

(The Role of Demons in Today's Society) Part 6

by Dean Hochstetler

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and renouncing Satan's works, breaking free from the powers of darkness, and providing pastoral care to those afflicted.

Duration: 46:15

Scripture: 1 Kings 18:21, John 8:32, John 8:34, 1 John 3:8

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Demonology"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal anecdote about a mission board leader who sought his advice regarding his troubled 14-year-old son. The speaker suggests that the boy may have been influenced by dark spiritual forces before being adopted. The sermon then transitions to discussing the topic of freedom from the powers of darkness, emphasizing that Christ is the victor over these forces. The speaker references the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 18, where he calls upon God to demonstrate His power and defeat the false prophets. The sermon concludes by highlighting the importance of commanding the powers of darkness in Jesus' name and the need to put on spiritual armor to withstand Satan's attacks.

Transcript

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the freewill offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. I want to take this opportunity to express thanks to you as a congregation, several congregations really, for inviting us to come and share with you in exposing the powers of darkness, in lending a hand of help to those who have been oppressed and are needy, and most of all, in declaring the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ over all the power of the enemy.

I want to make a comment on one statement that I made in a prior address. Someone called it to my attention. I made the statement that a few years ago I was at Iowa Mennonite High School for a chapel address.

As I reflect on that, it was probably about the mid-seventies, at which point the students raised so many questions about the occult realm, I came to the conclusion that about three-fourths of the population ordered their life by the horoscope. Now whether that observation is correct, I of course cannot say, but that was the impression I got from that particular encounter. So if you hear anything to the contrary, that is what I said and meant.

I have with me some books on the table, which you may avail yourself of. Here is one on the use of the divining rod, authored by the Beachy Amish. It stands solidly against its use.

This little book, *The Authority of the Believer*, there are a few left, is worth its weight in gold. There is no other document in print like it. I invite your prayers as we travel on from here to a conference in Sioux City, Iowa, International Center for Biblical Counseling.

There will likely be a meeting of perhaps a thousand people this year. It is held every two years, where people from across the world gather to encourage each other to look at God's Word and to share experiences in dealing with the persons whom Satan has oppressed. One of the speakers this year is James Friesen, Mennonite Brethren Clinical Psychologist and Pastor from Van Nuys, California.

Arle Watson, a Baptist brother from Salisbury, Maryland is there. Mark Bubek, who has written several books, Moody Press, *The Adversary and Overcoming the Adversary*. Scott Muriel, who wrote *The World of Spirits*.

And many others will have the input people at that meeting, which lasts March 3, 4, and 5. This evening, I wish to address the issue of freedom from the powers of darkness. Basically, because Christ is victor and Lord and has won the battle over all the powers of darkness on the cross. I invite your attention this evening to God's Word, first of all.

The first passage that I wish to read is from 1 Kings. 1 Kings chapter 18, beginning at verse 21. And Elijah came near to all the people and said, How long will you hesitate between two opinions? The Lord is God, follow him, but if Baal, follow him.

But the people did not answer him a word. When Elijah said to the people, I alone am left the prophet of the Lord, and Baal's prophets are 450 men. Now let them give us two oxen, let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up.

Place the one on the wood, put no fire under it. I'll prepare the other ox and lay it on the wood, and I'll not put a fire under it. Then you call on the name of your God, I'll call on the name of the Lord.

And the God who answers by fire, he is God. And all the people answered and said, That's a good idea. So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, Choose an ox for yourselves and prepare it first for you are mighty.

Call on the name of your God, but put no fire under it. Then they took the ox that was given them, and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning till noon, saying, O Baal, answer us. There was no voice, and no one answered.

And they leaped about the altar which they had made. It came about at noon when Elijah mocked them and said, Call out with a loud voice, for he is a God. Either he's occupied or gone aside or he's on a journey or perhaps he's asleep and needs to be wakened.

So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them. It came about at midday, it was past. They raved until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, but there was no voice.

No one answered, no one paid attention. Then Elijah said to all the people, Come near to me. All the people came near to him, and he prepared the altar of the Lord, which had been torn down.

Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of tables of the sons of Jacob, of whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, Israel shall be your name. So with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he made a trench around the altar, large enough to hold two measures of seed. Then he arranged the wood and cut the ox in pieces, laid it on the wood and said, Fill four pitchers with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood.

He said, Do it a second time. They did. A third time, and they did.

The water flowed around the altar, filled the trench with water. It came about the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice that Elijah the prophet came near and said, O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Today let it be known that thou art the God in Israel, and that I am your servant, that I have done all these things at thy word. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that thou, O Lord, art God, that thou hast turned their heart back again.

