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Remember What This Is All About? – Setting People Free!

by Dan Trygg

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. *He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and the regaining of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed,* ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

Luke 4:18-19

I turned my cell phone on Friday, August 3rd, as I was checking my email before heading off for my first meeting of the day. To my surprise, the phone chimed twice, acknowledging both a voice message and text message that had come in overnight. It was 3:49 in the morning. The text message just queried, “Is this Dan?” The voice message filled me in on the reason for the call. A fellow who had come to Bible studies in the past, who I will refer to as Joe, had been attempting to minister to a friend of his brother’s, a young man who was experiencing “demonic manifestations”. This was new territory for Joe, so he had called for some advice and pointers. I texted him back, to see if he was still awake, and he called right back. He had been trying to work with this fellow all night. We will call the demonized man Mike, and we will call Joe’s brother John. Joe said that it appeared that Mike had acquired a demon by dabbling in telepathy (knowing or transferring thoughts and emotions by non-physical or sensory means) and telekinesis (attempting to move or bend physical objects by a non-physical force of the mind or spirit). In his reading and study of these phenomena, Mike had opened himself up to a “spirit guide” in order to receive these “psychic abilities”. This “spirit guide” was a demon. At first, it seemed to be a positive experience, but eventually the spirit became manipulative, domineering and controlling. Most recently, it had made Mike depressed, and was suggesting thoughts that were self-destructive or harmful to others. By the time I talked with Joe, he had managed to get Mike to confess Jesus as His Lord and Savior, and to renounce the demon. I sent him some info in an email, and he asked if I would be willing to meet with Mike, if things weren’t resolved. I said, “Sure”, and we ended the conversation. On Saturday evening, I received a call from John. His friend, Mike, was still pretty messed up, and he wanted to know if I could meet the two of them the next day. We made arrangements to meet at Midway Perkins the following morning at 9:00.

The presenting problems included feelings of depression, blackouts, times when his roommates felt like he became like another person, and growing feelings of rage. The immediate concern that truly alarmed Mike was that he was feeling like he wanted to hurt one of his roommates. In fact, after we made arrangements to meet Sunday morning, this desire became so strong that he asked John to bring him to a hotel, so he would not be near his roommate. I was concerned when I heard this, because I did not think he should be alone, so I prayed for his safety, and that nothing would keep him from coming in the morning.

I did not know what either of them looked like, so I mentioned to the wait staff that I was expecting two young men, who may ask for “Pastor Dan”. They were running almost a half an hour late, but they texted to say they were on the way. When they finally arrived, they seemed very normal. Mike was very clean cut, nicely dressed and well spoken. He was very cheerful and polite. On first appearances, you would have never imagined what was going on inside of him. They sat down opposite me, with Mike next to the wall. After brief introductions, I asked, “Ok, so tell me, what is going on?” Mike went over what was taking place, and how it was getting increasingly worse. I found out that *he had been raised in church, had believed in Jesus as a child, and was baptized by immersion* after giving his testimony. He talked about how *he had become fascinated by telepathy and telekinesis* he had seen on television, and how he had begun to read about it and do research online.

One day a presence seemed to come to him in his mind, and offered to help him discover his abilities in these areas. He agreed to let this voice in his mind become his teacher. As he did, he began to experience the emotions of other people, and to a lesser degree their thoughts. At first, it was almost intoxicating. He felt so superior to others, and almost invincible. Initially, it seemed as though this ability really opened his mind and expanded his awareness. At some point, however, he began to realize that he was not in control, as he had at first thought. Something began injecting thoughts into his mind that were not his thoughts. It was very subtle, almost undetectable, at first. The suggestions seemed to parallel his own desires and emotions. Slowly the thoughts suggested things that he had not thought about, or wanted, ...at least, they were out of character for him, and sometimes were even surprising or shocking! The voice in his mind sounded like his own inner consciousness. He was slowly being conditioned to respond to these suggestions. Sometimes he did, but when they suggested things that were too outlandish, ...too wrong or too outside the box..., he would resist. Now, it was getting hard to even resist, and it was hard to know what was really him. I mean, it was all him, wasn't it? It was in his own head, sounding like his own inner voice, but he was thinking and feeling things that were extreme or wrong. Recently, he began to realize that he was “blacking out”.

He became aware of periods of time unaccounted for by his conscious mind. Some of his friends reported that he had behaved really weirdly, but he did not even remember what they were talking about! Then came the stream of depressed, angry, self-destructive thoughts, or thoughts and emotions of anger and violence toward others, even his friends. It was getting scary, and he seemed to be losing control.

