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Desperate

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Desperate

“As Jesus stepped ashore, a certain man from the town met him who was possessed by demons. For a long time this man had worn no clothes and had not lived in a house, but among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before him, and shouted with a loud voice, ‘Leave me alone, Jesus, Son of the Most High God! I beg you, do not torment me!’ For Jesus had started commanding the evil spirit to come out of the man. (For it had seized him many times, so he would be bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard. But he would break the restraints and be driven by the demon into deserted places.) Jesus then asked him, ‘What is your name?’ He said, ‘Legion,’ because many demons had entered him. And they began to beg him not to order them to depart into the abyss. Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and the demonic spirits begged Jesus to let them go into them. He gave them permission. So the demons came out of him.” —Luke 8:27-31

This passage of scripture certainly gives assent to demonic possession being one of the worst forms of human suffering known to mankind. Naked, homeless, living amongst the dead, chained, and driven to solitary places, this poor man’s spirit was in dire pain and distress. Blackest darkness certainly prevailed until Jesus appeared bringing light onto the scene.

Throughout the Bible, demons have always recognized Jesus and His power over them. I am reminded specifically of the first chapter of Job. The scene is heaven:

“Now the day came when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD—and Satan also arrived among them. The LORD said to Satan, ‘Where have you come from?’ And Satan answered the LORD, ‘From roving about on the earth, and from walking back and forth across it.’ The LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and turns away from evil.’ Then Satan answered the LORD, ‘Is it for nothing that Job fears God? Have you not made a hedge around him and his household and all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his livestock have increased in the land. But extend your hand and strike everything he has, and he will no doubt curse you to your face!’

“So the LORD said to Satan, ‘All right then, everything he has is in your power. Only do not extend your hand against the man himself!’ So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.” —Job 1:6-12

God is always ultimately in control. Satan, the accuser, cannot buffet the child of God apart from God’s divine permission. God’s purposes are never thwarted (Job 42:1). Yet, for a time, Satan has dominion over the earth and its people. For believers, Satan’s power and authority have been disarmed by Jesus by the cross. Scripture tells us:

“And even though you were dead in your transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he nevertheless made you alive with him, having forgiven all your transgressions. He has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross. Disarming the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” —Colossians 2:13-15

Indeed, Satan has no control over the life of a believer. However, while Satan’s power has been disarmed through Jesus, he certainly continues to shoot plenty of his fiery darts at us, seeking our ruin. If he cannot keep us from being saved, his strategy is to keep us from being used. Peter gives us this command:

“Be sober and alert. Your enemy the devil, like a roaring lion, is on the prowl looking for someone to devour. Resist him, strong in your faith, because you know that your brothers and sisters throughout the world are enduring the same kinds of suffering.” —1 Peter 5:8-9

When Jesus asks this demon possessed man his name, He is asking for more than just what the man is called. In those days people’s names were reflective of their character, their reputation. Interestingly, the name “Legion” referred to a division of three to six thousand men in the ancient Roman army. This name indicated that the demons were a large organized body, a vast host, a multitude in number. A pathetic sight for certain. This man was hopeless and helpless to change anything about his dire condition. We have no idea what it means to be possessed by such monsters, but I am certain we have all experienced circumstances when we have felt totally powerless.

Jesus desires to remedy our situations too—whatever they may be. Oftentimes it is in these instances that we are reminded of our total dependency upon Him. All the while He is gently whispering in our ears:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and my load is not hard to carry.” —Matthew 11:28-30

Become More

“Now to the one who is able to keep you from falling, and to cause you to stand, rejoicing, without blemish before his glorious presence.” —Jude 1:24

Today, embrace the power you have in Jesus to overcome your desperate situations. He is with you!

Further References

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come so that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” —John 10:10

“Finally, be strengthened in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Clothe yourselves with the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.” —Ephesians 6:10-11