

**The Deliverance Healing Ministry of Jesus
Luke 13:10-16, Mark 5:1-20, Eph 6:10-18**

Brothers and sisters in Christ, this morning we continue to look at the healing ministry of Jesus to better understand it – so that we, as the Body of Christ, may be equipped and empowered to continue that ministry in His Name.

Because our Lord said that those who believe in Him will do the work that He had been doing, and even greater works.
(John 14:12)

So if we are to offer physical and internal healing ministry for sickness, disease and deformity, a large part of being able to do so successfully depends on correctly understand what sickness is, where it comes from, and how it affects us.

And we have seen, the Bible reveals that **sickness, disease, deformity are a direct result of the Curse** on the creation, which came about as the consequence to Adam and Eve's covenant violation and rebellion against God, and it works

against us to prevents us from fully functioning in our capacity as stewards of God's creation.

And we are certainly glad that biology can help us understand more and more about the "how" of sickness and disease since that kind of knowledge enables us to cooperate and assist with the healing capacity that God has built into His creation

And the good news of **Jesus' healing ministry is that the Curse on Creation**, which is the root cause of sickness and disease and deformity –and even death - in people's lives, is reversed in the very person of Jesus Christ.

And so as we work with the Holy Spirit to bring people eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ, we must also continue to work with the Spirit to allow that eternal life to bring internal and physical healing into the internal and physical aspects of their lives as well - in the name of Jesus.

That is just the natural progression of conquering death and allowing people to experience signs and foretastes of the fact that the curse on creation is undone in Christ!

And a church which understands this and works to continue Jesus' healing ministry in this way will accomplish a great deal of good work in people's lives for God's glory.

However it's still not the whole picture.

The Scriptures also reveal that there is another factor which contributes to sickness, disease, deformity and death.

And in the scripture passages which we read this morning we see that **in certain cases it is a satanic demonic influence.**

In Luke 13:16 Jesus says that it was Satan who had kept the woman crippled for eighteen years, and in Matt 12 the afflictions of being both deaf and mute are attributed to the man being demonized.

And so brothers and sisters in Christ – to be properly and fully equipped to continue Jesus' healing ministry we must pay attention to this additional bit of information that is revealed to us.

To ignore it, for whatever reason, would be foolish and counterproductive in bringing about the needed healing and freedom in people's lives.

It would be like a doctor and a counsellor treating the physical injuries and internal wounds of a patient who is being abused, but ignoring and refusing to deal with the fact that someone is abusing this person.

Now to be sure not every woman who comes into the emergency ward with a black-eye and bruises has been beaten by her husband – maybe she really did walk into a door, but there are certain indicators that emergency staff are trained to look for to identify when someone is being abused so they can take action and respond accordingly.

In the same way friends, not every case of illness, disease, deformity either physical or internal will be caused or instigated by demonic influence – but there are certain indicators that we can be made aware of so that we can take action and respond accordingly.

Now – we must be warned here. It is easy to fall into the trap of **looking for some sort of prescriptive list of demonic indicators** which we can use to determine when Satan is behind something.

And perhaps your mind is already thinking about the typical indicators which have been made popular by Hollywood horror movies like the Exorcist – the head spinning around, eyeballs rolling back in their sockets, levitating in the air, a different voice speaking out of the person, convulsions and so on...

However the truth is friends, we can't build a prescriptive list like this because Satan and his demons are intelligent beings –

they are not impersonal forces of nature which act according to normative and predictive patterns.

The scripture characterizes the Devil as a roaring lion on the prowl (1 Peter 5:8) – which would be how he overtly displays his power in intimidating and brazen displays, and at the same time warns us that he “...*masquerades as an angel of light.*” (2 Cor 11:14)

Additionally in Eph 6:11 we are told “*Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes...*”

So if we build a prescriptive list which says these are the specific and conclusive indicators that the demonic is at work in a particular situation, the devil and his demons are quite capable of switching their schemes and working differently so we that do not recognize it and respond to it.

