



JESUS AND DEMONS

Part 17 of Luke's Gospel: Investigating the Man Who Is God

Pastor Mark Driscoll | Luke 4:31-41 | February 14, 2010

Luke #17 – Jesus and Demons (Luke 4:31–41)

Luke 4:31–41

31 And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, 32 and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. 33 And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, 34 “Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” 35 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. 36 And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!” 37 And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

38 And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon’s house. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. 39 And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.

40 Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. 41 And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

Introduction

All right, Mars Hill, we are in Luke 4:31–41, Jesus and demons. If you’ve got a Bible, you can go there and find it. Here is Luke’s Gospel. We have seen much of Jesus’ early ministry in and around Nazareth. Last week a little earlier in Luke 4, we saw that Jesus was a prophet without honor in his own hometown. He was kicked out of Nazareth, basically people tried to put him to death. And so this week he relocates his ministry headquarters to a town called Capernaum. It’s the hometown of Simon Peter. It’s in the region of Galilee, around the Sea of Galilee and much of Jesus’ ministry is gonna take place there, all the way up until Luke 19. And that point, he will set his face toward Jerusalem and the scene will shift.

So it’s helpful to get an idea of the topography, the region around the Sea of Galilee and the small towns therein, including Capernaum, are around a great fresh water lake. There’s a lot of fishing and then hills around it that are filled with farming. I’ll give you a picture just to get an idea of the Sea of Galilee. I don’t know about you, I presumed wrongly that the Sea of Galilee was actually quite small. This is a photo we took from a boat we were on this summer. It’s an enormous body of water, 13 miles by 8 miles, and the Sea of Galilee as it is today is actually smaller, likely, than it was in the days of Jesus. As more people have moved into the area and they’ve needed more water, the water line has actually gone down. So think enormous freshwater lake surrounded by fertile hill country and farming and there we find this very important little town, Capernaum, dozens, hundreds of people.

Jesus Was an Amazing Teacher

That’s where we pick up the story in Luke 4:31–32. And I show that to you so you know that this is historical, all right, that Jesus really did live and he really did go to places and they’re still there. “And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority.” So we learn more about Jesus’ ministry of preaching and teaching. He was a rabbi, preacher and teacher, that was his primary ministry. And here he’s preaching and teaching in the synagogue, in this little town of Capernaum on the Sabbath. Their Sabbath was Saturday, ours is on Sunday, the day of the resurrection of Jesus when all of the old covenant, including the Sabbath, was fulfilled and the new world inaugurated and the kingdom dawned with the resurrection of Jesus.

And Jesus is preaching and teaching and people are absolutely amazed because he didn’t teach like anyone else. Jesus did not bore people with the Bible. That is one of the greatest sins that a teacher or preacher would commit, is to bore people with the Bible. And in that day, they were particularly skilled at boring people with the Bible. They would read the comments about the footnotes and the comments about the comments about the footnotes and the footnotes about the comments about the comments of the footnotes, and it was just dull and dry and boring. And then Jesus shows up very enthusiastic, very passionate. He had already told us that he would be a Spirit-filled, Spirit-led preacher. He began his public ministry in Luke 4 around verse 18 where he quotes Isaiah 11:2 where it says, “And the Spirit of the Lord has come upon me to preach good news.” So he preached by the power of the Holy Spirit and he taught by the power of the Holy Spirit and people were amazed because they had never heard anyone like Jesus. Jesus was, while on the earth, an amazing teacher. He’s more than that, he’s also God incarnate, but he was an amazing teacher and he sends the Holy Spirit to empower Bible preachers and teachers today to preach and teach the Bible rather than boring them with the Bible, “and they were astonished.”

An Unclean Demon

And then something happens in this little synagogue in Capernaum. Luke 4:33–34, “And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.’” One thing you will note is that demons have some of the highest Christology, that’s the theology of Christ, in the whole Bible. The demons know who Jesus is. Lots of other people don’t get it, but the demons know who he is. “The Holy One of God,” category unto himself, unlike anyone else, one of a kind, that’s Jesus, the Holy One of God.

And he is preaching and teaching here in the synagogue, the old covenant church on their Sabbath day for their meeting. And who does he have some interaction and conflict with? A demonized man, a man who has an unclean demon, an unclean demon. It will say “unclean demon” about twenty-three times, if memory serves me correct, throughout the Gospel of Luke. Jesus keeps having these power encounters with demons. As the kingdom of God comes, there is opposition from the kingdom of darkness, and there is this battle that is raging throughout the totality of the Gospel of Luke all the way up to the crucifixion of Jesus. And so you’re going to get very familiar with Satan and demons throughout the course of our study of Luke’s Gospel.

