neuroses and mental illnesses, but deliverance is immediate.

It may take a while, but when it happens, it's done. It's sudden, and it's complete. It may take a long time to do if there's a lot of battle going on between God's kingdom and the devil's kingdom in that person, but the point is it is sudden and complete when it happens.

Another thing is transference, and that is to say that the problem can be transferred from the victim to another victim, as in the case of the demons cast into the swine. Anyone who wants to say that the story of the man of the tombs is a case of schizophrenia or something like that, which naturalistic people would say, I've got to explain how when he got delivered suddenly, the pigs got possessed. This is one of the stories that Kurt Koch has told, is that he was involved in casting demons out of a farmer on his farm in Germany, and suddenly the neighbor had five pigs.

They all started running around squealing and screeching and so forth, and they didn't stop for five hours. They had to shoot the pigs. They had gone mad at the same moment that the demon went out of this person.

They concluded that the demons went into the pigs, but anyone could be skeptical about that if they wanted to, but demons have shown a liking to going into pigs biblically too. By the way, the Roman Catholic ritual identifies four marks of demon possession, just so we'll have it. They agree with some of these we've mentioned.

One is knowledge of a language previously unknown. Secondly, knowledge of hidden or secret things. That's clairvoyance.

Third, demonstration of superhuman strength, and four, aversion to God. Those four are also on Kurt Koch's list. These four are in the Catholic ritual of exorcism.

Now, I've had a number of experiences. I don't want to talk about those all the time because, frankly, mine are not as dynamic as some others. The last case of a dramatic deliverance of demon possession I have ever had personal contact with was right here in Santa Cruz back in 2010 around March, so just about five years ago right now.

This happened in a Christian family. I won't identify them, so some of you may know them. This family I had known for some time, a very godly family.

All the children were well-behaved. They're homeschooled kids. The family is well-known in the community as a Christian family and certainly never had any weird behavior from any of their kids.

Some of their adult children were still at home, and one time they were at a church service, a large church service in this town in March of 2010. I was in Hawaii teaching for YWAM at the time, and I got a text from the mother of the girl that this happened to, and she said, please pray. She gave the girl's name.

She said she's demon possessed. I thought, no way. I know this girl.

There's no way she's demon possessed. This is like the most Christian family you'd ever meet, and this girl had a wonderful testimony as a mature Christian girl. I got this text from her mother saying, please pray.

So-and-so is demon possessed. When I came back, I got this story. They had been at this church service, Sunday morning church service.

Missionaries had been reporting, and they were telling about Christians who met in caves to avoid, I guess, detection, to avoid persecution. Apparently, from what I heard, they began talking about the bats in these caves and that the Christians had to worship God standing in bat guano. The mention of the bats caused this girl who was there at the church with her family, who'd never done anything abnormal at all, her arms began to conform to the shape of a bat's wings, and she started making a strange guttural sound, which people thought sounded a little like an imitation of a bat.

And this was in the middle of the service. It interrupted the whole service, and she was really freaking out and shaking, and they actually had to carry her out, and they laid her on the floor outside, and I think they called an ambulance, and they took her off to a hospital. The hospital wanted to give her drugs, but the parents were convinced that this was a demonic manifestation, though it shocked them, and they wouldn't give her drugs.

So they took her home, and a series of Christians visited her on a regular basis, some of them who did so are here in this room, including myself, and spent some time trying to cast demons out of her. There was one night I spent there with her dad, and her manifestations got worse. She could lift her father up with her hands.

She was a small girl, and she could actually lift her father off the ground. She had to be watched all the time because she tried to jump out the second-story window and stuff. They had to guard the windows, and the parents had to sleep in the same room with her and guard the door and things like that.

It was really strange. This went on for four months. This was not a quick deliverance.

It was very bizarre. But I was one of the many people who came over to pray and so forth. I remember one night her dad and I were dealing with her.

She was in a sleeping bag on her parents' bedroom floor, and he and I were in there, and she'd just be laying there shaking, and then something would begin to happen. Her arm would curl up, and it sounded like a guttural kind of man's voice would start saying, I'm going to kill her or something like that. I'd say, No, you're not.

Come out in the name of Jesus. I began to address it, and he'd say, No, no, no. Eventually, this thing would come to a peak, and then it would release, and it seemed like it went out.

She was relaxed. I thought, Oh, wow. Maybe we got something done here.

Then a few seconds later, it would start up again, the same thing. This voice would be speaking out of her, and I'd be saying, No, you have to come out in the name of Jesus. We weren't getting all excited.

We were just calmly commanding in the name of Jesus to come out. He'd say, No, no, no. I'm not going to come out of her.

Then it did, and then she was relaxed again. This thing repeated several times. By the end of the evening, I'm thinking five or six times this cycle.

I felt like I think we got five or six demons out of her. I hope that's all. She slept well that night, but the next morning she was still weird.

