

Class 203 Introduction to Spiritual Warfare: Session 4 Full Notes

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8b)

Session Four: In My Name they shall cast out demons

4.1 The Christian's authority to cast out demons

4.1.1. Jesus was anointed to bring freedom to the captives

Jesus saw His mission as one of liberation. In Luke chapter 4 He publicly claimed to be the walking fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1:

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound...

As we have discussed, Peter summarized Jesus' earthly works in a way quite different from how we in North America would summarize it today. While we would emphasize the Lord's moral teachings, Peter knew that this was only part of the story.

...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. (Acts 10:38)

The ministry of deliverance or liberation was an essential component of Jesus' ministry and a good one-fourth of more of His ministry involved the casting out of demons, resulting in spiritual healing, physical healing, and the good news of the Kingdom spreading like wildfire.

4.1.2. Caution: God at work!

The power of Messiah at work indicates that God is at work. Jesus said that His mighty deeds and His mastery over the demons demonstrated several important things:

1. That the Kingdom of God had come

But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. (Matt. 12:18)

2. Who He was

If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him. (John 10:37-38)

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. (John 14:10-11)

3. That the arrival of the Kingdom called for an appropriate response: repentance and faith.

Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." (Mark 1:14-15)

4.1.3. As the Father has sent me, even so send I you (John 20:21)

Here Jesus not only sets forth the **heart** of our mission, but the **activity** of our mission. Our mission is not to demonstrate His love alone but His works – for only in doing His works is there a full demonstration of Who He is. The world must see the power of the Messiah to set people free. The ability to demonstrate the power of the Spirit in the Name of Jesus is proof positive of the authority of that Name and the fact that God has glorified Jesus and elevated Him to be Lord and Christ. In short, it is proof that Christianity is true! Paul says:

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (1 Cor. 2:4-5)

4.1.4. Jesus trained and commissioned the Church to expel demons

In addition to His own powerful ministry of deliverance, Jesus released His authority over demons to the Church in widening circles as He trained the disciples. First the 12, then the 70, then all believers were authorized to continue His ministry:

Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. (Luke 9:1-2)

And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject unto us through thy name." (Luke 10:17)

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out demons... (Mark 16:17a)

Notice that when Jesus ascends He has removed any suggestion of a specific, personal grant of authority and has instead given a general grant of authority to the entire Church to carry on this mission of expelling demonic invaders.

4.1.5. The Church carried on powerful deliverance ministry in the Acts and beyond

From its inception, the Church carried on a powerful deliverance ministry, which had the effect of greatly propelling evangelism.

And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spoke, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. (Acts 8:6-7)

The effect was electric, just as it had been with Jesus. In the first several centuries after Christ, the casting out of demons was perhaps the main ingredient in evangelism. Christian leaders continued to speak boldly and publicly for hundreds of years about the ability of the Christians to cast out demons and perform other miraculous signs.

4.2 Understanding common terms in deliverance ministry

4.2.1. What do we mean by deliverance?

By deliverance we mean the ministry of setting people free from demonic influence. Ideally this involves not only expelling demons from a person but breaking the grip of any behaviors that have provided access or empowerment for the demons to operate in the person's life.

4.2.2. Use of the term "exorcism" and "exorcist" disfavored

These terms aren't disfavored because they aren't biblical – they are disfavored because they imply non-Christian ministry. The word exorcize – *exorcizo* – is not used of the ministry of believers in the Bible. It means to bind someone with an oath. Exorcism implies ceremonies and rituals which Christians do not need to resort to. The seven sons of Sceva in Acts 19 are referred to as "exorcists."

Jesus, in contrast, said demons would be "cast out," using the verb *ekballo*, which simply means to throw out. Jesus' ministry of deliverance and the Church's after Him were shocking, for no one had ever seen a person wielding the authority to cast out demons with a command.

And [Jesus] came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. And they were astonished at his doctrine, for his word was with power. And in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Let us alone; what have we to do with You, You Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know You, who who You are - the Holy One of God." And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Hold your peace, and come out of him." And when the demon had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and did not hurt him. And they were all amazed, and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word (logos – word, teaching, message) is this! For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." (Luke 4:31-36)

4.2.3. Use of the terms “possessed” or “possession”

These terms are disfavored for a couple of reasons. First, to say that someone is “possessed by the Devil” implies a degree of ownership that is difficult to justify biblically, especially when speaking of Christians.

