

(The Role of Demons in Today's Society) Part 3

by Dean Hochstetler

Understanding our position in Christ is essential for experiencing God's acceptance, affirmation, and authority in our lives.

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Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 9:1, Luke 10:1, John 8:32-36, Ephesians 1:3-6, Ephesians 6:10-18

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Demonic Oppression"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by discussing how we come to know God. He then expresses his concern about the number of Christians who do not truly understand their identity in Christ. Using a personal anecdote about walking on a fence, he emphasizes the importance of keeping our focus on God and His Word to avoid spiritual pitfalls. The speaker then shares a powerful testimony of a woman being set free from demonic oppression through the authority of Jesus Christ. He concludes by illustrating the difference between power and authority, using the example of a traffic policeman.

Transcript

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the free will offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. This morning I wish to do two things.

First of all, a presentation on how we come to know God. Then second, after a short break, perhaps a chorus or two, then I want to begin with the major address of the morning on the believer's authority. I am appalled as I travel across the ever-widening circle of the Christian Church of the amount of people who are Christian yet do not know who they are.

And as a result of not knowing who we are, we remain relatively powerless. At the same time, it is Romans 1-4 which says, Jesus Christ, declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection, and the

Christian is in Christ. Therefore, the Christian Church is designed to be powerful to the pulling down of Satan's strongholds.

Let's take a look this morning from God's Word as it is found in Colossians 2. I will begin reading at verse 8. See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world rather than according to Christ. For in him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form, and in him you have been made complete. He is the head over all rule and authority.

And in him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the removal of the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ. And having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. And when you were dead in your transgressions, in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.

Having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us, he is taking it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. And now notice carefully the next verse. When he had disarmed the rulers and authorities, he made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through him.

That means that God is the power, who through the agency of Christ on the cross, has stripped Satan of his power, and handed it to the Son. Now Satan has had title deed to this world, ever since Adam gave it to him back in the garden, because of his disobedience. God had said to Adam, there's the world, get it under your feet, subdue it.

Instead of doing that, Adam listened to Satan's voice, obeyed him, and gave him the title deed that he had. Jesus Christ now has that title deed, because of what God has done through the cross, and has stripped Satan of his power. The Christian, by definition, is in Christ.

Therefore, the Christian has authority to deal with Satan and his host. But alas, we often fail to see that. Let's look at it this morning.

To help us understand a bit better. Three men walking on the fence. I recall oh so well an instance from my childhood, when Thanksgiving dinner was at Grandfather's.

And a bunch of us boys got it in our heads to walk down the top of the board fence. And I happened to be next to last, and Cousin Maynard was behind me. We all were doing fine, marching right down the fence, until I got it in my head to turn around and see how Maynard was getting along.

And guess what happened? I fell into the barnyard. You see, if I had kept my focus in the right direction, that wouldn't have happened to me. And that's exactly what takes... We need to remember that the facts of God's word come first.

They do not change. They are always constant and the same. We need to put our faith in those facts.

Feelings are going to come along by themselves. But if we turn around and put our faith in feelings, we're going to tumble off of the fence. Because feelings are not stable.

They fluctuate. But facts do not fluctuate. They are constant.

Therefore, the truth of God's word is to be believed by you and I. And that will stabilize our feelings. This overhead, dealing primarily with worldview, that God is up here, the angels and the demons are in the center, and the realm of man and things beneath. The whole issue of dealing with Satan and his host has to do with the honor and glory of God.

Satan would like to very much, and I suggest to you a careful reading of Isaiah 14. He would like to get up here where God is and displace him. Well, he can't do that.

There's no way he can get there. So his next best ploy is to attack God's children and afflict them, if he can. The problem is, far too many people see Satan up here on the same level as God.

And that's not true. The passage in Colossians says that Satan has been stripped of his power. He is seated at the right hand of God the Father.

That will be the force of the presentation from Ephesians 1 and 2. And that the believer is seated with Christ in heavenly places, far above the principalities and the powers of this world. Now, we have to get that perspective straight as to who we are and where we are. Because if we fail to see that, we will be like I was walking on the fence when I misplaced my perspective.