I guess that wasn't all of them. Other people, too, were ministering to her. Eventually, she was delivered.

I was not present at the time, so I can't describe the phenomenon. She's still in this town. She's a godly Christian girl still serving the Lord.

It was just a bizarre nightmare that her family went through for especially four months. It was a wake-up call to her family, for one thing. Their family didn't think that their kids could be possessed.

The world's full of surprises. One of the things that was surprising is it took so long to deliver her. One thing that was not surprising is she ultimately was delivered.

You've just got to wonder why it takes so long sometimes. One of the most famous cases of demon possession I know of happened in Germany in 1843. Pastor Johann Christoph Blumhardt, a long German name, a Lutheran pastor in a small German village near the Black Forest called Mötlingen.

He came to this pastorate. He was a young man in his 30s. Shortly after he'd come, someone told him that there was a lady in his church, a young lady, I think she was 25 or 26, and that she was seeing apparitions in her house.

She was an orphan living with her other orphan siblings. They were poor. They were living in one floor of a two-story house.

Wherever she went, there was this banging on the walls really loud that could be heard many doors away, sometimes across town, and house shaking and stuff like that. The pastor at first didn't know what to think about it. Eventually, he did pay a visit.

This woman was seeing apparitions, ghosts or whatever, and she would go into trances and things very much like in the Exorcist movie. I don't want to go into them in detail. I could.

They stick in my mind because I've read the actual account from Pastor Blumhardt himself who wrote to the leaders of his denomination to explain. It was like a journal of what he did. It took two years to get thousands of demons out of this girl.

Her name was Gottlieben Dittas was her name. There were physical phenomena. I mean just one of them that's not as gross as some of them.

The whole village was at the house looking through the windows watching. She was sitting in her living room, and blood was pouring out of her ears, her eyes, her nose, and her mouth. Her whole body was saturated with blood.

Pastor Blumhardt said, The amount of blood on the floor seemed like more than a body could hold. You know, the human body has what, eight pints or something like that? He said there's more blood than that on the floor. It's supernatural obviously.

Now, Pastor Blumhardt never went to see her alone. He always took the mayor and a medical doctor with him. And so he had plenty of witnesses as well as the whole village sometimes seeing the things that happened.

Many supernatural things happened, but the main thing that's exciting about this story, there's some very gross things that happened over the course of two years because he kept being called and every time it's something weirder. But demons would speak out of her and they'd speak many languages and things like that too. But eventually, the last demon came out, very resistant, and it screamed out as it left, Jesus is victor.

And some of the demons before they came out told Pastor Blumhardt, Most people wouldn't have been able to defeat us, but you just kept praying and fasting and we just couldn't resist you and they had to leave. But the last one was very stubborn. It came out two years after the first one, around Christmas time, 1843 it happened.

And the demons screamed out, Jesus is victor. And that was the final victory. That girl became a totally normal girl.

She had had physical problems before. She had one leg shorter than the other and some spinal problems and some other sicknesses that plagued her. She was perfectly healthy for many years after that.

She actually became the pastor and his wife's nanny for their children. And he wrote a post script six years later and said she's been perfectly normal. No one I know is better with children.

You know, she's been completely healthy. And this guy was not a Pentecostal. He wasn't a television evangelist.

He wasn't anyone who was making money off this. He was a very unassuming man who just wanted to run a little country church. He didn't expect these things.

It's horrible to think that a combat with a demon possessed person, the demons may be thousands strong and may take two years to come out. The case here in Santa Cruz is only four months. That was a quick one, I guess.

Fortunately, I've seen much quicker. If they're all that long, we'd all get worn out, I'm sure. But this case with Pastor Blumhart, the wonderful thing about it is that the demon had to confess, Jesus is victor, as it left.

In other words, it couldn't resist Jesus any longer. Why it could resist so long is a mystery. We don't know everything we'd like to know about this subject of demon possession, but we know this.

If you resist the devil, he will flee from you. I've heard people misquote that. Some people say, rebuke the devil and he'll flee from you.

Oh, I wish it was that easy. The Bible nowhere says to rebuke the devil. There's nowhere in the Bible that says to rebuke the devil.

Although Jesus rebuked demons sometimes. Jesus seemed to have a better success rate than many times we do. And that could easily be not just because he was the son of God, we have his authority too, but he walked in faith and authority more than we usually do.

When a man brought his son to Jesus, when Jesus and three disciples had spent the night up on the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus came down and found that the other nine disciples were trying to cast the demon out of a boy whose father had brought him to him. The boy was having fits and so forth, writhing on the ground, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus cast the demon out.



And the disciples who had been unable to do so said, Lord, why were we not able to do that? Why couldn't we cast it out? And his first answer was, because of your unbelief. And then he said, depending on which manuscripts of the New Testament you trust, but some manuscripts have him saying, how be it this kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting. Now Jesus could cast it out instantly, but I don't think he ever had a problem with unbelief.