And here what we see is this demonized man was in the synagogue, he was in the old covenant equivalent of church. Don’t think for a minute that all the people in church are great and all the people outside of church are demonized. There’s demonized people among God’s people as well. Just like Satan filled Judas Iscariot and compelled him toward his murderous, treasonous betrayal of Jesus, so too, even in the church, Satan will empower; for those who are unbelievers even indwell. He causes all kinds of division and strife and conflict and controversy. Jesus is the good shepherd. Pastors are under-shepherds. People are sheep. And Satan loves to send in wolves to ravage the flock, and to attack the under-shepherds. So here we see that there is a demonized man gathering among God’s people.

Demons and Satan

What we need to do now is we need to study demons and Satan. As we do, many of you wonder why we would choose this. We didn’t, God did. And he put it in the Scriptures and we go through books of the Bible and we talk about whatever it is God has said. And you’re going to learn about Satan and demons repeatedly in the Gospel of Luke.

Two Equal and Opposite Errors about Demons

And let me say by way of preface, there’s a good little book by C.S. Lewis called *The Screwtape Letters* and in it he’s talking about Satan and demons and he makes this interesting statement, “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race could fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence, the other is to believe and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.” What he says is, as soon as you say demons, people go one of two ways, “They don’t exist. I don’t worry about them. I don’t believe in them. Move on, you’re making me feel awkward.” All right, that’s some of you. Others of you will have an unhealthy, an inordinate obsession with Satan and demons. You will blame them for everything, just like Eve did in Genesis 3, “The devil made me do it.” And you’ll find a demon in everything, everything. And some people really get freaked out and it’s like “Oh, my coffee’s hotter today than it was yesterday, hell is hot. This is must be the coffee demon coming to scald me from my enemy.” I mean it’s just, it’s goofy, it’s goof-tastic. That’s where some people go. They go goof-tastic on it.

Now the reason some you would deny Satan and demons, number one, you may be influenced by what we’ll call modernism and a few-hundred-year enlightenment project where scientific rationalism said that there is only physical, there is no spiritual. So you don’t believe in a spirit realm at all, particularly Satan and demons. Some of you, as well, may not believe in Satan and demons because you suffer from something called chronological snobbery. You think that they were primitive and they didn’t understand things and so they invented mythical figures, and now you’ve gone to community college and you are highly developed and evolved and you’re smarter than they were. Some of you will deny Satan and demons as well because you believe in spirituality. Spirituality is demonology. Just because it is spiritual does not mean it is good. Much of what is spiritual is demonic and satanic. And we live in a day when as long as you are spiritual, you are fine. You may not be fine. Your yoga, your meditation, your religion, your spirituality, your supernatural experience may all be demonic, satanic.

So I don’t want you to have an unhealthy, inordinate obsession with Satan and demons. We believe in them, but we emphasize Jesus. And I don’t want you to deny them or settle for just vague, general spirituality.

Know Your Enemy

But as Christ did, we will encounter Satan and demons. Clinton Arnold, in my opinion the best New Testament scholar on Satan and demons, has written some of the finest commentary about Satan and demons that has been written in the modern era. He makes this interesting statement. He says that, “A servant of Christ can no more avoid demons than a gardener can avoid weeds.” All right, if you’re gonna serve Jesus, you’re gonna meet demons. Just like if you’re gonna tend your garden, you’re gonna pull weeds. That’s just the way that it is. That’s just the way that it is.

1. Satan is not equal to God.

Now let me tell you a few things about Satan, he is not equal to God, that’s number one. Number one, Satan is not equal to God. It’s not like there’s two Gods, good God, bad God, all right, Ying and Yang, that’s not it. It’s God the Creator and created things. Satan is among the created things. Satan was an angel created by God to glorify, honor, obey, and serve him. If you want to read more, go to Isaiah 14. You can do this for personal study and community groups. I’ve also got a whole lecture on Satan and demons that I did for the staff, it’s online. We can give you the link to that with twenty pages of notes. We’ve done a lot of work on this, but nonetheless, Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28, Genesis 3, Ephesians 6. If I was gonna give you four places to

go off the top of my head, Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28, Genesis 3, Ephesians 6. You put those together, you're gonna have a really good idea, theologically speaking, about Satan and demons. But the first thing you need to know is Satan and demons are not equal to God, they're created beings. They are angels who rebelled against God. Satan was cast out of heaven. Those angels who declared war on God with him were cast down with him. So we're talking about Satan, he's not Creator, God is. He's not all present, omnipresent, God is. He's not omnipotent, all knowing, God is. He's not all powerful, God is. He doesn't share the attributes of God. He's not equal to God. He's not the other God. He's a created being in rebellion against God.