However the good news is that we don't need a prescriptive list – because the Holy Spirit can always tell when the enemy

is involved in something and **He will reveal to us when something demonic is involved.**

In last week's scripture passage from 1 Cor 12 we saw how the different Holy Spirit grace-gifts work together to help facilitate the ministry of healing in the Body of Christ – and one of those grace-gifts was the “*distinguishing between spirits*” (1 Cor 12:10)

So brothers and sisters in Christ – it's very important for us to listen for, and be able to know the voice of the Holy Spirit, and when He is speaking to us... because that will make the difference between us knowing when we are up against demonic influences and responding to them appropriately or not.

Now I can't stress this Holy Spirit discernment and empowerment enough friends – in fact in our scripture passage this morning we even hear Jesus attributing his deliverance healing to the power of the Spirit working through Him. (Matt 12:28)

Because the truth is that the scriptures don't give us a whole lot of information about the demonic, and while drawing from personal and anecdotal experience can be somewhat helpful, if we absolutize it and stop relying on the discernment given by the Holy Spirit those experiences can quickly turn into superstition – and that only adds to confusion and schemes of the enemy, and does not bring about healing.

And I have to return to Hebrews 12:14-15 again to emphasize the importance of being able to bring about this sort of deliverance so that a person can experience healing in their life - *“Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”*

Friends **the Devil has many schemes to attack the Body of Christ to try and stop the advance of the Kingdom of God** – and if he can use physical illness or leverage an illness of the heart, to not only cause discouragement and suffering and prevent us from functioning as stewards of the creation, but

also to manipulate us to do certain things or react in certain ways that will offend others, or discredit our witness – he will do so and very quickly he is able to neutralized the church.

For example – someone becomes sick in a congregation and people offer prayers for them like we usually do – but they are not aware that the enemy is involved this time, and the illness continues. And the person begins to become discouraged, and the enemy also starts to afflict them with lies so subtle the person believes them to be their own thoughts and reasoning.

They begin to think and feel the following: *They must not be praying for me, maybe I don't have enough faith, they are probably praying for their own issues, God must not care about me, or so on...*

And through this sickness and these lies, the enemy is able to manipulate that person into angrily confronting some people in the church about their situation.

And it is not received well at all by their fellow church members who take offense at the anger and accusations from the person being deceived by the enemy, and they begin to judge them as being unchristian and especially ungrateful for support they have been offering them...

And from that point it begins to snowball and grow into that bitter root which attacks and neutralizes the Body of Christ.

Forgiveness and confession are then needed to stop the spread and remove the offence and bring relational healing, but unless we recognize the enemy at work and take steps to bring deliverance healing – the enemy is still in position to launch another attack.

Do you see how that works? Now it is very clear from the warnings and instructions in scripture that **the devil and his angels can attack us, and harass us, deceive us, and come against us in our thoughts and feelings, even directly...**

Otherwise we would not have Peter's warnings about the devil prowling around like a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8) nor Paul's instructions to put on the full armor of God and his clarification that our battle is not against flesh and blood but against the evil spirits and spiritual powers of this world. (Eph 6)

So you can see why it's so important that we are listening and paying attention for the Holy Spirit's discernment about when the enemy is involved.

Now, you may be wondering as I have sometimes wondered as well, why doesn't God just sovereignly answer our general, uninformed prayers for healing when the enemy is involved?

Why is the success of the healing contingent upon our knowing and confronting and standing up against the enemy?

Well brothers and sisters in Christ – there may be many instances which we are not aware of where God does exactly that, but in the instances where the Holy Spirit reveals to us

that there are demonic influences at work so that we may respond, it is for the purposes of further demonstrating that Satan is a defeated foe and that Christ can plunder his kingdom.

As our Lord says to the Pharisees in Matt 12:29 *"how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house."*

Remember, Satan had tried to defeat Jesus by offering to give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would just bow down to him (Matt 4:8-10) But Jesus resisted, quoting the truth of scripture and now in His ministry Jesus is showing that He can simply overpower the devil and plunder his kingdom – setting free those who are born under the curse from that which the devil uses to oppress, deceive, manipulate and control.