The disciples, who often did cast out demons easily, didn't cast it out easily this time. When he said, why, Lord? He said, because of your unbelief. It's not that we don't have the authority of Christ, but I think sometimes our faith is very weak.

We're intimidated. That, I think, is the devil's main ploy. It's so, when you encounter someone who's manifesting weird symptoms of demon possession, it's so uncanny, so surreal, so unnerving that it might shake you up and say, I don't know if I can handle this.

But it's our unbelief alone, and very possibly sometimes compromises in our lives, frankly. Unfortunately, I wish I didn't have to say this, but Christians sometimes compromise in their lives in certain ways. Jesus never did that.

The apostles, as far as you know, didn't do that much. So what really happens, Jesus and the apostles had tremendous success, instantaneous success, really, with demons, and sometimes we do, too. If we don't, it could be our unbelief, or it could be something else.

Maybe we're just not walking in the authority that we're supposed to be walking in because we've compromised or something. I don't know. But that would not be a reason to withdraw from the fight.

That would be a reason to remain pure and to strengthen your faith. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Like what I said when I was 19, I was afraid that a demon would appear.

It was the Word of God that took that away. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. Behold, I give you authority over serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Resist the devil and he'll flee from you. Resist is a warfare. How long you'll have to resist, you don't know.

But you know this, if you keep resisting, he will flee. You won't. You see, what happens sometimes, we might try to confront a demon-possessed person, and we don't get immediate results, so we just give up and go the other way.

And he doesn't go, because we didn't resist until he fled. You have to resist until the enemy is no longer besieging the gates. You resist as long as you need to.

It's kind of nice, though, because in natural wars, you may resist to your last man, and your last man dies, and you lose anyway. But the promise of Scripture is, if you resist, you will win. The devil may put it off as long as he can.

He may try to make your faith weak. He may do what he can to try to prevent the kingdom of God from pushing the kingdom of darkness back like that. But he cannot ultimately do it if you have faith, if you actually move forward in faith.

I came prepared to bring a lot of different examples of demon possession, but obviously I'm too verbose and can't get to all those. Like I said, I'm somewhat over-prepared. I have way too much material.

But I do want to cover a couple of questions that we usually have about this. We've talked about the symptoms of demon possession, how clairvoyance, fits of anger, supernatural strength, things like that we've talked about. But how does someone get demon-possessed anyway? It's clear not everyone is.

Not even every non-Christian is demon-possessed, as far as we know. Now there are some deliverance ministers who come to town and they try to make everyone need deliverance. I remember I was working with a minister here in town back in the early 70s, and he told me of a deliverance minister.

He'd been in another town before I knew him, and a deliverance minister came to town and stayed in his home. And while they were sitting in the living room, my friend was cracking his knuckles. And the minister said, how long have you been doing that? You know, I think you might have a knuckle-cracking demon.

I had a friend earlier than that, like in 1971. He was a long-haired hippie guy like me, but he was a Christian. And he heard about a Bible school down in Texas they wanted to go to, some Pentecostal thing.

He hitchhiked down there. By the time he got down to Texas, he was all sweaty and stinky and long-haired and greasy. And when he got there, they said he had a long-haired demon and a body odor demon.

And he didn't stay for the classes. But there are people like that that talk as if you turn on the faucet, you're in danger of letting a demon into your house. They come from everywhere.

That is not what the Bible teaches. I mean, there are some people who say every Christian needs to have deliverance. Well, why? In Jesus' day, not even all the non-Christians needed deliverance.

Some people have demons and some don't. But why do some have them and some don't, especially among non-Christians? What prevents the devil from taking possession

of any non-Christian? Some of these questions are not answered directly, but there are some hints in Scripture. There are indications in the Bible that people who are demon-possessed often are involved in the occult.

Now, it's not clear what comes first, the chicken or the egg. Did they get demon-possessed by being involved in the occult? Or did they get demon-possessed and then they became involved in the occult? Sometimes we're not really—that's not made clear. But in missionary experience, it is often brought out that it's involvement in the occult that seems to bring on the demon-possession.

I mentioned Douglas Dean, who is the young boy about whom the Exorcist movie was made. He was involved with tarot cards and Ouija boards and so forth before he got possessed, just before. And I've known many cases like this of people who get fascinated.

This Kurt Koch I mentioned, he says he's dealt with over 4,000 demon-possessed people he's ministered to. But I know that he has said lots of case studies he gives are of people who get involved in mediumship. They go to a seance or something like that and they get possessed.

That's biblical. In the Old Testament, you don't find the word demon, but you do find the word familiar spirit. And it was always the mediums, the witches, that had a familiar spirit.

That meant they were possessed by a spirit that allowed them to do these summoning the dead and things they did. They were demonized people. And they were apparently, the spirit that was in them was allowing them to have these occult powers.

In Acts chapter 16, Paul was in Philippi and there was a demon-possessed girl who was a fortune teller following him around for three days. After three days, he realized she was demon-possessed. He commanded the demon to go out.