Sin always brings suffering, even to the innocent. Mark it down and mark it well. When somebody sins, somebody suffers.

You never escape that. And often it's innocent people that suffer because of it. Therefore, the great need for forgiveness.

Forgiveness is perhaps the number one issue in the Christian church. That is so sadly not appropriated. As a result of unforgiveness, you have anger, resentment, grudge-holding, hatred, and even murder.

I see a vast number of troubled people these days. Eighty-five percent of them have one problem in common. The problem of resentment against someone, living or dead, that they have never resolved.

When you read Matthew 18 carefully, you find it stated that here was a man who owed ten million dollars. He didn't have it to pay, and his Lord forgave him the debt. That same man went out and found a fellow servant who owed him twenty bucks and began to choke him and demand, give me the twenty bucks.

He didn't have it. He had him thrown in jail till he paid. I suppose you earn a lot of money in jail.

The boss man found out about it. Called that first man in who had the ten million forgiven him. Said, look, I forgave you all that debt because you asked.

Shouldn't you have had mercy? Then he said, because you didn't have. I am going to deliver you over to the torturers until you pay up. Either have mercy on your brother or suffer.

It's as simple as that. If you will not forgive, then you're going to have to live with the suffering because forgiveness releases the other person. I'll illustrate that with these two stick men.

The person over here has been offended. He's hurt. He's in pain.

He may be suffering from despair. The offender says, it's not my fault. He had it coming.

So what? The Bible says, forgive this person that offended you because you will release yourself. Now, Jesus did that on the cross. He said, Father, forgive them.

They don't know. How do you experience God? Authority, accountability, affirmation, acceptance. Do you experience God from the top down or from the bottom up? Which? I wonder what would happen if I asked for a show of hands on that this morning.

Now, think about that for a bit. How does God come to you? The Bible says, Matthew 11, 28, Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy, and my burden light.

If you are experiencing God from the top down, then you will see God carrying a big stick to bop you one the minute you get out of line. In other words, you have to get your life and your act cleaned up before you can come. May I submit to you this morning that that approach is not biblical.

The Bible says that God accepts us where we are as we are. This is the assembly of the saints this morning that meet here in Kelowna, Iowa. Perfect people? No.

Perfect speaker? No. If you have any doubt about that, consult with my wife. Or go talk to the neighbors.

They'll tell you. But we're on the road. You see, we have been redeemed by the blood.

God accepts and he affirms us. Therefore, we can become accountable to his authority. That's bottom up.

That's the grace of God shown to us in Jesus Christ. John 1.12 says, I am God's child. John 15, I am Christ's friend.

Romans 5.1, I am justified. 1 Corinthians 6, I am bought with a... Ephesians 1 says, I am a saint. He says that to you.

It's rather interesting that the letter of 1 Corinthians was written to the Corinthian church and addressed to the saints that be at Corinth. And then Paul goes on to deal with some 17 different things that need help in the church. How many do you have here in this area that need help? But who are the saints? Are we not part of that? The Bible says so.

Ephesians 1.5 says... Ephesians 1.7 says that I am redeemed by the blood in heavenly places. Romans 8.1 and John 15.15... All the amount of people that one meets up with who sit on the benches of the Christian church who are trying to become branches. You can't.

You are a branch. If you are a branch, then what is the function of the branch on the apple tree, for example? What do branches do on apple trees? They bear apples, don't they? They bear fruit. We don't try to be branches.

We are branches. All of this and much more. The New Testament pictures.

We are accepted. One of our big problems, and Mennonites in particular have this problem, simply because of our emphasis on doing good works. We need to know... Romans 8.32-36 says that if the Son shall set you free, then you are free indeed.

We need to know that we are a free people. That, then, will be be. We can divide the book of Ephesians into three nice units.

The first unit is the Christian's wealth. Up to 2.6. The rest of chapter 2, 3, 4, and 5, the Christian's walk. Because when you get to Ephesians 6, it's the Christian's warfare.

