Erased - Part 2

# The Dark Side (Luke 8:26-35)

Welcome. Today, we’re in part two of our series called “Erased”. This morning we’re going to look at the Dark Side, Satan and his demons, consider who they are, where they came from, and what they’re doing in our lives today. Now, to start with, I want you to understand that the reason why we’re talking about this evil realm is so that we can better understand our enemy; we must be aware of him and understand him because he’s done a good job convincing people that he doesn’t exist. It’s as if he’s been erased from our culture and maybe you’re here and you believe in God, but you feel that that the Dark Side is just a little bit of a stretch. You know, the forces of darkness being equivalent to a cartoon picture of some little guy in a red suit with a tail and a pitchfork.

And so, if that’s you, I’m glad that you’re here because the truth is that every day there’s a spiritual battle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. Today, you and I worship the God of light and yet Satan is the ruler of darkness. Our God is truth, but Satan is called the father of lies. Jesus came that we may have life and have it to the full, but Satan came to steal, kill, and destroy. And so, the Bible clearly teaches us that,

“Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12).

Now, before we begin, I want to give you a little bit of context about the Dark Side, because a lot of people don’t understand that before the foundation of the world that God created angels. Now some traditions relying upon extra-biblical sources suggest that there are seven archangels if not more; and these are head or chief angels overseeing specific affairs according to God’s will. But we’re most commonly aware in Scripture of three archangels, Gabriel, Michael, and one named Lucifer who has fallen from grace. Now Lucifer was the earliest English translation of this angel’s name, but we also find him called Day Star, Shining Star, Star of the Morning, Morning Star, Satan, and the Devil being among the nicer titles that have been given to him. Today, we’ll use the name Satan because that’s most commonly used in our modern translations from first Chronicles chapter 21 to Revelation chapter 20.

Now, as we consider this angel, Satan, we must understand that like us he was created with free will, the ability to choose right and wrong, and so he wasn’t always bad. He was actually created as a chief worship angel, and the Bible teaches us that Satan was one of God’s best and most beautiful angels, but instead of worshiping God, he wanted to be like God. And so, instead of being like Jesus who said, “Father, your will be done”, Satan said five times, “I will, I will, I will …” and the prophet Isaiah records this in chapter 14,

“How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have...said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:12-14).

And so, Satan fell into pride, setting himself in opposition to God who said, “I will not give my glory to another” (Isaiah 42:8). Therefore, because Satan said, “I will make myself like the Most High” God cast him out of Heaven with a third of the angels that followed him. We can read about this in Revelation chapter 12, where God gives us a glimpse of this event. Verse seven says,

“There was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him” (Revelation 12:7-9).

And so, Satan desired to be worshiped, one third of the angels of heaven chose to serve him instead of God. When Satan said, “I will be like God” God had enough and said, “No, way! There is none like me.” The prophet Ezekiel recorded these words in chapter 28, where God said speaking of Satan,

“You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways

from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings” (Ezekiel 28:14-17).

This gives us a glimpse, a snapshot of the Dark Side, whose leader’s name is Satan. His followers, these rebellious and fallen angels, are the demons, the evil spirits that wreak havoc in the world today; however, we have to recognize the reality that not every bad thing that happens to us is because of demons. Much of what we face in our daily lives is because we live in a fallen world where sin abounds. And so, what we want to do today is to get a kind of overview of what demons can do, how powerful they are, and how influential they can be.

One of the best examples of this is found in Luke chapter 8, where we come to a fascinating event which brings us face-to-face with Christ’s authority and power over the Dark Side. It’s this passage that’s possibly the greatest of all deliverances that Jesus ever performed, because it’s the story of a man who’s possessed by thousands of demons. Here the Lord Jesus clearly demonstrates that he is the One who not only has power over creation, but also has the power to crush all the forces of hell which operate under the rule of Satan. Beginning in verse 26, of Luke chapter 8, Luke tells us that,

“They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes which is across the lake from Galilee. When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into them, and he gave them permission. When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned” (Luke 8:26-33).

As Jesus got out of the boat, Luke tells us that he was met by a demon possessed man; but not just one, many demons. In fact, in verse 30 it says, when Jesus asked him his name he replied, “Legion” which is a Latin term meaning a group of up to 6000 Roman soldiers. And so, the point of his name being that a large number of demons were inhabiting this man, he was literally infested with evil spirits, and he is the classical definition of a madman. Luke tells us, he was strong, dangerous, out-of-control, and yet deep inside he was hurting, because he would cry out and cut himself with sharp stones.

And so, when Legion saw Jesus, he fell at his feet crying out, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?” You see, they needed no introduction, because these demons were once part of the angelic host dwelling in the presence of God, these were those who had rebelled and been cast down, and so they knew exactly who he is. Their greatest concern was why he was there and his presence traumatized them because they know he is both their judge and their executioner.

This is an important passage of Scripture for us to understand because we often fail to recognize the unseen spirit world around us, to acknowledge the strength of the Dark Side, as well as the authority that Christ has given to us who believe. And so, today, there are three things that we need to know and the first one is this, we can’t underestimate Satan’s strength.