The demon left and she couldn't tell fortunes anymore. Her demon allowed her to tell fortunes. Losing the demon lost that ability.

Which explains why some people might not want to get rid of their demon. That explains why some people may not really want you to cast their demon out of them. And you might not be able to.

They might like something the demon is giving them. Some power, some attention. Hard to say.

But the occult and the demonic are mixed in such an inextricable way that it's a fair assumption that many people who become demon-possessed have done so. Because they got involved, even fairly innocently, in the occult. In the case that we were talking

about here in Santa Cruz five years ago, no one can say for sure how that young girl got possessed.

But it's interesting that shortly before this happened, she had a condition that doctors couldn't help her with. And she heard on the internet about a particular kind of practitioner, I think it was over in Aptos, who had this procedure. Supposed to help people with unusual conditions.

Well, she went to that person, turned out it was some occultic thing. She didn't know that when she went over there, but it was. And this woman was touching her, and who knows what she was doing.

Possibly transferring demons? I don't know. But it's interesting that this young girl, and everyone in her family had probably never come near the occult ever before that. And lo and behold, she goes to this practitioner, this occult healing therapy, and within, I think it's within weeks, this manifestation happened and she was in trouble.

And so I believe any dabbling in the occult at all is dangerous, and may lead to possession. Now, you might say, but I, when I was a teenager, I used a Ouija board, or I used tarot cards, and I didn't get demon-possessed. Fair enough.

I'm not predicting that everyone who is involved in the occult is going to be demon-possessed. I'm saying that that is a portal that has apparently been the way that some people have become demon-possessed. Why some and not others? I do not know.

I will say this, though. I have a theory about that, that my own experience with demon-possessed people somewhat confirms, but I can't say it's 100% sure. But we do know there's different kinds of personalities, including some that are very suggestible personalities.

Some are very compliant personalities. They're easily controlled by people, by anyone. And these may be the kinds of personalities that also are easily controlled by demons.

The demons are a personality that seeks to impose their will on a person, and somebody who's a little more strong-willed, somebody who's a little less compliant, it may not be so easy for the demons just to take them over. I'm not sure. But I think that just as some people are more suggestible, more subject to hypnotism, more subject to, you know, influence by personalities that are human, they may also be the ones who are the more influenced by unhuman personalities.

It's very possible. I'm thinking that some of the cases I know fit that stereotype. But I can't say that the Bible says that, because it doesn't.

It doesn't tell us why some people would get possessed and not others. But it does seem that the occult is a very common portal for that. Another seems to be unforgiveness.

Now, you might not think of that immediately. You know, there's a story in the Old Testament how David killed Goliath, and then the people began to say, Saul has killed his thousands, but David has killed his tens of thousands. And Saul was very upset.

He was very jealous. They're ascribing to David tens of thousands and to me only thousands. What can he have next but the kingdom itself? And the Bible says he looked on David with suspicion from that day forward, and the next morning an evil spirit came to Saul.

And he was bugged by that evil spirit until the day he died. David's music at a later time sometimes gave him temporary relief, but it was not permanent. The man became demonized, and the only thing we read of is that he began to view David with suspicion from that day forward, and then an evil spirit came on him.

There are cases in the Bible, I believe, that can be said to show that demons can gain an advantage over people who are unforgiving. In fact, Paul said in Ephesians 4, Be angry, but do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath, neither give place to the devil.

Don't let the sun go down on your wrath, neither give place to the devil. If you let the sun go down on your wrath, Saul did. He began to eye David with suspicion, and the next day an evil spirit came upon him.

He let the sun go down on his wrath. Jesus told a parable that's very interesting and suggestive in Matthew 18. It's when Peter said, Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother? Seven times.

Jesus said, no, 70 times seven. There's this king or this man who owed his king a great deal of money, billions of dollars. He couldn't pay it, so he begged forgiveness, and his king forgave him.

And that servant who was forgiven went out and found a fellow servant who owed him a little bit of money, and the man begged him to give him time, and he would not. He was unmerciful, and he dragged that servant to debtor's prison, his fellow servant. This servant who had been forgiven a great debt would not forgive his fellow servant a small debt.

And Jesus said, when the king heard about that, he was very angry, and he took that servant, the one that he had forgiven before, he says he delivered him over to the tormentors until he should pay all that he owed. Then the last verse in that chapter says this, So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you do not each of you forgive from the heart. Interesting.

He tells a long story about someone who got forgiven by the king, obviously a Christian forgiven by God. The man does not forgive a fellow servant, obviously a Christian who won't forgive another person. The king, God is angry, delivers the guy to tormentors until

he repents.

And Jesus says, and that's what my Father will do to you. Who's Jesus talking to? Peter. Peter's the one who asked the question.