Mennonites in particular have become so peace-loving they have forgotten they're the devil to fight. We need to return to... Not that peace is not important. That's not what I mean to say.

But we have the perspective out of balance. We need to know. We need to be.

Then we can proceed with doing. The problem is we so frequently want to... Problem that we need to deal with are the lies... Behold to my... Then you will know the truth. This is from the address of Jesus to the Pharisees.

Nowhere in all of scripture is there more scathing language than what Jesus addressed to the Pharisees. The woman caught in adultery, for example, that was brought to him. And may I submit to you, the text says that woman was caught in the very act.

I often wonder where the man was. But very likely she was standing there in the midst of those men stark naked. What a shameful position.

You don't find any gentler words to anyone in scripture than what Jesus used with her. I don't condemn you. Go and don't sin anymore.

That's forgiveness. But to the Pharisees, those of you that have no sin, throw a first rock. You go on in that chapter to verse 44.

You are of your father the devil. That's terrible language. Jesus said they were like a bunch of whitened graves.

He said the prostitutes would get to heaven before they would. He called them a bunch of snakes. Terrible language he used for those self-righteous characters.

The last Pharisees haven't all died. Satan comes along and says you sin sometimes. God says a person declared there are the scriptures that bear it out.

1 Peter 2.9 These scriptures declare that we are saints who may on occasion sin. People have to say about you. What a place to get identity.

People have lots of things to say that aren't true. So does Satan. God says you get your identity from what God says about you.

This little phrase in him appears numerous times in Romans. We've been crucified with Christ. We've died with him.

We've been buried with him. We've been raised with him. Alas, far too much of the Christian church stops right there.

That isn't all that's involved in being in Christ. We shall see a little later. From Ephesians chapter 1 through 2.6. Who the believer is in Christ.

That little phrase in him is either stated or implied in Ephesians 1 to 2.6 nearly twenty times. That much statement in that short a space, it must be important. And it is.

That is God's truth. Satan says you get your identity from what you have done. God says you get your identity from what God has done for you.

Ephesians 1.7, Galatians 2.20, 2 Corinthians 5.17. Satan comes along and says you can't have peace with God. You aren't saved. You're not forgiven.

Look at your record. Now let me try something interesting here. May I see the hands of those of you that would like to have the record of your life's experience up here on this overhead? May I see your hands? I haven't seen a single one and notice I kept mine down too.

I have a record that I have made in life. And I confess to you I'm not very proud of it. There's stuff in that record that I just assume you don't know.

But it is my record. I made it. I cannot change it.

Neither can you. The only thing that can be done with my record and yours is have it forgiven and put it under the blood of Christ. That's all that's possible.

Now, Satan says the record still holds. I've got you. I'm safe.

God says the blood of Jesus applies to my record. I'm safe. Remember the story back there in Exodus chapter 12? Children of Israel were told by God to Moses to the people, take a lamb from the flock, kill it at twilight on the fourteenth day, put some of the blood on the doorpost and the lintels of your house, and go inside and prepare the lamb to eat.

I'm coming through the land tonight, God says. When I see the blood, I pass over. And where there is no blood, there will be death of the oldest child and the oldest animal.

Now, I have learned a bit about human nature over the years. And I can well imagine that there were Egyptians who heard, put blood on the doorpost and the lintel of your house. And I can imagine that there were Israelites who heard that and said, I hate having that bloody mess on my front door.

I'm not doing it. Forget it. What were the results? Come midnight.

Wherever the blood was, there was safety. Was it Israelite or Egyptian? It didn't matter. And where there was no blood, there was death.

That blood was for God to see. For God said, when I see the blood, you're safe. And God sees my sinful record and years under the blood of the cross.

He says, safe. That's acceptance. That's affirmation.

Sin has always produced guilt. And there has to be provisions to cleanse my guilt. My guilty conscience.

It needs help. Dr. Carl Menninger, founder of Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kansas, largest Christian psychiatric facility in the world, who once made this statement, If I could secure forgiveness of sins for my patients, I could dismiss 90 percent tomorrow. Dr. Menninger saw the relationship between mental illness and emotional distraction coupled up with unforgiveness, with guilt.