2. Satan is not our only enemy.

Number two, Satan is not our only enemy. Satan does work through false teachers, false apostles, false Christians, false religions. He does have an entire army at his service, liars, unrepentant sinners included. But also the Bible gives us three categories of opposition: the world, the flesh, and the devil. Now there is Satan and demons, and you, even if you're getting attacked spiritually, it's probably not by Satan. All right, Satan can only attack one person at a time. He can send a limited number of demons to attack a limited number of persons. All right, Satan's probably harassing Billy Graham, probably not you, all right. If you're getting harassed it's probably not Satan, it's one of his servants. It's a demon. So there's the devil. There's the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Now the flesh is our internal predisposition toward rebellion. It's our own sinful tendencies and proclivities. It's our own sick desires to rebel and do evil. And so some of you, your real issue isn't Satan at all, it's your flesh. Again, if there's a limited number of demons, why in the world would Satan commission a demon to attack you if you're already destroying yourself? If it's a battle and you've got your own gun in your mouth, why in the world would Satan send one of his few soldiers to attack you? You're gonna kill yourself. And some of you are doing it through habitual unrepentant sin, spirituality, false religion, pride, arrogance, all of that. And Satan's favorite tactic is pride. The reason he was cast out of heaven was pride. He tempts pride. We call it self-esteem. Any of you who are bound by these things, it is not that Satan needs to attack you, your flesh has taken care of it: pride, religion, sex, drugs, gluttony, foolishness, spirituality, stupidity, religion. All right, you've just got the gun in your mouth. You can't blame Satan.

There's the devil, there's the flesh, there's also the world. The world is the corporate systems and structures and ideologies that are opposed to God. If you believe what everyone believes, if you behave as everyone behaves, you will be living a satanic life, you just will. Now it may be a spiritual life, but it will be a satanically spiritual life. The world tempts you to sin, to use people, to disobey God, to live for your own glory instead of his own, to be a consumer instead of generous, that's the world system.

And if you don't believe me, go see Avatar, the most demonic, satanic film I've ever seen. That any Christian could watch that without seeing the overt demonism is beyond me. I logged on to christianitytoday.com and the review was reflective of Christianity today, very disappointing. See, in that movie, it is a completely false ideology, it's a sermon preached. It's the most popular movie ever made, and it tells you that the creation mandate, the cultural mandate is bad, that we shouldn't, we shouldn't develop culture, that's a bad thing. Primitive is good and advanced is bad and that we're not sinners, we're just disconnected from the divine life force, just classic, classic, classic paganism, that human beings are to connect, literally, with trees and animals and beasts and birds and that there's this spiritual connection that we're all a part of, that we're all a part of the divine. It presents a false mediator with a witch. It presents false worship of created things rather than Creator God in absolute antithesis to Romans 1:25, which gives that as the essence of paganism. It has a false incarnation where a man comes in to be among a people group and to assume their identity. It's a false Jesus. We have a false resurrection. We have a false savior. We have a false heaven. The whole thing is new age, satanic, demonic paganism, and people are just stunned by the visuals. Well, the visuals are amazing because Satan wants you to emotionally connect with a lie.

And some of you say, "This is my first time, is he a fundamentalist?" I've never been accused of that. I've been accused of many things, not being a fundamentalist. I do love film, I love story. My degree's in communication. I've got two home theater systems. I've got three Tivos, all right, I am not against technology and the arts. Our film crew just was in L.A. at Universal Studios shooting on the Spartacus set to get all of our footage for Good Friday. Some of my friends are filmmakers and poets and artists and we're a very creative church. We just don't like Satan, that's all. We love the arts, we just don't like Satan. And it's amazing to me that Christians are going to the movie going "That was so enlightening." No, that was so darkening. It's a worldview. It's the way to view the world. "Oh, the problem isn't sin, it's disconnected from the divine demonic spiritual life force. Oh, the problem is not that I need a savior, the problem is that I need to live in tune with creation." This is all eastern garbage -ism. It just is. "Spark a divinity within you, God is in everything. You don't need God to come and save you." That's all it is, it's worldliness.

So you have three enemies; the world, this system of thinking and corruption that teaches you lies about you and God and the world and your place in it; the flesh, your internal predisposition toward rebellion and death; and also the devil, a real enemy of God and his servants and demons with them all working together to get your flesh to follow the world rather than the Scriptures. Number two, my point: that Satan is not our only enemy.

3. You need to know your enemy.

Number three, you need to know your enemy. Satan is not like God, he's not God. He's not equal to God. He's not our only enemy, he's a real enemy, and number three, you need to know him. You need to understand him and study him. 2 Corinthians 2:11 in the New International Version says it this way, I like it. It says, "Satan won't outwit us providing we understand his schemes."