Jesus was alone with his disciples, and Peter said, how many times should I forgive? Jesus said, let me tell you a story, blah, blah, blah, blah. And so shall my Father do to you if you don't forgive. Is it possible that God could turn Christians over to tormentors until they repent? What are these tormentors? Well, one thing that's rather interesting and something we'd rather not face sometimes is whenever we read of demons in the Old Testament coming against somebody, it says it like this, an evil spirit from the Lord came to Saul.

Or in 1 Kings 22, the prophet Micaiah told Ahab, a lying spirit from the Lord has been put into your false prophets. Lying spirits, evil spirits from the Lord. The Bible actually in the Old Testament always speaks of it as an evil spirit comes from God.

It's like being possessed in the Old Testament is like a judgment from God. Now, Jesus says, if you, Peter, do not forgive your brother, my Father will deliver you to tormentors until you will. Until you get it right.

Now, I don't like that. I'd be glad if that scripture wasn't in the Bible. Especially if the reality it's telling wasn't also true.

I just assume that wasn't true. Now, I will welcome anybody to disagree with any interpretation of the Bible I have, as long as you have a good reason. And even if you don't, I won't try to interfere with you.

All I can say is, if that isn't talking about this, what is it talking about? Catholics think it's talking about purgatory, actually. My Catholic friends quote that verse, my Father will do this to you. He'll deliver you to tormentors until you pay what's owed.

They say that's purgatory. But there's nothing in Jesus' statement that necessarily says this happens after death. This could be God's discipline.

Remember, there's a man in the Church of Corinth, in 1 Corinthians 5, who is sinning. And Paul said, deliver that man over to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit will be saved later. You know, he'll come to repentance.

It's Church discipline. Deliver him to Satan. And Paul said the same thing at the end of 1 Timothy 1. He says, Hymenaeus and Alexander, they're false teachers.

I've delivered them over to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme. Wow. A person in the Church can be delivered over to Satan? All I can say is that it may not always be the explanation, but it apparently is sometimes the explanation.

That an evil spirit from the Lord, as a discipline, as a judgment, is sent against some. Maybe as a total judgment against wicked people like Adolf Hitler, or other demon-possessed people in history. And maybe as a discipline against Christians.

I don't know. The man in the parable was forgiven by his king before he was unforgiving, and then his king kind of reversed the sentence. You know, I didn't write it.

You make sense of it. If you don't like the implication of what I'm suggesting, you're free to responsibly interpret that any other way that works for you. I can't think of another, but maybe you can.

But the point here is, unforgiveness appears to be one of the things. Now, I do know people who've had more experience than I have in the area of casting out demons, and they have often said that they have to, in many cases, the victim has to forgive people before the demons can be made to come out. That unforgiveness, ungraciousness, unmercifulness toward other people is a sin that is a great sin in the eyes of God.

And when a person is harboring that sin, it would appear that God's not really interested in doing them special miraculous favors like getting the demon out of them. The demon might have come in because they were unforgiving. At least there's Bible verses that seem to connect those two.

I'm not saying the Bible gives us a clear teaching about how people get possessed, but it does hint. The occult and unforgiveness seem to be common factors in a number of passages. Another thing might just well be rebellion against God.

Why? It says in 1 Samuel 15, 22, and 23, when Samuel is rebuking Saul, he said, rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft. If in God's mind, rebellion against God is in the same category as witchcraft, then it might have the same consequences as practicing witchcraft. There's an interesting proverb.

It's Proverbs 17, 11. It says, a wicked man seeks only rebellion. Therefore, a cruel angel will be sent against him.

In our translation, it probably says a messenger, but it's the same Hebrew word as angel in other passages. Angel means messenger. It actually says, a wicked man seeks only rebellion, and because he seeks only rebellion, it says a cruel angel will be sent against him.

Well, maybe rebellion against God is something that results in being possessed by the ultimate rebel against God. You take on the same spirit as the devil himself. I wouldn't experiment with that, with rebellion against God.

I think it's dangerous. There's one other thing that I might say about how people come to be demon possessed, and much of this is speculative, but there are many studies,

experiences that people had that suggest that maybe people sometimes can be born with demons. Now, let me just say experience.

The pastor I first studied under in the charismatic movement back in the 70s, he did not believe that Christians could have demons, and that's okay. I wouldn't argue necessarily about that, but there are lots of experiences that missionaries have where people who seem to be Christians seem to have demons, and my pastor was aware of that, and he used to say, we don't get our theology from experience. We get our theology from the word of God, and as far as he was concerned, the word of God said Christians can't have demons, and therefore, any number of experiences people had where it seemed like Christians did have demons, he said that doesn't count for anything.

We don't get our theology from experience but from the word of God. Amen to that. I agree to that.

But what about experiences that don't contradict the word of God but from which we can learn things that aren't said in the word of God? Think of medical conditions. Take epilepsy, which I mentioned earlier. Apparently, there's a genuine physiological medical condition, epilepsy.