Now the Bible says, in Hebrews 9, 11-14, that the blood of Christ applied to my conscience eases the conscience. That subject is important enough that it's treated again in chapter 10, 19-20. When the blood of Christ is applied to our guilt, our conscience is eased and we are at peace.

But Satan speaks to the contrary. Now who are you going to believe? The voice of the devil or the facts of God's word? Which? Satan says your behavior tells you what to believe about yourself. God says your belief about yourself will determine your behavior.

John 14, 6. John 15. As a result of knowing who you are in Christ, a person will practice what he believes in time of crisis. Not what he professes.

Belief will determine what you do. We need to get those facts straight because those are the basics of salvation and the basics of being in Christ. Know what God says about your position.

Believe that to be true, that is who you and I are. As a result, we will act in Christlike way. It is only then that we can submit to the authority of God.

Then we can resist the devil and he will flee from us. Now those are some very elementary but very basic truths. How do you experience God? Do you see him accepting you and affirming you? So that you can become accountable to him.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the 9th of Luke. Luke chapter 9, verse 1. And he called the twelve together, gave them power and authority over all demons and to heal diseases. And he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing.

Luke 10. Now for this the Lord appointed seventy others. He sent them two by two ahead of him to every city and place where he himself was going to come.

And he said to them, The harvest is plentiful but the laborers few. Beseech the Lord of harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Now let's keep in mind that the great commission in the last chapter of Matthew says, Go teach all that I have taught you.

Does that then include Luke 9-1? Huh? Does it include Luke 10? Let's go a little further in Luke 10. Verse 17. The seventy returned with joy saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.

He said to them, I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. And nothing shall injure you.

Nevertheless, don't rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you. Rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven. Ephesians 1, verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

See, already here appears that in him. Ephesians 1-7. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace.

That's acceptance. Verse 13. In him you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having believed, you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit.

When you become a believer in the finished work of Jesus Christ, you receive the down payment of the Holy Spirit in your life. That is not speaking of his fullness. The question is not the absence or presence of

the Holy Spirit.

It says he's there. The real question is how much of me is reserved for me, and how much can he have. Go on.

Verse 18, the prayer of Paul. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. Inheritance in the saints.

Who are the saints? Any here this morning? May I see hands? Now who are the rest of you? Perhaps we're a bit too modest to say that. But let's affirm who we are in Christ. That's not being boastful.

That's taking God at his word. That's real humility. Accepting what Christ has done for you and I. And what is an inheritance? Any of you ever get any? My mother's brother died the first part of January.

And we received a copy of the will just lately. My mother is to receive \$20,000 from his estate. And us grandchildren also share in the estate.

That is an inheritance. Did we work for it? Did we earn it? No. Free gift.

And what is the surpassing greatness of his power toward us who believe? The surpassing greatness of whose power? Mine? Yours? His power. For who? People like you and I. Common ordinary people. Redeemed by the blood.

Great power, it says. Now comes the illustration. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of his might, which he bought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and seated him at his right hand in heavenly places.

What an awesome gospel. The power of resurrection morning that brought Christ from the dead, available to the Church, the likes of you and I. Isn't that great? Plug in. I invite you.

And so do the Scriptures. Put your faith there. These are facts.

Far above all rule, authority, power, and dominion in every name that's named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. He put all things in subjection under his feet, gave him his head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. Then he goes on in chapter 2 with a discourse of who we were.

And every person in the house of mature age this morning can identify with that passage. Dead in trespasses and sins in which we formerly walked. Any exceptions? No.

That's us. Verse 4. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved.

That's acceptance. Not the top down, the bottom up. See, we're dead in trespasses and sins.

We need help. And God knows that. And accepts us.

Now notice verse 6. And raised us up with him, and seated us with him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We have not been raised separately. We have been raised together.

And not only raised, but seated. You see, Christ didn't just rise from the dead. He ascended to God the Father.