Some of you have never been in a fight. If you've ever been in a fight or even a modified version, which is usually an athletic competition, you know the key is to study your opponent. If you don't know your opponent, your odds of losing go up. You need to know their strengths, so you can defend yourself there, their weaknesses, so you can attack them there. I'm a big fan of MMA, no secret there, not doing it, you could get hurt, but I like watching it. And what you find in MMA is there's all these different styles. There's wrestlers and jujitsu and Muay Thai and boxing, all these different disciplines and each have strengths and weaknesses. So if you're a wrestler up against a guy who's a boxer, first thing you need to do is kick his legs a

lot because if he plants the front foot, he's gonna knock you out. But if you kick away the front leg, you take away his power then you could shoot, get him to the ground. If you're a wrestler, now you're in control. You've maintained top position. If you're someone who's got a great stand-up game, let's say you're a Muay Thai fighter, but you don't have much of a ground game, well, then the best person to defeat them is someone who knows jujitsu. They get you on the ground, they get you in some weird hold, next thing you know you're out cold, don't even know what happened to you. 'Cause Muay Thai's all about knees and elbows so you gotta be working from the top, from the clinch. But on the ground, you're in trouble. The point is you know your enemy, you know their strengths and weaknesses, you defend yourself at point of weakness and you attack at the point of strength. If you don't know Satan, you will be defeated. That's the big idea.

The Demons Obey Jesus

So back to the story. He has somehow gotten access to someone in the congregation. Jesus shows up, God in human flesh, preaching and teaching and this demon is manifested through this person. Now there's a conflict. All of a sudden this synagogue is an octagon and there's going to be a conflict right there among God's people. Luke 4:35-37, "But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent and come out of him!' And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. And they were all amazed and said to one another, 'What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!'" And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region." Now they're amazed by the authority of Jesus in preaching and in commanding spirits. See in that day, some of the rabbis would try and deal with demons, but it was more like Poltergeist or Exorcist or Rosemary's Baby, it went really bad really fast. They didn't know what they were doing. They had weird incantations and ways of doing things. And Jesus just shows up with complete divine authority and says, "You, go," done, simple. That's authority. And the demons obey him because he is God, and they have to obey him because his authority is ultimate.

Your Life Is Like a House

Now some of you will want to know how in the world did this guy get demonized. The Bible doesn't generally use the word demon possession, some of your translations will. It uses the word "demonized," that can be internally influenced, externally oppressed, completely controlled, it's a wide range of usage and meaning. But how does that happen? I'll use an analogy building on a metaphor that Jesus uses. He uses the analogy about Satan and demons about a house. So let's look at your life and your body like a house, you live in it. Now what happens to your house if you leave all the windows open, all the doors open and you invite all the wrong people over? They move in, they trash the place, they do horrible things, they torment you, they destroy your house. They take over your life. Your life is like that through sin, unrepentant sin, habitual sin, folly, general spirituality. Yes, this includes Buddhism, Hinduism, Jehovah's witnesses, Mormons, Muslims, all demonism, spiritual power through sources other than the God of the Bible. You're involved in the occult, witchcraft, drunkenness, sexuality, all these kind of things. What you're doing is you're opening the windows and you're taking the hinges off the doors and you're inviting unclean people and things in. At some point, it can go really bad for you, really bad for you.

See some of you don't look at it that way. You just think sin is the breaking of a law, which it is, but sin is also the opening of a door. How many of you tonight would go to bed with all of the doors off the hinges in your house? But some of you do that spiritually every day. Unrepentant, habitual sin, folly, religion, and spirituality.

What happens then is if you're a non-Christian, see your house belongs to Satan. You either belong to God or Satan. So if you're a non-Christian, you might be nice, spiritual, moral, decent and good, and Satan wants you to believe that you're wonderful because he loves pride and as long as you're happy being on his team, he's not going to disrupt anything. And so he owns you and then he possesses you. He owns you and your life and he starts to do devastation, his work always leads to death.

Now if you're a Christian, does Satan own your proverbial house, yes or no? No, but can you open yourself up to all kinds of torment and influence by inviting people and things into your life that shouldn't be there? Yes, yes. We don't know whether or not this man was a believer, all we know is he had opened all the doors and windows to his house to the point where when Jesus shows up, there's actually a demon connected to this guy. A Christian cannot be demon possessed, Jesus owns them, but they can be demonically influenced by all the openings in their life.