It is mentioned in Scripture. It's mentioned that Jesus healed epileptics. Unrelated to demon possession, it's just strictly a medical condition.

He healed epileptics. But the Bible does not anywhere tell us very much about epilepsy, but we can learn about it from experience. Haven't medical scientists studied epilepsy? Don't doctors know a great deal more about epilepsy than the Bible tells us? What they know doesn't contradict what the Bible says.

The Bible just doesn't say much about it. Likewise, a condition like demon possession, the Bible doesn't say that much about it. It says some things but not as much as we'd like to know.

Experience, if it doesn't contradict the word of God, may very well be a reasonably good source of information about such things. And many missionaries have encountered people who seemed to be born demonized. Now, we react against this immediately.

That's unfair. How could a little child be born demon possessed? That's not fair. Well, actually, the Bible doesn't say anywhere that the devil is fair or that he plays fair.

We know children can be born afflicted in other ways. They can be born with missing limbs. They can be born mentally defective.

They can be born in horrendous misshapen shapes. That's not fair either. There's a lot of unfairness in this fallen world, and the devil is the least fair of all the players.



And the question is not, is it fair to believe that children can be born demon possessed? The question is, is it true? I can't say for sure, but we do know one interesting case in the Bible, the man who brought his son to Jesus. We don't know how old the son was, but Jesus asked the man, how long has he been in this condition? And the man said, since childhood. Now, he didn't say since infancy, but it might have been since infancy, but it was from childhood.

Well, it's no more fair that a child should be demon possessed than an infant should. That's unfair too. It may be he's simply saying, we don't remember any time he wasn't like this, just from his childhood.

He may have always been that way, we don't know. But in many missionary accounts, there have been cases where it would appear that small children are already manifesting demon possession. I was an elder at New Life Center back in the 70s over on the west side here, and they had all kinds of, you know, they're a rehab for alcohol and drug addicts and things like that.

I wasn't one of those. I was in the ministry there, but there was a man who was one of the elders there and his wife who lived there. And her story, she was the child of Satanists.

Her mother and father were Satanists. I mean, it's weird. She grew up around weird stuff.

Like at one point, her uncle turned to his brother, sitting on this couch and blew his brains out with a gun. And she was born, she said, demon possessed. When she became a Christian, she was delivered.

But her testimony was that she was possessed from birth. You can't base much doctrine on what somebody claims about themselves. But, you know, I mean, this, her testimony actually agreed with other testimonies from all over the world.

And it is possible that as a person can be born a drug addict because their parents were drug addicts, that in some cases a person can be born demonized because their parents were demonized. I don't know. But I don't know that it isn't so.

The Bible does not deny it. And much experience seems to possibly confirm it. You may actually run into people who've never been anything other than demon possessed as long as they've lived.

But in other cases, it may be something they have done. Usually if someone's done something that invited the demon in, they're probably not going to get the demon out unless they renounce that thing. Because the devil has gotten a foothold through what they've done.

Remember, Paul said, do not give place to the devil. Don't let the sun go down on your

wrath, neither give place to the devil. If I give place in my life to the devil, well, I'm the one who gave him the place.

Why should God remove him? I've got free will. I not only can give place to the devil, I can go to hell if I want to. God will give me free will to do that.

If I invite demons in my life by certain activities and I don't want them to go, I don't think even God himself will interfere with that. I think he'll wait until you're ready. You want to get saved? You want to get delivered? You're going to have to renounce those things that invited the demons in.

And although we don't really find specific cases in the Bible of that procedure, and therefore it may not be necessary, I may be wrong in thinking that it is, it has been the experience of many who have ministries in this area that they have felt they got much quicker results once the person renounced the occult things they had been involved in, or once the person forgave the person they weren't forgiving, or something else that had caused them to be demon-possessed, because once they undid that or renounced it, that made it easier to bring deliverance. Now, can Christians be demon-possessed? I told you that my pastor told me they cannot, and he gave me several scriptures that were supposed to prove that. And then I ran into people who said that they had met Christians who were demon-possessed, and I wasn't sure.

So I spent a couple of years combing through the scriptures to find out the answer to that question. The answer to that question I can announce after those two years, which ended when I was 21 years old, so it's been my conclusion for the past 40 years. The Bible is silent on that question.

Maybe not entirely silent, but it's not explicit. When Jesus said, God will give you over to tormentors, that might not be silence on the subject. That might actually be a statement about if you were forgiven by God and you won't forgive others, the king is angry, he delivers you to tormentors until you get it right, until you come around and say, okay, I forgive.

But that's not explicit, because it doesn't say that the tormentors are demons. I'm kind of interpreting it that way. It may be that he has something else in mind.

So there's not anything explicit that says Christians can have demons, not in so many words. But there's nothing that says they can't. The assumption that Christians cannot have demons is based essentially on a couple of biblical ideas.

One is greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. Well, if Jesus in me is greater than the devil, then of course I can't be demon possessed. Well, Jesus is also greater than disease, but sometimes I can get sick.