1 Peter 3.22. Angels, principalities, and powers subject to him. You and I are in Christ. Therefore, subject to us.

Let us turn, then, to the subject of authority, of Christian authority. Those of you that have outline with you, turn to the section on freedom and authority, the second page. What is authority? Let's come at it from the back side for a moment and look at what it is not.

It is not the fullness of the Spirit of God in a person's life. Though that is an important subject to talk about. It is not a special gift for special people.

It is not prevailing prayer. Though that is an important issue. Might I see hands this morning of the people in the house that pray too much? I know of at least one that doesn't.

I don't know about the rest of you. Authority comes to us because we have been adopted into the family of God. We are joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

We have it because we have touched Calvary's cross. I have already pointed out Romans chapter 6 which announces that we are crucified with Christ. We have died with him.

We are buried with him. We have been raised with him. And we are ascended and seated at the right hand of God the Father.

Now, having said that, it is equally true that you and I are the body of Christ. And we are here on earth. So what happens this morning, we are assembled in this auditorium.

But our head is in heaven, seated at the right hand of God the Father. And in spirit we are there too. Now, I am old enough to remember, as are many of you, the times when Mother sent me to the chicken house to get a rooster because company was coming Sunday.

And it was my task to see to that the head came off. Well, after the head was cut off of the chicken, how long did the action remain in the chicken? Oh, it was furious for a little bit and then it came to a halt. You see, if life is going to stay in the chicken, the head has to stay attached.

If you and I are going to function as the body of Christ, then we must be attached to the head. The head cannot get work done on earth as he desires without his body, the church. He has commissioned us for that purpose, to do his work in the world.

And we cannot do that work unless we are united to the head. That is why I was saying we are branches of the vine. We are not becoming branches, we are branches.

Let's begin to function like branches. Now let me explain authority. We all know something about a policeman.

Some policemen have been on the police force for twenty years. Another policeman may just have joined that force and come out of training a week ago. Who has the most authority? What do you say? The man with twenty years' experience or the man with one week? It's the same, is it not? The one has more experience than the other, but it has nothing to do with authority.

For the John down here got married a good many years ago. That day when someone said, you are husband and wife, did they know all about that there was to know about being married? Do they know more about it now than they did then? Were they any less married at that point than they are now? We're not talking about experience here, we're talking about position. Position of authority.

Now let me illustrate with the same policeman. Let's go up here to Iowa City. It's a busy intersection.

People are getting off of work, and the traffic light fails. Well, what do the city fathers do in the interim between getting the traffic light repaired or putting a four-way stop on the corner? What do they do? Put policemen on the corner, don't they? He blows his whistle and sticks out his hand, and traffic stops. And these go.

And after a bit he reverses that whole procedure, and these stop and those go. Now does that policeman have power to stop a car? Does he? No, you can take the smallest minivan around and make pancakes out of that guy. Well, how come do people obey? Because he has authority.

Now let me give you an example from real life experience. My wife and I, along with others, have been dealing with a severely demonized woman during the past year. She came again about two weeks ago, and we ministered to her again in Jesus' name.

During the first set of sessions that we had with her, it lasted about a month. One evening in the group that was assembled was a 35-year-old woman. Her name is Becky.

She's the mother of four children. She had never participated in this kind of an exercise before. After we were at it a while, I said to Becky, why don't you sit right over here next to the afflicted woman.

And presently I said, you take charge of commanding that wicked spirit. Now the demon within the woman had no idea who that was except for her name. Didn't know anything about her experience level.

But you see, those wicked characters have supernatural knowledge. And that demon picked up on it right now. You have no experience.

You are young. Becky was equal to the occasion. That is true.

I am young, and I have no experience. But I know who I am in Christ. In Jesus' name, get packing.

And the demon wilted. Now I have better than 30 years' experience dealing with that kind of thing. But her authority was the same.

It had nothing to do with experience. Authority is authority. And the same is true for you.

Every Christian is called to stand against the powers of darkness. You heard about a situation in Haiti this morning. You heard about another and about the school system.

They confessed their involvement with witchcraft. They began to ask pardon of their peers and face God Almighty with the sin that they had committed. And they found healing and forgiveness.