That's why one of my frequent prayers is when I'm repenting of sin and dealing with God, is: "God close any doors I've opened, take back any ground I have given. I command everything and everyone that has does not love and serve Jesus away from me and my family. I pray against the enemy and his servants, their works and effects, and I command them away from me and my family. And I ask you, Holy Spirit, to come in, to live in me and my home and our life and to have your way with us." 'Cause Jesus says even if you get rid of the demons and you don't have the Holy Spirit to take up residence in your proverbial home, you get what? Seven more demons. It's a very serious matter.

See, right now Satan would whisper in some of your ears, "This is crazy talk. What he's talking about is a biomedical condition. These are people that are mentally disturbed. These are the kind of people who hear voices." The truth is they may actually be hearing voices. Their issues may not all be psychosomatic. Some people do have physical conditions, they do have abuse issues, they do have clinical diagnoses. Some people do need medicine and some people are also in bondage to the enemy who's tormenting them, harassing them, yelling at them. And people who dismiss the spiritual and only evaluate the physical, they're not able to do the best in treating the whole person. This man's in torment and Jesus sees it and delivers him.

How to Open the Doors and Windows

How many of you right now would like to know what things do you do to open the doors and windows? It'd be nice to have a checklist. I'll give you one from Scripture. The Bible's true and it gives us information so that Satan won't outwit us because of his schemes.

Ordinary Demonic

We'll start with the ordinary demonic. These are just ways to open the windows, open the doors, come on in, ruin my life. Sexual sin: porn, fornication, adultery, bisexuality, bestiality. Marriage between Christians and non-Christians. I'll put all this on the blog and you can look it up later. False religion, false teaching, false Jesus. Bitterness, just unforgiveness towards someone who's sinned against you. Foolishness and drunkenness. The Bible says to be self-controlled and alert; not when you're drunk, it's impossible. Idle gossip and busybodying. That's evil? Yes, it's demonic, especially in the church. Lies. Saying lies, believing lies, particularly about God and Jesus. And idolatry, which is worshiping anyone or anything other than Jesus. All of those are ways to open doors and open windows.

Some of you say, "Well, I do that all the time." Well, that explains why you're confused, the love of God seems distant, the enemy seems near, life grows dark and cold, you get more proud and less humble, the Bible seems to be more ridiculous and you seem to be more insightful. The enemy's already doing his work. He's already moved into your house. Does he own your house? No. But you've invited him in through the ordinary demonic because some of you just think that sin is nothing more than just breaking rules. It's not, it's picking teams. And so you repent of sin and you close the windows and you shut the doors and you invite the Holy Spirit so that you can live in obedience without allowing your enemy access.

Extraordinary Demonic

If it escalates, it goes to what I'll call the extraordinary demonic. Torment. Physical injury, like this man whom Jesus healed and his body was thrown on the ground. False miracles, some of you say, "But this person or guru, they're very powerful." Some of you have seen auras around people and had dreams and visions and seen angels. Much of it, if not all of it, demon, demon, demon, real but deceptive. Real and powerful and deceptively real and powerful. Accusation, Revelation 12:10, "Satan is the accuser of the children of God that he accuses them day and night." Some of you have negative self-talk. Some of you hear voices, "You are a failure, you are a loser, you cannot be forgiven, you are not loved by God. You will never change. You should kill yourself. You, you, you." It's always that way. When Jesus is attacked by Satan repeatedly in Luke's Gospel, Satan says to him, "You, you, you." Some of you think you have negative self-talk, low self-esteem. Some of you, if it were a human being following you around saying these things, the diagnosis would be easy. You're being stalked and tormented. But because they're invisible, you think you're crazy. You may not be crazy. You may be opposed, you may be harassed.

Death. Ultimately Satan is a murderer, that's what Jesus says in John 8. He wants you to die, drugs, alcohol, sex, foolishness, reckless behavior, suicide. Murder and suicide is always his goal. And he works through false spirits and false spirituality. One of the great lies that the culture tells us is spiritual is good. That's exactly what Satan wants you to believe. That's why Oprah has a whole segment called spirit. All right, you know it's bad when it's not Jesus, that's the big idea. You gotta define who it is we're talking about. I don't want you to be spiritual, I want you to love Jesus. I don't want you to be connected to the spirit world, I want you to be filled with the singular Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that empowered the life of Jesus. Spirituality in all of its forms, radical environmentalism, yoga, incantation, meditation. All of it is demonism. It's opening doors, opening windows. It just is. In 1 John 4 says, "Do not believe every spirit, test the spirits to see whether they love God or not." People don't discern, they don't test, they don't come back to Scripture. The result is they open the windows, they open the doors, they invite in their enemies and their life is destroyed or worse still, Satan blesses them. They're powerful, rich, famous, proud, and then they don't see any need for God because their life is so good because Satan has done nothing but make them fat and happy for the day of his feast.