Then the fire of the Lord fell, consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. Then all the people saw it and fell on their faces and said, The Lord, he is God. How long shall we halt between two opinions? Is the Lord Jesus Christ exalted and seated at the right hand of God the Father, and we with him, or are we underneath Satan? Which? Who has been dominant in the work of many a church and in many a person's life? Let us continue by taking a look at 1 John chapter 3. 1 John 3 verse 8, The one who practices sin is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning.

The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that he might destroy the works of the devil. The Gospel of John, chapter 8, John 8, verse 32, Then you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We are Abraham's offspring, and have never been enslaved to anyone.

How is it that you can say we shall become free? Jesus answered them, I say to you truly, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever, the son does remain forever. If therefore the son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

It does indeed seem that in the day in which we live, the church has gotten into Saul's armor. Now you recall that story back in 1 Samuel 17. Goliath has come out and has challenged the armies of Israel.

He defied them in the name of his God, and Israel was afraid. They didn't know how to handle it. David came along, and Saul tried to outfit him in his armor.

It was big, it was heavy, it was cumbersome, it didn't fit. He wasn't used to it. He threw it aside.

Some of the things that we have gotten into are very similar to Saul's armor. They encase us with weights and problems and burdens so that we cannot be effective witnesses for Christ. And the work of evangelizing the lost goes by the wayside.

And it does appear in many quarters that the church is relatively powerless, even though it is designed to be powerful, for that is what the word says. We have gotten into Saul's armor. We need to throw it aside and use, as did David, I come against you in the name of the Lord of hosts.

That was his answer to Goliath. We need to come to the society in which we live in a very similar manner. Materialism has crippled us.

There is more attention paid to the size of bank accounts than it is to the quality of spiritual life. In many quarters there is a liberal interpretation of the word and a denial of its common sense. I have heard more than one person tell me that when the Bible speaks of demons, Jesus is simply describing mental illness in the terminology of its day.

If you take that track, then you make Jesus out to be a liar. He doesn't know what he's talking about. I did not say that there is no mental illness.

There is. You meet it on every hand. But there is also demonization of people, places, and things.

It is just as foolish to not be able to see any of that as it is to see it under the benches and behind the curtains and outside the door. God's word has balance. There is disregard for the exalted position of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have looked at that particular overhead numerous times. And it behooves us to look at it again. The believer who has received Jesus Christ by faith, according to the book of Ephesians and the book of Colossians, is exalted and seated right alongside of God the Father with Jesus Christ.

That is the believer's position. The Bible says so. And when we take any other position, then we are denying the truth of God's word.

Many a person, and I have met pastors who saw themselves down here below Satan, they were afraid of him. Wanted nothing to do with it. Oh, they're glad that somebody is doing it, but please excuse us.

Jesus gave commands in Luke 9. One, for example, Go to the world with the good news of the kingdom. Then he issued two other statements. Heal the sick.

Cast out the devils. Far too many people have no understanding of what that means. But if you are seated with Christ in heavenly places, then authority has been delegated to you.

Exercise it. In many quarters, the principalities and the powers of this world, as outlined in Ephesians 6, have been allowed to dominate the community, the government, yes, in many cases, even the church. Occultism flourishes.

There is a tremendous rise of it in the world today. Far greater than it has been in recent history. As a result of some of the things that go on, we have issues that we don't seem to be able to cope with.

We hardly know what to do with abortion. There's debate about it. Is it right or is it wrong? I can tell you plainly what the demons say about it.

They say it's murder. They agree with God's Word. The Bible says they believe in trembling.

Issues like homosexuality. It seems like the trumpet call is no longer loud and clear. This business of occult practices that I have been talking about flourishes in our communities.

The Bible says it is sin. It has awful consequences personally and generationally. I have invited you to Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28, Daniel 9, Deuteronomy 18, 9-15, Isaiah 47, Ezekiel 16, 6. I am old enough a person to remember the days of strict discipline in the church.

Someone had dress sleeves a little too short. Wow, that was a problem. Someone didn't show up for communion at least three times in a row.

That was a real problem. I never yet heard of a congregation that disciplined somebody for practicing sorcery. How come? We've even had pastors using a divining rod.

Pastors that practiced the powwow business and thought it was good simply because it worked. Never giving any consideration to where the power came from. How are these practices perpetuated? One can logically raise that question.

There are three ways. One by the lines of heredity. You have ancestors that used divining rods, pendulums, black boxes, powwows, etc.

You will find mediumistic power down the generational lines because it travels that way. The second method is transfer. I'm not giving you advice here.