You know, the fact is Jesus is greater than my flesh, but my flesh sometimes gets its way

if I let it. The issue here is the resources of Christ in my life are more than adequate to give me victory over demons, over sin, over my flesh, but I don't walk consistently. I'm not a consistent Christian all the time.

And what is true of Jesus is not always true of me. It should be. I should be just like Jesus, but I'm not always just like Jesus.

And if I as a Christian go off into some compromise in my life, that puts me in the devil's backyard. The Bible doesn't say that those compromises are going to be protected from attack. Peter says, be vigilant, be sober, because your adversary, the devil, walks around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Now hold on a minute. Who's he writing to? He's writing to the saints. First Peter's written to the Christians who have been sprinkled with the blood of Christ and have received the Holy Spirit, he says in the opening verses.

In chapter 5, he says, you Christians, be vigilant, keep your eyes open, be sober. Your enemy, the devil, is like a lion. He wants to devour you.

But if he can't, why warn me about it? What do I care what the devil wants to do if I'm immune? Peter doesn't talk like we're automatically immune. Paul said in Ephesians 6, we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, we wrestle against principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this age and spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to still be standing.

Well, what if I'm lazy and I don't want to wrestle? Why don't I just have a policy with the devil, live and let live? You leave me alone, I'll leave you alone. Apparently the devil doesn't make agreements like that. He doesn't make truces.

And if I don't wrestle, what's the cost of not wrestling? Losing. What's that look like? I don't want to find out. All I know is that I am commanded to watch out for the devil who wants to devour me.

I'm told to wrestle against principalities and powers and if I don't do that, it sounds like there's some danger of me losing something to the demons, to Satan. How much can be lost? I don't know. But I'm not going to be presumptuous and think, well, just because I have called myself a Christian, I've been born again, the devil can't do anything to me.

Now again, the idea that the devil, that Christians can be oppressed and not possessed is a very common statement in Evangelical churches. Almost every Evangelical church I've been to says unbelievers can be possessed, Christians can only be oppressed. I'd be very happy if that was true, but the Bible doesn't say anything like that.

The Bible does not distinguish between what can happen to Christians or non-Christians

with reference to demon possession. The term demon oppressed is not in the Bible, so the statement itself is unbiblical. We are warned about the danger of not resisting the devil, not wrestling and so forth.

We're not told exactly how severe those dangers may be, but they may go all the way if our compromises are all the way, if our cluelessness is all the way. We're in a battle. You don't go to war in a real war and ignore the fact that the enemy's there.

You might have a far superior military than the enemy, but if you're asleep, or if you're cavalier, or you're just not paying attention, you're walking through enemy territory, there's no guarantees that just because you've got the better firepower, that they're not going to get you. The Bible assumes that we have got to be aware of the spiritual dimension we're living in sufficiently to know where the danger is and to live in such a way that we don't make ourselves vulnerable to that danger. While I will not say with certainty that Christians can be demon possessed, I know of nothing in the Bible that says they cannot.

Like I said, one of the arguments against Christians being demon possessed was that he that is not so greater than he that is in the world. True. No question about that.

I have rejoiced in that for over 45 years. I've rejoiced in it, especially when I've been in the presence of the demonic. But there's another thing, too.

And that's the Bible says your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. And the argument goes like this. If your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, how is a demon going to live there? Certainly a demon is too contrary to the Holy Spirit.

They could not dwell together in the same body. I'd like to think that was true, but I don't know that that's true. Paul said that there's something in there with the Holy Spirit that's very adverse to the Holy Spirit.

The flesh, he didn't say anything about a demon there, but he said the flesh lusts against the spirit, the spirit against the flesh. These two are contrary to one another. And where are they? They're both inside of me.

They don't like each other. There are conflicting powers that can live side by side inside of me, and I have to make a choice between them. Can a demon live in there with the Holy Spirit? I don't know.

I don't know that a demon has anything more adverse to the Holy Spirit than my flesh has. And, you know, so, is it possible for a pagan god to inhabit the temple in Jerusalem? Well, Antiochus Epiphanes invaded the temple in Jerusalem and sacrificed a pig to Zeus on an altar in the temple. That's not supposed to happen, but it did.

Can the temple be defiled by invasion? Maybe, maybe not. All I know is that by saying

that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, I am not being told anything about the possibility or impossibility of adverse personalities being in there with him. But certainly, if those arguments work for you, I have no objection to you feeling that Christians cannot have demons.

Because even though I have seen what looks like evidence of Christians having demons, I'm willing to say I could be misinterpreting the evidence. After all, not everyone who seems to be a Christian is. It may be the people that I thought were Christians who had demons weren't really Christians.

They just had me fooled. That's possible. It's also possible that the people I thought who were Christians had demons, they didn't really have demons at all.

I was just mistaken, misdiagnosing something. In other words, I can live with the idea that Christians cannot have demons if the Bible teaches it. I just don't find any direct discussion about that question in the Bible.