This man comes before Jesus and by his own authority, he casts this demon out and the word goes around. Jesus is here. There's no one like him. He has authority that is unprecedented, unequalled, and unparalleled.

Peter's House

Now what happens next is the scene shifts from the synagogue to Peter's house. Peter's house is very important historically. It becomes the epicenter for Jesus' early ministry. Peter's house is small, it's not big. Few hundred, 200, 300, 400, 500, I don't know how big it was. I'll show it to you in a moment. It wasn't a big house. We're looking at a small town, small house, simple working-class fisherman. Jesus lived there. Jesus lived there. Jesus stayed there. Other disciples lived there, stayed there. The early church started meeting there. Christianity started as a community group at Peter's house. You're gonna see its inception and inauguration. And from there it kept growing so they kept knocking out walls and rebuilding Peter's house until it became a large church. I want you to know that all of this is actual, factual historical, and true. The Bible's not a myth and it's not a philosophy. It's a series of historical events where God worked on the earth, and I'll show you Peter's house. We were there this summer.

Hi, Pastor Mark here in Capernaum. This actually was the hometown of Peter. Jesus, though he grew up in Nazareth, made this a base of operations and a bit of a hometown for his public ministry. Just behind us is the Sea of Galilee, so all of the depictions of fishing and rural life that you see in the Gospels actually took place at this site. The scope and size of Capernaum is probably shocking to many. It was a town of perhaps fifty, no more than a hundred people. The archeological excavation behind us reveals that their homes were quite small, perhaps 500, 600 hundred square feet, the majority of which would have been dedicated to human habitation, though animals would have shared a portion of the home as well. And there's one particularly noteworthy excavation and that is the home of Peter, and this was the original footprint and the archaeological dig of Peter's residence. You're looking at a very small space, of course. And this is where Peter lived. This would have been where Jesus would have visited him. And what's curious is that many of the early disciples of Jesus, Peter, Andrew, James, John, Matthew either were from or at some point resided in the town of Capernaum. And so when you're looking at a town of maybe ten, twelve, fifteen families, to get that many men to follow Jesus and to forsake their jobs and careers was actually a big sacrifice. Over the course of history, Christians started worshiping in Peter's house, likely was the meeting of the first church. And so over time, additions were added on to Peter's home so that Christianity could grow and the church could grow and ultimately a Catholic church was built on top of the ruins just above us. And so there you have it, Peter's house.

Amazing isn't it? It's all true, guys. The Bible's true. That's the big idea. The Bible's true. Satan's a liar, the Bible's true.

Jesus Heals Peter's Mother-in-Law

I'll show you what happened at Peter's house right here. Luke 4:38-39, "He arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house." That's Simon Peter's house. "Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them."

I'll do one theological excursus. How many of you, like me, grew up Catholic? You're a Catholic? Okay, I was an altar boy, O'Driscoll. We're a bunch of Irish mix all the way back, Irish-Catholic mix. That's what we were. And I was always told Peter was the first Pope and he didn't have a wife and it's not good to have a wife, and if you want to serve God you should become a priest, to not have a wife. And I said, well, that's not gonna work for a whole list of reasons, but one of them is Peter had a wife.

Here he had a mother-in-law. And just so you know, a mother-in-law's always part of a package deal, right? She comes with a wife. I don't know any—I've never met a single guy—I've had a lot of conversations with single guys. I've never heard this: "I am really looking for a mother-in-law." I've never had that conversation. Now I do love my mother-in-law, we actually get along very, very, very well, but priority for me was the wife and mother-in-law is part of the deal. So if Simon had a mother-in-law, it would be very weird for the Bible to say he had no wife, but he did have a mother-in-law. That's just peculiar all by itself. 1 Corinthians 9:5 says that Peter had a wife. Eusebius, the early church historian, says that Peter's wife actually loved the Lord and was actively involved in women's ministry. So we love Catholics and some are brothers and sisters in Christ, but Peter was married and he and his wife lived in this home and apparently their mother-in-law lived with them or was staying with them.

And she's really sick, it says, with a high fever. Now recording this is Luke the physician. And a high fever, here we're talking about she's approaching that place where she could die. They can't get that fever to break. So they appeal to Jesus, please, heal her. He comes over her, he prays for her and he commands the sickness, like he did the demon, to vacate this person, and it does.