Second, the idea of possession is not faithful to the New Testament Greek. In the Gospels the verb *daimonizomai* is used for “possess” but this word does not mean possess. It means to have a demon or be “demonized,” if we were to simply transliterate it. Of the dozen or so times that the expression “possessed” or is used, the word *daimonizomai* is used every time but two. In the other two, the word *echo* is used, which simply means to have or to hold. Thus in the New Testament people are “demonized,” or “have demons,” or else are had or held by demons.

From a pastoral standpoint, it is easier and more beneficial to minister to others using these terms as well, as it is less degrading than telling someone that he is possessed!

4.3 Demons in the human person

4.3.1. Where do demons reside?

This is a question that is not easily answered. Clearly demons can and do at times inhabit people physically, as the Bible says in no uncertain terms. It is not easy to answer the more specific question of whether they dwell in a person’s body, soul or spirit. Many Christians would object strongly to the assertion that demons can live in the spirit of a Christian, being as we are the Temple of the Holy Spirit. In the case of Christians we do not think it is unbiblical to suggest that Christians can be demonized as long as we are clear about what that means. It would be naïve to think, especially in the light of the New Testament warnings we have received, that Christians cannot be harmed, harassed or influenced by demonic spirits.

When demons are not inhabiting a human person they may seek to inhabit other living creatures of various kinds, or places. Many people think that demons do not favor being “unclothed” as it were by a body. Jesus’ own teaching on demons seeking to reenter people after having been expelled lends support to this. (Matt. 12:43) The Lord says that they view a human body as a “house” and that they are restless.

Pastorally it is less important to be able to analyze these dynamics than to be able to address them!

4.3.2. How do demons gain access to the human person?

This is another subject where the Bible does not offer as much light as curious minds may wish to have. However, biblical teaching as well as pastoral experience will provide some basis for understanding. Demonic activity may occur and demonic influence may exist in a person’s life through a variety of means and it is important to be alerted to the possibility of these life events in people who seek freedom:

Invitation: This is rare, but some will deliberately invite demonic spirits into them.

Idolatry: The gods of the Gentiles are demons and therefore people who worship gods other than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are at risk by that very fact. As a side note Jews per se are not idolaters.

Heredity: We leave room for the possibility that demonic influences may be transmitted through the bloodline.

Occult involvement: Anyone who engages in occultic practices or possesses occultic objects.

Curses: A curse or spell can release demonic workings into people's lives.

Sexual perversion: This frequently opens people to demonic bondage. All sexual experience outside of marriage ("fornication") must be avoided.

Drug use: Drugs are often used to open up people to spiritual experiences. The normal defenses within in a person's will seem to be overridden by their effect. Addiction associated with drug abuse can be exacerbated by demonic agency.

Soulish witchcraft: Often becomes empowered by a demonic agency which will lead a person into wrong emphases, false doctrine, and false experiences.

Carnal religiosity: Intensely zealous religious people can open themselves to the motivations and control of religious spirits.

Unforgiveness: Few sins are as crippling to the whole man. This is the devil's playground.

Violence: Participation in or observation of violence can invite the demonic.

Wrath: Giving place to outbursts of wrath or hatred may also invite spirits of anger.

Carnal indulgence of various kinds: Carnal indulgence in many forms can become demonically empowered. Examples would be gluttony and sloth.

Physical and sexual abuse: People who are physically or sexually abused can become demonized. There may be a variety of mechanisms at work here.

Physical and emotional traumas: Persons who have experienced physical traumas, terrifying events or "shocks" may become weakened in their soul to the extent that they are unable to resist demonic invasion. Depending upon the circumstances, spirits of fear or grief may then cripple the person's life.

4.3.3. Diagnosing demonic behavior

Much demonic behavior is easy to identify, as the Gospels show us some obvious signs of demonic activity. Others are more subtle. Here is a partial list.