I'm warning you. If you do not have the ability to use a divining rod, you take hold of the hands of someone else who is, the power will be transferred to you in a weak state, and then you can develop it. Powwowing abilities are transferred the same way, often from man to woman, woman to man, but it doesn't have to be that way.

It can be to any willing recipient. The third way is read occult literature and experiment. You'll develop those powers too.

The novels of Carlos Castaneda, for example, a competent, well-trained Spanish-American anthropologist, went into Mexico and befriended an old sorcerer by the name of Don Juan, learned his repertoire, then wrote novels. You can take those books, and with what you read, begin to practice sorcery. They're the best sellers in the bookstore because they give people a grasp on power.

Let us look this evening at the route to freedom. Enough of this dark stuff. As I said earlier, I'm not particularly interested in it.

I am interested in the victory of Jesus Christ over it. First and foremost, we need to call sin by its right name. Sin is sin.

If the Bible says that magic and divination and spiritism are sin, then they are sin. And we need to examine the forms that it takes in our communities. You'll never find a Ouija board mentioned in your Bible.

It's not there. It is, however, a combination of fortune-telling and spiritism. The basic headings are in the book.

We need to recognize that. Second, we need to break all occult contacts. Make a clean break with the stuff.

Put it away. Next, confess and repent of the acts that you have been involved in. Even though you did no better, was done in innocence, confess it and repent.

Name the acts I have learned over the course of the years that this idea of, I confess my sins, is virtually worthless. Be specific. You committed specific acts of sin.

Confess specific acts. Put it under the blood of Jesus. Receive forgiveness.

A cleansing of the conscience and move on. It is important to renounce Satan and all of his works from one's life. The early church did that.

They did it for the first 200 years of its existence. Alas, in most of the modern day churches, that particular statement has been removed from the baptismal confessional. There is no renouncing of Satan's works.

Yet they are prevalent all around us. One should make such statements verbally. They seem to carry additional force, more than when they are made in the mind.

From a standpoint of Christian evangelism, I would invite your attention to a passage like Acts 26, 18. I'll paraphrase. Paul is saying, my commission is, to go to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, so that they can see who Jesus is and be found in faith and sanctification in him.

Notice the sequence of that. Exercise authority on behalf of those whom Satan has bound. In Jesus' name is the commission and the mandate.

You do it. It is worthless to ask God to do for us what he has told us to do. He has given us the commission to go to the world with the good news.

He has said, go deal with the wicked world. Deal with those wicked spirits. Therefore, in Jesus' name, you do it.

I shall do it. Don't ask God to. He won't.

He has given authority to the believer, simply because of our exalted position with Christ. We are in him. When you hear someone confess their sins, then deal gently with them.

I tell people that the Anabaptist position, the best theology on the face of the earth to deal with sin, the Protestant idea in general is everyone is their own priest to God. The Catholic says, no, you need a priest to mediate between you and God. Anabaptist theology holds both positions as valid.

Many a person cannot get free from the bondage that Satan has put on them, either personally or ancestrally. They need somebody to help them to freedom. Serve as that person's priest.

Because he needs help. When you hear someone confessing their sins, having met the biblical criteria of release, tell them that. I pronounce you forgiven.

That's tremendously therapeutic for the person. Furthermore, when sins are confessed, at least in the presence of one other person, it holds the person responsible. And they can say to Satan when he accuses them about the past record, I put that under the blood of Jesus in the presence of another person.

It adds force to it. The issue of pastoral care. I have yet to meet a situation of severe demonization where the person comes through to safe ground without adequate pastoral care.

It's the biggest problem I face. I get phone calls from all over the country asking for help with these kind of issues. And people come from vast distances sometimes seeking help.

My first concern is always, who's going to give pastoral care? And so often you can't find anyone who will provide it. You might just as well not begin. You and I are called to be kings and priests, are we not? Let's function that way.

You don't need to be a pastor to provide pastoral care. Get your arm around that afflicted person. Help him to safety and to freedom.

You're not alone. The Lord will not lead you where he doesn't go ahead. Isn't that great? There are times when it is necessary to spend time praying over situations.

Even fasting. Jesus gave that kind of a diagnosis in the ninth chapter of Mark. The little boy that often fell into the water and into the fire.

He told the disciples pointedly, you are not adequately prepared. Deal with ancestral sin. I'm aware that this is an area of real controversy.

I had a person tell me today they positively didn't believe in it. Isn't that interesting? The medical profession does from a physical point of view. The psychologists and the psychiatrists do from an emotional point of view.