Suddenly he stopped talking, and looked at me. He said, "I have to tell you something. Ever since we sat down, I have felt a growing anger and rage toward you. *Something in me wants to reach across the table and strangle you!*" I've heard *that* one before. I wasn't shocked, though Mike was. He said, "I don't even *know* you, but I have this intense rage inside. I don't get it." I explained that it wasn't *him*; it was *a spirit* inside of him. I likened his condition to picking up a parasite. A parasite can make you very sick, and cause a lot of damage, but the problem is not *you*, ...it is the parasite! We tried to read through a study sheet I had brought, but *as soon as we'd start reading, his eyes would drop down to his lap.* I called him to attention three times. Each time, he didn't realize he wasn't following along. By the third time, he looked really out of it. *His ability to think was severely diminished, and he was kind of in and out of mental focus.* At that point, I said, "There is no point in trying to talk or teach anymore. The demon is blocking his ability to hear and understand. I think we should go out to the car to pray."

We went out to John's car in the Perkins parking lot. Mike got into the middle of John's back seat, and he and I got in on either side. I explained that what was happening was like someone squatting in a house that does not belong to them. They had the *ability* or power to break in and occupy, but they have *no legal right* to be there. When confronted, they might bluster, swear and threaten, ...but when the police come, and it is established that they have no right to be there, they *must* leave. If they *resist*, the police call for back up and reinforcements, until they are *forcibly removed*. I started to pray, and Mike's hands went up to his chest, and he began to slump down in the seat. *I started saying that Jesus had given us authority over the demons* (Lk. 9:1,2; 10:17-20), ***and I began to command the unclean spirits to leave.*** At first, it talked through Mike's mind, but soon it was talking to us directly, in a distinctly different voice, smugly declaring that we could not do anything. *I insisted that we did, indeed, have the authority to make it leave.* John and I began praying and commanding it to come out, and Mike started rocking back and forth, side to side. Then, a *growl* started deep inside, and suddenly he *roared* so loud it seemed to fill the entire car. He turned and looked at me, and said, "You are *afraid* of me, aren't you?" Immediately, I felt something welling up from my belly, rising up through my chest, and I broke out in loud belly-laughter that lasted for maybe ten seconds. Then I said, "I am not *at all* afraid of you!" He immediately turned to John, and blurted out, "But, *he* is!" I shook my head, and said, "No! **What matters is that you have to go! We come in the name and authority of Jesus Christ, and we command that you leave.**" He said, "I don't *have* to." I said, "Why?" "He *asked me in,*" it said. I then commanded that he withdraw, and I called Mike forward. I said, "Mike, I need you to *renounce that spirit.* Tell it that *it is not welcome here anymore.* In the name of Jesus Christ, *command it to leave!*" At that, we began to command that it leave again. Suddenly, Mike bent over and started coughing. I felt that something left.

By this time, the back seat of the car was getting very hot. The windows were up and the sun was out. It was 11:00, and people would soon be coming for lunch at Perkins. I felt we had accomplished what was necessary *at that point.* We had *delivered the eviction notice, and broke some of the power.* I knew *we were not finished,* but felt like it was safe to stop for the moment. **I prayed that God would enforce the commands we had given, however He might choose to do so. Different situations seem to call for different measures.** In our experience, sometimes it has been enough to confront and command the demons to leave, and they do. God enforces the eviction, while we are just to wait and watch. Other times, a person has found freedom gradually. The Spirit leads them to recognize the lies, and enables them to "take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:3-5). At other times, the Lord has called us to organize a team of people to meet again with the afflicted person at another time. Sometimes, there is *more* that needs to be exposed, and dealt with, than can be addressed on *one* occasion. **The battle is always the Lord's, and we must get our instructions from Him.** Like ancient Israel, sometimes the Lord will fight *for* us, while we are to be silent (Ex. 14:14; II Chron. 20:17). At other times, we are given unusual strategies or instructions *to follow* (e.g., Josh. 6; Judg. 7), while on still other occasions the Lord directs us to *go up aggressively against* our spiritual opponents, because He has removed their protection and we are to "take" what He has "given" to us (Josh. 8, 10).

I prayed over Mike and John, and told Mike that *he needed to resist these thoughts and suggestions when they come, taking authority in Jesus' name.* He experienced a new level of freedom, and he found he *was* able to recognize these thoughts and oppose them, as they came. His roommates reported a couple of instances where a demon seemed to manifest again, but *the tide was turning.* The *eviction notice had been served.* The *command had been given.* Now, *we are to watch and wait to see what the Lord's strategy may be.* Sometimes we forget we are in a spiritual war. *The enemy likes to keep hidden, so we ignore the call to arms.* **Experiences like these help us to remember what it is all about: setting people free, and furthering God's kingdom on planet earth. Therefore, "Be sober and alert. Your enemy the devil, is like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. " Resist him, strong in your faith..."**¹ Peter 5:8-9.