I do know this, though, that people who seem to be Christians can seem to have demons. If somebody is coming to me for help, and they seem to be demonized, and they say they're a Christian, I can't say, Oh, well, I can't try this, I can't command any demons because they're Christians. And Christians can't have demons.

I can't make any assumptions like that. First of all, I can't assume for sure they're Christians. I also can't assume for sure they're demons, unless the evidence is unmistakable.

And thirdly, I can't assume that Christians can't have demons. I just have to deal with the situation as it arises. If someone comes to me with a demon, I'm going to deal with it as a demon.

I'm not going to let some theoretical theology about it say, I can't go there, because that's not in my theology. If it was in the Bible, it would be in my theology. But I can't find it in the Bible.

Now, how do you cast demons out of people? It's really quite simple. You command them to go in the name of Jesus. Now, they don't always go immediately, but that's what makes it happen.

There's no magic, holy water, crucifixes, crossing yourself that's going to make it any stronger. There's a strong temptation to resort to superstitious things when just commanding in the name of Jesus doesn't get immediate results. I heard when I was younger, you want demons to go, just say, blood of Jesus.

Or just say, Jesus Christ. Or Jesus is Lord, and that'll just make them run. Well, you know what? Someone got that idea because it apparently worked for someone.

I haven't found that always to work. Sometimes demons have been known to mock the blood of Jesus, to mock the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus and the blood of Jesus is not a magic formula.

There are no magic formulas. You stand as Christ's agent, proclaiming in His name, His victory. The demons themselves must proclaim, Christ is victor when all is said and done.

Every knee is going to bow. Every tongue is going to confess that Jesus is Lord. Even the demons are going to have to do that.

They know it already. And as long as you show them that they can't scare you off by resistance, if you continue to stand in the name of Christ and in nothing but the name of Christ, no superstitions, no magic, it's Jesus who delivers. I remember hearing of an actual case of a minister who was trying to cast a demon.

The demon spoke out and said, you can't cast me out because this kind comes out only by prayer and fasting, and you haven't fasted. And the pastor was suddenly discouraged. Oh, wow, I haven't fasted.

Maybe I can't do this. And then he came back and said, wait a minute. I'm not casting you out.

Jesus is casting you out. He fasted. And the demon did come out.

But you've got to remember, it's not me, it's Jesus. I'm standing as the agent of Christ. I'm His flesh and His bones.

I'm His body. It's the headship of Christ, the authority of Christ, through His body that casts out demons, not me. I don't have to be great.

Although if I do have compromise in my life, the devil may tell me about it. It may be public. It may be scandalous.

Fortunately, I don't think I have any scandals going on in my life. But the point is that there are things I wouldn't like the demons to tell the public. Nonetheless, it's not my perfection that's going to get the job done.

It's Christ's and it's my confidence in Christ. It is Christ versus them, not me versus them. I stand as Christ's agent, a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones, speaking His authority in His name.

Jesus said in Mark chapter 16, these signs will follow those who believe. In my name, they shall cast out demons. Well, there's two things there, His name and believing.

When the disciples couldn't cast out, He said, it's because of your unbelief. So, really what it comes down to is you've got to know God. It says in Daniel chapter 12, those who

know their God will be strong and do exploits.

You've got to know God other than by hearsay. He's got to be not just a theological concept to you. He's got to be a person that you actually know and live with and who you consciously represent day by day everywhere you go.

If a demon-possessed person crossed your path and you weren't, I wonder how many people would say, uh-oh, I better put on my Christian hat now. I have to suddenly remember I'm a Christian and act like a Christian because I wasn't acting much like a Christian in the last half hour. You've got to be a real Christian.

The sons of Sceva were not real Christians and we know what happened to them. They said, we cast you out in the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches. The demons said, we know Jesus, we know Paul, we don't know you.

And they beat him up. That is, the demons in one man beat up seven men. That's that supernatural strength they put on too.

But they weren't real Christians. You don't want to confront the devil if you don't have authority over the devil, but you do if you're a Christian. And people need you to.

The world needs real Christians because there's real demons. And a fake Christian can't cast out a real demon. So many Christians just decide that demons are fake too and they don't believe in them.

Unfortunately, not believing in something doesn't make it disappear. It just means it has the full advantage over you because you're in denial. So we have to realize we're living in a demon world.

But Christ is the victor. The kingdom of Christ has been planted on this planet 2,000 years ago. It's been spreading and taking territory from the devil.

And the devil is more desperate than ever. He knows his time is short. But it can be shortened by Christians doing what they're supposed to do instead of sitting around and being worldly and going to church and singing the songs and thinking that makes them a Christian.

When they're living in a world just inhabited by spiritual darkness, which is waiting for them to confront and to drive out. Jesus is the victor, but he gets his victory through the efforts of the saints. And that's who we are.

And that's what we have to do.