How come the church doesn't believe it from a spiritual point of view? Are we not a triune being? Are we not body, soul and spirit? Then how can it hold good for two and not for the third one? Generational sin. Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5, 9. Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28. John 9, 2. Daniel 9, 4-19.

Galatians 3, 13. 1 Peter 1, 18. Mark 9, 21.

I am fully aware of what Ezekiel 18 and Jeremiah 31 have to say. Those are chapters on personal responsibility. Calling people to deal with personal sin which has guilt connected with it.

I emphasize personal sin has guilt connected with it. Generational sin does not. Generational sin does not have guilt connected with it in regards to you or I. But our lives may be burdened because of it.

Now did you hear straight on that one? I mean to be understood on it. What the prophets are saying, they're calling people to responsibility to deal with the sins of the past that have brought burdens on people's lives. It was the sins of the forefathers that brought Israel to Babylonian captivity.

It was not the present generation that was living that was responsible. We need to understand that principle. These things need to be recognized and confessed.

Daniel does it. If not, there will be consequences to the third and fourth generation. Every book that I know of dealing with the deliverance issues treats that subject in a positive way.

Now I want to illustrate. Again this evening I'm going to use names and addresses because I have specific permission to use the story publicly. Otherwise I would not tell it to you.

This particular person is Anna Eby. Her husband Everett was a customer of mine in my working years. One day he came with an item from his combine that was broken and we were repairing it as he was waiting.

And in the process he began to tell me the problems that he has with his wife Anna. He said, my wife is nasty, vicious. She'll undercut her best friends right behind their back.

She has long fingers. She'll go into the store and steal stuff. And I got to hurry to town to cover for it to keep her out of jail.

She'll go on shopping sprees and spend hundreds of dollars for stuff we have no use for. When the bill comes to the house, if she gets a hold of it, she'll burn it. That'd take care of your credit, wouldn't it? Finally Everett is telling me these things with tears streaming down his face.

And he hadn't told me one thing I didn't know. I'd heard it all from the community. Finally I said to him, Everett, what kind of background does your wife have? What do you mean background? I said, I've heard this pattern before.

I'm suspicious of a powwow person in the near ancestry. I'm going home to find out. Two days later in the evening, Everett was on the phone.

We'd like to come over and talk with you. Well, I said, I happen to be free tonight. Come along.

So they came. What I had assumed was correct. Mrs. Eby's mother had been the powwow woman in the community all her adult life.

We discussed the issue a while. We looked at pertinent scriptures. Finally I said to him, the ball's in your court.

It's your turn to play. And then I began to lay out the whole picture before the Lord. Lord, my life is burdened.

I have these terrible problems. I do things against my own will. I don't want to be this way.

She finished with her prayer of confession, approaching it from a generational point of view. And her husband prayed with her. And when she finished, when he finished, then I prayed with them.

And at the end of the prayer, issued orders to Satan and his host, in Jesus' name, you have heard these confessions. That breaks your stronghold. It breaks the curses that are lying on Anna.

I command you in Jesus' name, be gone to the abyss where you belong. There was nothing dramatic about it. They went home.

About three weeks later, I saw Everett again. Everett, how's your wife? He had a smile from one ear to the other. You wouldn't believe that I'm living with the same woman.

The change had been that great. A couple evenings later, Anna was on the phone. Why, oh why, did I have to live with this burden for over 50 years? I said to her, I can't give you a good answer, but praise the Lord, you are now free.

You see, had the church adequately taught, she wouldn't have needed to carry that all those years. About two years later, I had a conversation with the pastor of the church. They attended.

Olive Mennonite. He said to me, Everett and Anna were the deadest people we had in the congregation. They turned from that dead wood to the livest people we've got in the congregation.

Anna couldn't pray. She couldn't read her Bible, not even privately. And now she does both publicly.

Isn't that a turnaround? Praise the Lord. And yet we have tolerated these kinds of practices under the cover of the church. When you adopt children, consider it first order of business.

Deal with that generational history, that child you're adopting. How do you know what all is back there? Most of us won't. But lay that history before the Lord.

He knows all about it. Many a disaster could be avoided if we would take that route. Instead we wait until the children are 13, 14, 15.

When they are past the age of accountability. And it's terribly late. I want to give you another illustration on that very issue.

The first year that I served as a resource person at Trinity Seminary in Dr. Warner's course titled Power Encounter. There are several of his books still laying that back there I saw. The head of one of the large mission boards in this country was in that course.

The second day he said to me, can I take you out to supper tomorrow night? And I said, of course. What's wrong with getting a free meal, you know? He showed up with six other students from the course. We had a whole lot more going to supper that night.