There were two men in that group that had been involved in what is called oraciones de puro, which if I translate it loosely means cigar prayers. They had gone to the local witch in their unconverted state. The witch happened to be one of the few literate people in the valley.

Only about 30% of the people in that area can read and write. She took a piece of paper, wrote on it a prayer to the devil. Included in the prayer the names of women that these men were interested in.

Then they took the paper home, made a cigar out of it with tobacco and pinned it together with as many pins as were named inside. Smoked it. Powerful magic.

It did exactly what it was designed to do. But it left these men under terrible bondage. They needed help to be freed from it.

The day before we left that area, the older man came to me and said, Thank you for lending me a hand. When I repented of that thing and confessed it as sin, I lost my desire for tobacco. They hadn't been able to shake these eight years since I'm a Christian.

Isn't that great? We left that area. Went home. After we got home, I got a letter from Mrs. Case.

It was the longest letter I ever got in my life. I still have it. It starts like this.

We could write a book about the things that are happening in this valley. You know, Warren left the area until a witch from the north coast moved into the community and took up residence with the local prostitute and began to ply his trade of healing people with his powwow magic, putting curses on those that others didn't like and paid him to do. Now, among other things that I had said to the believers was, If witchcraft is being practiced in your area, if you Christians will stand in Jesus' name against it, you can bring it to a halt.

One of the men in the valley was a truck driver by the name of Cheeto. He saw the witch at work and he remembered what he had heard. He said to some of the other Christians, Remember what we heard the other week? Do you see a witch at work? Let's gather at my house in the morning to pray against the witch.

And they did. From that morning on, the hands of the witch were tied. He couldn't ply his trade.

Now, it's not open to question in that part of the world as to whether witchcraft works. Everybody knows that it does. Well, the local population saw that the witch couldn't work.

They noticed the Christians gathering every morning at Cheeto's house. They watched in the cracks in the wall and through the windows that weren't even there, and the open door. They soon had two and two put together.

It's the Christians that are causing the witch not to work. At the end of three weeks of that exercise, the local community laughed the witch clear out of the community, Get out of here! Those Christians have more power than you do. The following Sunday morning, Marshall got all four churches together at one place, and what he preached I have the least idea.

The upshot of it was, there were seven people found salvation, including the prostitute. Simply because they had seen the powers of darkness brought to nothing in Jesus' name. Every last one of you in the room this morning had more advantages than those people.

You have more education. You have more understanding and more know-how than did they. But they exercised faith in God's word to the hilt.

With astonishing results. On that same trip, there's a building contractor in Nappanee, Indiana by the name of John Mass. Perhaps some of you know him.

I've known him since I was 16 years of age. John is a fine brother. Member of the Beachy Group.

And they operate a children's home in the country of El Salvador, about 20 miles outside of the capital of San Salvador, in a little village named Aguilares. When we had decided to make that trip, I wrote John a letter. We're going to come and visit you in the month of December.

I want you to keep that in mind. That's all that John knows. It's the month of December.

He has no idea what day. We left Honduras the day after Christmas and headed for the border of El Salvador. And the further we went, the sicker we got.

I was finally so sick I was passing red blood. I said to Edna, let's call it a halt and lay it out. Ah, she said, let's plug on.

She won the argument. It was God who said to Abraham, hearken to the voice of your wife. About three o'clock that afternoon, we pulled into John's yard.

He came out of the house with his son-in-law. Just who we want to see. Said, what's up? Go get a shower, get other clothes, hurry up, get it done, go with us.

John is a soft-spoken man. I never heard him so adamant, ever. And with great reluctance, I complied.

I said, John, I'm sick, I don't want to go anywhere. Hurry up, I told you to hurry. After we were en route, I asked him, I said, John, what's the big necessity of going somewhere tonight? Well, he says, over yonder here about fifty miles, a fellow missionary by the name of Eli Glick has a preaching point.

And as sometimes a tender, a young woman, about twenty years of age, comes there. She has gotten mixed up in a love triangle, and the other woman has gone to the local wits and had a death curse put on her. She's been unconscious for three days now, and today is the day to die.