Jesus Has Authority Over Demons and Sickness

And here we see the authority of Jesus over demons and sickness. Do we believe in demons? Yes. Do we believe Jesus has authority over demons? Yes. Do we believe in sickness? Yes. Do we believe Jesus has authority over sickness? Yes. Do we believe that God can and does heal people? Yes, we do. Some get healed in this life, all of God's children get healed in the end with the resurrection of the dead where there's no more sickness, sin, death, destruction or tears, so our God is a healing God. Now we don't heal people, God does. We pray for people and God can choose to answer them if he wills. And this woman is healed.

Now Jesus is having one of those Jack Bauer days. All right, he's preached, cast out a demon, healed a woman. She gets up to take care of him, maybe make him something to eat. She's got the gift of hospitality. The kingdom is inaugurating and dawning and unveiling and he's not even done. Luke 4:40-41, you think Jesus needs a day off? Totally, he'll get one next week in the remainder of Luke 4. "Now when the sun was setting," so the Sabbath is over, "All who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. And demons also came out of many, crying, 'You are the Son of God!' But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ."

Where to begin here? He cast demons out of people and they say, "You are the Christ, you are the anointed, you are God." What he says is "I'm gonna silence you. You're not allowed to say that." Why? Well, because John the baptizer was already the forerunner and Jesus was going to speak for himself, and demons do not have part in Jesus' ministry proclaiming who he is. That would be very confusing to people. And so here's Jesus in Peter's house and if you could just get the picture, this little house is filled with people, line of people outside. It's gotten dark. Sabbath is over. They want to come and see Jesus. They want to come and see Jesus and he prays for them and he heals them and he commands demons away from them. How does he do this? He does this by the laying on of hands.

Mars Hill, we believe in this. We don't believe there's anything magical, supernatural, super spiritual in the laying on of hands. We do believe it's a sign of love and blessing and affection and encouragement and help. We believe that Jesus' brother James writes sometime later in the book bearing his name that leaders of the church are to lay hands on people in the church, especially those who are sick, and pray for them that God would heal them. So we do that at Mars Hill. You need to do that in community group, you need to do that with your friends and family. Don't just tell people "I'll pray for you." Put a hand on them and pray for them. It shows that God is loving them through you. All right, this is a shoulder-to-shoulder hug, put your hand on somebody's shoulder, put your hand on somebody's head. A lot of people feel lonely and isolated and abandoned and touch is very important. It's a demonstration of God's affection, so we pray for people. We love to pray for people. We pray for people all the time.

Have I ever seen someone healed? What do you think? Yeah, I totally have. I have. The elders of the church have seen people healed. We can't guarantee you a healing, but we can pray and God always answers prayer yes, no and later, those are his answers. He gets to pick whatever one he wants but yeah, we pray for the sick and we know that God can heal the sick and that sometimes God does heal the sick.

At Mars Hill, do we ever deal with anyone who really is demonized? Yeah, in the history of our ministry, we've seen it. I've been doing this actually fourteen years now this month is when we started our first core group meeting. And early on stuff started happening. I didn't understand it, hadn't been to Bible college, seminary, never been a member of a church, pastor in a church, had no business starting my own quite yet. Just jump into the deep end of the pool and call it a swim lesson. People started coming up to me. "I'm hearing voices. I'm being attacked. I'm seeing things." One mother, "I'm nursing my child and my chair comes off the ground." What? "What do I do?" "Find a new chair, I don't know what to tell you, like, this is totally

beyond my experience. I got nothing for ya.” All of sudden me and my family started getting demonic attacks, weird things started happening, stuff I can’t explain naturally, led me on a course of biblical study. I started in Genesis, went to Revelation, read every single verse in the Bible on Satan and demons. Read every single book that I could find on Satan and demons, a big stack.

Satan is real. He’s really at work. He really does hate Jesus. He has servants who really are working with him. We believe all of that and we’ve seen it. We’ve also seen, like Jesus did, people delivered from that kind of bondage and oppression to live new lives, and sometimes the healing is connected to the spiritual because we’re one person, many parts, material and immaterial, and sometimes when the spiritual part of a person gets fixed, the body gets healed. Sometimes, and I want to be careful with this, just ‘cause you’re sick doesn’t mean you have a demon. But some of you are demonically oppressed or influenced or non-Christians—you’re even possessed—and it leads to lots of physical problems. And if you were connected to Jesus and the Holy Spirit were to be the most powerful presence in your life, then you might also see some physical healing as well. That’s indeed true.

I don’t want you to be scared of Satan and demons, but I don’t want you to neglect them. When you see someone who is spiritually oppressed and damaged, don’t automatically just judge them and get self-righteous. Have an air of compassion about you. Pray for them, pray with them, speak the truth of Scripture into their life. You know, I see the world is at war and I see people as captives in war and I see the enemy just devouring and destroying people. And I see Jesus setting captives free and that’s what he said he would do at the inauguration of his ministry as he read from Isaiah early on in Luke 4.