1. inability to control thought life, e.g., impure thoughts, fearful thoughts, irrational hatreds and mental constructs

2. inability to control emotions or sensations, e.g., hatred, self-pity, silliness and flightiness
3. restlessness, exhaustion and inability to focus
4. compulsive behaviors
5. attraction to darkness and the occult
6. erratic, inappropriate, and untimely behavior
7. unexplained changes in personality or morality
8. blasphemy
9. an aversion to holy things such as the Word of God, the Names of God, worship, and pious Christians
10. extreme religiosity and devotion to religious rituals
11. attraction to strange and unusual beliefs; doctrinal error
12. profanity and an attraction to uncleanness in general
13. mockery and cruelty
14. falsehood, often on the level of what the world calls "pathological lying"
15. sexual licentiousness and seduction
16. suicidal tendencies and self-destructive behaviors
17. social withdrawal
18. supernatural knowledge or skills
19. supernatural strength
20. persistent patterns of destructive or addictive behavior, incidents or accidents in persons and families; these often indicate the workings of a curse
21. persistent illness
22. other overt supernatural manifestations and phenomena

While experience is of course useful, demonic activity is best diagnosed by the Holy Spirit and confirmed through observation and prayer. Much demonic activity is diagnosed through revelation from the Spirit, whether by a word of knowledge, discerning of spirits or some other means.

As a pastoral issue, the mind of the Spirit should be sought in all cases. Remember that some illness is demonic; most is not. Many of the behaviors listed above began as *moral failings* before they became demonically energized as people continued to give place to the devil. Similarly, much *mental illness* has nothing to do with the demonic realm at all but is a matter of brain chemistry. The enemy may take advantage of these situations. Or, mental illness may be completely caused by the enemy's workings.

4.3.4. Demonic assignments

It is also likely that demons are sent against people to accomplish certain things and of course the Gospels are clear that demons can specialize in their workings in people. The Bible reveals us that there are spirits of: deafness, blindness, muteness, insanity, epilepsy, fear, etc.

In addition to wishing to please the Lord, the nature of our warfare impels us to leave no open doors or "holes in your armor" which the enemy can take advantage of – for he will if he can. Christians are the target of the curses of the enemy's servants and so we must give him no place.

To whom you forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes I forgave it in the person of Christ; lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. (2 Cor. 2:10-11)

4.4 Expelling demons

4.4.1. Pastoral considerations

In any deliverance session, the primary consideration is the welfare and dignity of the person afflicted. As ministers of Christ we must reflect the character of the One who would not break a bruised reed. For this reason we believe it is not always necessary to perform demonstrative deliverances. In the majority of cases, people are able to maintain a normal life despite some degree of demonic influence. Therefore, deliverance can be "scheduled." This allows for a calmer and less intrusive setting, with pre-selected people fully prepared to minister in God's love.

4.4.2. Preparation

Jesus taught that there were hard cases. (Matt. 17:21) For this reason it is wise for the team to be fasting ahead of a deliverance session. Fasting is a means to obtain both strength and revelation – it has no merit of its own except as it "casts us upon the Lord."

Some directives should be given to the person ahead of time as to what to expect. Sometimes a person's known background makes areas of inquiry and ministry clear. For example, a person who has been engaged in bloodshed or witchcraft presents some obvious areas for prayer. A number of good questionnaires also exist which are meant to obtain more background about a person's life, practices, and family history. Some practitioners prefer not to utilize such knowledge or to use it only a little so that they are more free to receive information from the Holy Spirit which is not clouded by having a lot of natural knowledge.

An ideal team is "smallish" – it cannot be so large as to overwhelm the person receiving ministry. Jesus sent people out in twos. A group of three experienced persons and one learner is a good size, probably as large as you would like to use. There should also be another one or two people present who are there simply to intercede for the meeting and who are not participating in the ministry of deliverance itself. Authority is important to unity – one person should be clearly in charge. Those ministering should be in heart agreement, at peace among themselves and have unity of purpose.

4.4.3. When should you not proceed?

People must be completely willing to change and give up all known sin in order to derive the benefit from this ministry. You should never expel demons against a person's will. A person whose "house" is not filled with the Spirit may find the demons returning, and this in greater numbers. (Matt. 12:43-45)

4.4.4. Steps to freedom

1. Ask God for help! This seems so obvious that you will forget it. Ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom and guidance. Ask the Lord for His protection and the ministry of His angels.
2. As much as possible, be in an atmosphere of praise and worship. Appropriate music can be played or people may worship the Lord. This can make the Presence of God more manifest in the room.