And if we are the Body of Christ – those who believe in Him, who will do the works which he had been doing, the works

which Jesus said “were the Father working through “Him.” It is only natural that the Holy Spirit will use us to continue that work of God in the lives of others.

So how do we continue the work of Jesus’ deliverance

brothers and sisters?

Well, from the examples in scripture where we see Jesus delivering people from being demonized, I would say that we should always keep deliverance connected to healing and within that larger biblical understanding of Jesus’ work of reversing the Curse – and the continuation of crushing the head of that ancient serpent who deceived Adam and Eve – thus necessitating the Curse.

And within that understanding we engage the demonic according to Paul’s instructions in Ephesians 6:13-18.

First we protect the areas where we are vulnerable so that we are able to stand firm against whatever the enemy is doing.

So – according to Paul’s illustration here - we are particularly vulnerable to the lies of the devil, so we gird our sensitive and vulnerable loins with the truth. If we know the truth we are protected.

We are also particularly vulnerable when it comes to our track record of being loyal and faithful in our hearts to God, so we cover our vulnerable and unfaithful hearts with the breastplate of righteousness – Christ’s righteousness. If we live in Christ’s righteousness we are protected.

And what gives us the most traction to stand firm against the devil, is being prepared to tell the good news that there is peace between God and humanity through Jesus Christ – so we are have our feet fitted with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Having the truth of scripture, believing in the righteousness of Christ, and proclaiming the Gospel of peace between God and humanity will enable us to stand firm against the demonic

influences and schemes – that’s the foundation of the armor of God which covers those vulnerable areas.

So this first part of Paul’s instruction about the armor of God has a more passive sense to it – stand firm, be covered by this armor.

But the second part of Paul’s instruction switches to a more active usage of the armor, **we are to take up and use the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit.**

We are to use our faith in Christ and in the mighty power of God who can do all things to put out the accusations Satan throws at us – just as a soldier would use their water soaked leather shield to smother flaming arrows and prevent them from setting the fort on fire.

And as we go about putting out flaming arrows - we trust in the protection of our salvation that covers us from all angles, protecting us from attacks and blows that we don’t see

coming while we are actively engaged in the midst of the battle.

A blow to the head would prove to be fatal to us – but our salvation is secure in Jesus Christ, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit and nothing the enemy does to us can undo that.

So as we are actively engaging the enemy, protected in the salvation of Jesus Christ, we are to use the sword of the Spirit, the word of God through praying in the Spirit to strike down the enemy and defeat them.

Now I know that most times when we hear “*the word of God*” we think about the scriptures – and certainly if we are engaging the demonic by quoting the truth of scripture, well even our Lord did that when resisting the devil.

However, the specific words Paul uses here in the original Greek refer to the act of speaking, that which is uttered – and so we can understand this as a command for us **to speak the**

words, and pray the words which the Holy Spirit gives us to fight against the demonic.

1 Peter 4:11 confirms this understanding of how the Holy Spirit gifts us to serve each other. Peter writes *“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God.”*

Of course this was also our Lord’s approach when He encountered demons, empowered by the Holy Spirit He spoke whatever was necessary in the situation to stand against them, and send them away in order to bring healing to those who were afflicted by them – and the apostles continued this – and so do we.

Take up the sword of the Spirit – which is the utterances of God... and with all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit...

And with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints... (Eph 6:18)

Why? So that no one misses out on the grace of God and no bitter root is able to grow up among us and cause trouble...

Brothers and sisters in Christ – as we continue our Lord’s healing ministry, let us make sure that we do not overlook or ignore the Holy Spirit’s warnings about how the enemy may be involved.

Instead let us stand firm, and let us take action, empowered and equipped by the Holy Spirit to bring freedom and healing to those whom Christ has called us to disciple.

Amen.