Jesus’ Authority Becomes Our Authority

Now in saying this as well, I know that some of you can immediately gravitate toward what I’ll call guru-ism. Guru-ism is “I need to get the Holy Spirit man to fix my problem.” The truth is every Christian has the delegated authority of Jesus Christ equally. It’s not that pastors have 100% spiritual authority and deacons 80% and community group leaders 75% and the rest of you are at, you know, 25% of spiritual authority. It’s that God gives full spiritual authority to all of his children. And it’s not our authority, it’s Jesus’ authority. That’s why we need to be humble.

Anyone who goes out without the Holy Spirit and the authority of Jesus and arrogantly thinks, “I’m just gonna go do some ghost busting and find me some demons and crack some heads,” you’re gonna end up like the seven sons of Sceva in the book of Acts where they go out to deal with demons and they don’t come in Jesus’ authority and they get beaten, bloodied, stripped naked, running for their life. All right, you just don’t want to practice in the demonic. That’s not a good place to practice, but the truth is that you and I have the delegated authority of Jesus, meaning if you’re being harassed, you can command demons away from you in Jesus’ name. If you’ve opened up your life, you can repent of your sin, ask the Holy Spirit to lock down the windows and doors and you can command Satan, his servants, their works and effects away from you in the name and authority of Jesus and they obey. Not ‘cause we’re powerful, but because he’s victorious.

And what happens is that Jesus ultimately is going to the cross. He suffers and dies in our place for our sins. Colossians 2:13–15 says, in so doing, he died for our sins, he disarmed the powers, principalities and spirits. He triumphed over them and he canceled any right they have to us. See, through sin and rebellion and folly, we have joined Satan in his war against God. Through repentance and faith in Jesus because of his death, burial, and resurrection, our allegiance to Satan is canceled, our freedom in Christ is granted and then God’s enemy becomes our enemy and Jesus’ authority becomes our authority.

And like Jesus, speaking the truth of the word of God, we, too, are delegated that authority, all of the children of God. I teach this to my little kids. They used to have, occasionally, demonic things happen at night. They would run in, “Pray for me, pray for me.” “I’m glad to but pray for yourself. You belong to Jesus. You’re a Christian. The Holy Spirit is in you. You have the same authority that I do.” It was a great joy to me when one of my younger children recently was awakened. They felt the presence of something. They said they saw something, they heard something in their room, they were very scared. And I asked, “What’d you do?” They said, “I prayed to Jesus and I commanded in Jesus’ name this thing to leave me and I went to sleep.” That’s what we’re talking about. It’s not Rosemary’s Baby, The Exorcism, it’s not letting Satan and demons show off. It’s not being totally terrified of them. It’s knowing that they’re real, but so is the resurrection of Jesus.

I’ll close with this, Colossians 2:9–10, “For in him,” that is Jesus, “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,” Jesus is God, become a man. “And you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.” That is, powers and principalities and spirits and demons, language. Jesus is the highest authority that he is God come to save us and that he fills us that we might have the same Spirit, the Holy Spirit and same authority, his resurrection authority over Satan and demons. We believe in Satan and demons, but we don’t emphasize them because it’s all about Jesus and the authority is in Jesus.

So here’s the bottom line. Some of you are not Christians, you belong to Satan, you’re going to hell. Some of you are sensing it with a life of torment, confusion, and death. Some of you, Satan’s tactic with you has been to make you fat and happy so you have no urgent sense of need for Jesus. Some of you are Christians, you’re not possessed by Satan but through unrepentant habitual sin, stupidity and spirituality, you’ve opened the doors and windows and you’ve invited people and things into your life that you need to repent of, kick out with the authority of Jesus, lock the door, shut the windows, be filled with the Holy Spirit and keep your house clean. So we’ll pray.

Father God, I do pray against the enemy, his servants, their works and effects. God, I pray you would forgive us of our sins and cleanse us of our unrighteousness. I pray that you would reveal to us the resurrected spiritual authority of Jesus. Jesus, we claim your victory on the cross where you paid our debt and you freed us from our slavery and you defeated our enemy, and we thank you for your victorious resurrection where you are now seated above all principalities and powers and spirits, that you are the authority above all authorities and that you delegate to us your authority, those of us who are Christian. May we not obsess over Satan and demons, may we not deny Satan and demons. May we rebuke them in your name. May we do

so humbly, not arrogantly, falling into the devil's trap of spiritual pride. May my friends who are non-Christians become Christians? May my friends who are Christians repent of sin, receive the Holy Spirit, shut the windows, lock the doors and not invite the enemy into their life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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Note: This sermon transcript has been edited for readability.

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