3. Encourage the person that Christ can and will set him free, but that he must want to be free. It is amazing but true that many people are fond of their sins. Jesus said, "What do you want me to do for you?"

4. If possible, seek to have the person repent of all known sin or, if he is not a Christian, seek to lead him to Christ. This will help immeasurably, as the person can then cooperate with you in his deliverance. One of the most powerful weapons we have against the enemy is our personal righteousness. The most effective deliverances may be those in which the person is doing as much self-deliverance as possible. This makes the whole environment potentially less confrontational and thus more comfortable for the person. Repentance and recommitment to Christ will deprive the enemy of the legal ground he needs in order to afflict the person. As a rule it is wise to focus on three particular areas in which sin may especially empower demons:

- unforgiveness
- the occult
- sexual sin

In each case have the person renounce sins in general, then list specific instances. For example, if a person has unforgiveness against someone, he should say so, then verbally forgive that person, asking God to forgive him for the sin as well. The Holy Spirit may suggest names or relationships for further inquiry.

In the case of occult sins it is usually necessary to renounce involvement verbally. A positive act of the will was necessary to open that door; an act of the will strengthened by our voice may be needed to close it. Again the Spirit will suggest avenues for inquiry and prayer.

In sexual sin the sin must be repented of, unclean practices renounced as well, and soul ties broken between persons.

In addition to these three main areas there will be sins specific to the person which should be addressed if known.

5. As a demonic presence becomes apparent, command any demons to leave in the Name of Jesus. If there are known curses, cancel them in the Name of Jesus and by the power of His Blood. If the demon will not manifest, command it to do so. Ask the Holy Spirit for insight as to what types of demons there are. While you may not know its precise name, believe God to give you a *functional name* and a battle plan through a word of wisdom, discerning of spirits, or a word of knowledge. Be sure that the person knows you are not speaking to him but to an evil spirit.

6. Be cautious about conversing with demonic spirits. Remember, they lie! Let God tell you when the deliverance is accomplished. They may be faking it! If you are engaged in a "scheduled session" more than one meeting may be required.

7. Ministering in the authority of Christ means just that - you are ministering in the authority of Christ. Demons fear Christ and respect Him. Although you may need to be firm, it is not necessary to shout, scream, or engage in theatrics. Do not be rattled by manifestations of demonic power or behavior. If necessary, make the demons be quiet. These may be unpleasant, but greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world!

8. Pray until you are finished. Let God tell you when. Recognize that some cases are harder than others; even Jesus taught this. Some demonic spirits are weaker than others; and some are truly vicious. When the enemy's hold is weak enough a general command of expulsion may be used.

9. Pray for inner healing for the person.

10. Pray for the Holy Spirit's filling of the person.

4.5 What happens next?

4.5.1. After deliverance

A person should be given post-prayer directives to help him "maintain" his deliverance. On more than one occasion Jesus said, "Go and sin no more." There is a special danger as we have already seen for people who have been delivered – the enemy may seek to marshal his forces again to attempt a return. The house must not only be swept and decorated, but filled!

A new life must begin of vibrant faith and worship. Devotion to the Word of God and the discipline of prayer is essential. Behavior patterns that allowed for demonic inroads must be addressed and broken, at whatever level of intensity is required. This may necessitate counseling for a time.

4.5.2. The problems of the flesh and iniquities

Many people lose a deliverance because the root of the demonic in their lives was not occultic but was a matter of fleshly indulgence. Further carnality will lead to enslavement again. The flesh must be crucified – it cannot be cast out!

Iniquity in the sense of hereditary sins and weaknesses should be broken in the deliverance session and care should be taken to avoid those areas. If a person has a great deal of occult involvement in his family history, he probably had a tendency to be fascinated by those things himself. This is the biblical dynamic of iniquities being visited on a person for several generations. While we do not understand this dynamic, we know it is real and can be difficult to break when we are not determined and persistent about it. A person who has been delivered out of the occult should never again dabble in it or flirt with it.

4.5.3. For further reading

Neil Anderson, *Winning Spiritual Warfare*

Randy Clark, *Global Awakening Ministry Training Manual* (available through his ministry at www.globalawakening.com)

Chris Hayward, *God's Cleansing Stream*

Derek Prince, *They Shall Expel Demons*