I had read about stuff like that, but this is the first time that I'm confronted with it. I confess to you the chills went up and down my back. I said to John and his son-in-law, I think we'd better pray.

So we conducted a prayer meeting the rest of the fifty miles. We got there, it was dark. I was introduced to a local Christian at the foot of the hill.

And I inquired of him, how is this death magic performed? The man knew all about it. He knew the rituals, the formulas, the whole bit. Then he added, the day she dies, it always works.

With that information, we started up the hill. We came to a little rickety house. To my consternation, there's a hundred people outside that house, a whole community.

It's the day to die, and we're going to be in on it. We walked inside the house, and evidently our praying had brought her out of coma, for she was rational. I took my Spanish Bible and began to read to her from the Gospel of Mark, the accounts of who Jesus is and what he does.

Finally came the confession of Peter, thou art the Christ. And I said to her, ma'am, what are you going to do with Jesus Christ? She thought it over for quite a while. And finally she said, I believe.

With that, in Jesus' name, began to command the powers of darkness that were behind the death magic. Giving them orders in Jesus' name, release this woman. Christ is victor.

Kept with that for about ten minutes, and felt a check within myself. Stopped, and we sat there wondering what to do next. All of a sudden, cries of freedom coming from that woman.

I haven't heard cries like that from that day to this. Tremendous cries. Expressions of joy and praise to the Lord.

Now one thing I knew, that every crack in the wall, and all those open windows, and there was no door, were all eyes. That I knew. So I walked outside the building, into the darkness.

Addressed the crowd on the hill. Informing them this woman will not die. The Lord Jesus Christ has set her free.

And I preached them a short sermon on the necessity of turning from these works of darkness to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. The next morning the woman was greatly improved. To the consternation of the whole community, for the first time in their lives they had seen the power of death magic broken.

Got a letter about six months later from John. He said that was the end of the attacks, there were no further problems. One thing I am certain of, the gospel was a lot easier to preach in that corner of the world than it had been before.

That's authority. That's not power, that's authority. Using delegated stuff that comes to us because we are in Christ.

Now I know the danger of those personal illustrations, but I know those so much better than I know any others. There are spirits that govern this whole area. They are assigned to the local churches by the master of spirits of this world, Satan.

To see to it that the church does not function. To see to it that there is strife and turmoil in the lives of people. We need to tie those territorial spirits fast.

I recommend to your reading a book, Taking Our Cities for God, by John Dawson. Or another one by Peter Wagner, Engaging the Enemy. Gives you a lot of information on that point.

Have you ever seen where Satan's program lacked funds? Did you ever see where he was out of money? Did you ever see that he lacked personnel? Have you seen the church lacking finances? Personnel? Who's tying it up? Doesn't the word say that the cattle of a thousand hills are the Lord's? And doesn't it say that no good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly? If the church lacks in funds and personnel, then Satan is behind it. Bind him fast! Tie him up! So it can't work. And liberate the people of God.

We have been told to wear the spiritual armor of Ephesians 6. The helmet of salvation. The belt of truth, which is right here. The sword of the Spirit, which is the same thing.

The shield of faith. The breastplate of righteousness. Frequently I hear people say, I put the spiritual armor on every morning before.

Put it on and leave it there. Sleep in it. You might need it the middle of the night.

Don't take it off. The Christian church is not faced with impossible tasks. We are endowed with the use of an all-sufficient name.

The Lord Jesus Christ. Let's plug in. May God be the glory.

Great things he has done. And we're part of it. Let us pray.

Father, I thank you this morning that we are your people. Imperfect though we may be, you have accepted us. And you are affirming us.

And we are becoming accountable to your authority. Grant us your blessing and your peace. That we may be the people of God.

Amen. I thank God for that reminder this morning of our position and our authority that we have. Thank you, Brother Dean, for sharing with us.

I think at this time we'll stand for closing prayer. We'll stand. And now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before his presence with exceeding joy to the only wise God our Savior be glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and ever.

Amen. Heart in peace.

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