Among other things that he told me was the problems that he had with his 14 year old son. He said this son of mine is vicious, vile, filthy, incorrigible, lies, steals, failure in school. I know that he's bright.

He told me some other things. Finally I said to him, I think that that boy has been treated with healing magic, pow-wow, before you got him. He was Iranian by birth.

They got him as a baby. He looked at me. He said, I can't buy that.

I said, that's okay. You asked my opinion, I gave it to you. That question plagued him and plagued him and plagued him and plagued him.

Nine months later out in the eastern seaboard, he went to the bishop of his denomination in his district, laid out before him what I had said. Moreover I had said, deal with that issue while the boy is asleep. It will keep him out of the picture.

The wicked spirits don't sleep. Finally the bishop agreed that that approach could harm nothing. The following night the bishop, this man and his wife, went to the bedside of the 14 year old boy.

And in a voice just above a whisper, they began to command the powers of darkness and the authority of Jesus' name. Release this child. You're under the authority of the finished work of Christ.

There was nothing dramatic about it. But from the next morning on they had brand new sons. He went from an F to an A overnight.

School teachers came out to inquire what happened here. He later told Dr. Warner, with tears streaming down his face, that one instant alone was worth every cent I spent on this course plus all the travel. And all that I can say is, praise the Lord, I got the opportunity to be along and see the hands of God at work.

There is many a time when the Christian needs to command the powers of darkness in Jesus' name. Now I know that that sounds a bit weird to speak right out into thin air at the spirit world. But aren't you doing the same thing when you pray to God? Huh? What's the difference? The one is submission to authority and the other is command of authority.

Sometimes the powers of darkness will cloud a person's memory bank so that they cannot get a hold of what's in there that needs to come out. I have seen situations where they closed the person's ears so they could not hear, shut the mind so they couldn't think. That's the meaning of Acts 26, 18.

Take to heart what the scripture says on it. We need to put on spiritual armor for Satan will attack us. Ephesians 6, 10 to 18.

The helmet of salvation. The belt of truth. Sword of the spirit, which is God's word.

A breastplate of righteousness. Not righteousness that I have, don't have any. The righteousness imputed by God.

The shield of faith. The shoes of peace. All the equipment that is outlined we need.

And I would have you notice that there is no armor for your back. It's straight into it. I want to emphasize again where the believer's authority comes from.

It comes from us having touched Calvary. From being united with Christ. From having sins forgiven and our lives cleansed.

From being seated in heavenly places with Him. I cannot do justice in amplifying the value of the cross. The power of the resurrection, I know that I can't do that.

I don't understand all the implications and the ramifications thereof. But of a certainty I can tell you this. That there are three major values of the blood that we can never get along without.

I don't care whether you live to be 200. There's never a day, nor an hour, nor a minute when you don't need the blood of the cross. Remember again that first value of the blood on the doorpost and the lintels back there in Egypt.

For God said, when I see the blood at Passover, you're saved. All the occupants of the house that were under the blood were saved. And where there was no blood, there was death.

Hebrews 9.14 and 10.22 point out that my guilty conscience needs to be cleansed. The blood of Jesus needs to wash away my guilt and yours. This evening if you've been involved in the sins of sorcery, bring it to the cross, to the blood of Jesus, by confession and repentance.

If you are burdened generationally, bring it to the cross. Galatians 3.13 says that Christ had become a curse for us. Those generational curses are broken at the cross.

Appropriate it to yourself. Romans 8.29 to the end of the chapter raises the rhetorical question, what can separate us from the love of God? Will Jesus? Of course not. Will Satan? He'll try, if you listen to him.

But the Bible says, in Christ we are more than conquerors. More than. Seated with Christ in heavenly places, far above the principalities and the powers.

Don't ever argue with Satan about your past history, when you have confessed it and put it under the blood. Now if you haven't put it under the blood, you'd better be doing it. Because when Satan comes to you, and accuses you about your past record, and you've got it under the blood, then you can point him to the blood of Jesus and tell him goodbye.

And he's got to listen. You never get past your need for the blood. Don't ever fear the devil.

Exercise authority in the power of Jesus' name. That's the message of Ephesians 1 up to 2.6. It's the message of Exodus 14. It's the message of Exodus 17.

It's the message of the passage we read from Kings about Elijah. Power of God Almighty. How long are we going to halt between two opinions? Is God, God? Or is He not? I invite you this evening to stand to your feet.

As we sing a hymn of invitation or two. Some chorus perhaps. Those of you who wish to publicly declare a confession of sin.

Of getting right with God. Of dealing with generational sin. I invite you to the altar to do so.

I invite you to come and receive the covering of the blood of Jesus.

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