## 1. We Can’t Underestimate Satan’s Strength

Some of you may remember in the book of Acts when the seven sons of Sceva were trying to cast out demons? Well, one day a demon mocked them and said, "And who are you?” This account is recorded in Acts chapter 19 where Luke wrote,

“Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. [One day] the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding” (Acts 19:13-16).

And so, we must never underestimate the strength of our enemy and especially if we’re not girded up in the armor of God. You see, these seven sons of Sceva were playing with fire, they weren’t Christians, they didn’t know Jesus, and they underestimated the power of the Dark Side. These fallen angels are not confined to the limitations of space and time as we are. They’re very intelligent, experienced, powerful, and influential. As a matter fact, in second Kings chapter 19, when the Assyrian army threatened to destroy the people of God, King Hezekiah prayed and God answered his prayer. The Bible tells us in verse 35, that God sent one angel who put to death one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the enemy’s camp. When the people got up the next morning all they saw were these dead bodies!

And so, we need to understand that all of the angels were created before the dawn of time; they don’t die, and so they’re very old and very experienced. As a matter fact, they’re much superior to us; and though they’re not omnipresent like God, they move through time and space very quickly, because they move the way spirits move, not being constrained by bodies like we have.

Earlier I told you about those three archangels, Gabriel, Michael, and Lucifer. Well, Scripture tells us that even when Michael was arguing with Satan he was very respectful, even cautious, because he did not underestimate his strength. The Bible describes this in Jude chapter 9, saying that,

“Even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (Jude 9).

And so, if Satan’s own peer, Michael, wouldn’t bring in accusation against him, how much more cautious should we be? You know, while it’s true that we share in the victory of Christ, we must not be presumptuous, because Satan and his demonic hordes are very powerful and dangerous. When we resist him, we must be self-controlled and alert, standing firm in the faith. We don’t want to underestimate his power; and then number two, we don’t want to toy with seducing spirits.

## 2. We Don’t Want to Toy with Seducing Spirits

We don’t want to become partners with darkness. You see, the Bible tells us, that each and every one of us were once darkness, but as we put our trust in Christ and are born again we become children of light. And so, we have a new nature and the darkness that once was our identity should now be repulsive. It’s for that reason that Jesus warned, “If the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is! No one can serve two masters” (Matthew 6:23, NLT). For that matter, the Bible tells us in second Corinthians,

“How can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? …separate yourselves from them, says the Lord. Don't touch their filthy things, let’s cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God” (2 Corinthians 6:14-15, 17; 7:1; NLT).

And so, we don’t want to toy with seducing spirits, messing around with séances, consulting mediums, even looking at tarot cards or horoscopes because we fear God. Yet, our culture today has erased any real deeply rooted fear of the supernatural making it seem as mere fantasy or entertainment. Whether it’s clothing emblazoned with the skull and cross bones, a modern rock singer thrashing and shrieking with symbols of death tattooed all over their body, or those rappers who celebrate death, murder, rape and every form of immorality that goes along with that lifestyle. Now, maybe you find that funny, but who in the world identifies with or mocks death? Where do you think that comes from?

Just think about Legion for a minute; this demon possessed man, who’s naked and unashamed, he’s violently shrieking, screaming and cutting himself. He’s more at home in the tombs of the dead than he is among the living. He’s celebrating death, violently raging, threatening, and out-of-control. He’s a tortured and tormented soul, and so, we need to take these things seriously. God does and that’s why he commanded in the Scriptures,

“Let no one be found among you who…practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord…” (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

These things are detestable, despicable, and revolting to God. He sent his Son Jesus Christ to set us free from the power of sin and death; and so, we don’t want to toy with seducing spirits, we don’t want to have anything to do with the Dark Side, because Jesus is Lord, he’s our master, and he has authority even over the demons who cried out, “Don’t torture us, don’t send us into the Abyss.”

And so, in Luke chapter 8, we’ve seen the oppressive, violent, dominating power of demons in this one man named Legion. And though, the demons usually disguise themselves, here in the presence of Perfection, the Son of God, they couldn’t restrain themselves. And so, you and I, number three, we must rely upon the authority of Jesus Christ.

## 3. We Must Rely Upon Christ’s Authority

Now, I want you to notice the demon’s fear and complete submission to the authority of Jesus Christ. In verse 31, Legion began begging, even negotiating with Jesus not to send them into the Abyss. “Cast us into something else, anything else,” they said. And it’s important that we recognize that even though these demons are a very powerful supernatural force they are still subject to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We see this clearly demonstrated in numerous other accounts where Jesus exercises his power and authority over the Dark Side. However, none of them are nearly as powerful or descriptive as this one; and Jesus said to Legion,

"Come out of this man, you evil spirit!" (Mark 5:8).

Immediately, these evil spirits came out of this man and Jesus permitted them to go into a herd of pigs which literally caused them to go berserk and run over the edge of a cliff.

Today, we must rely upon Christ’s authority, because we can stand firm, we can resist, and we can act with authority in the name of Jesus Christ. It was he who said,

“If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you” (Luke 11:20).

The kingdom of God has come and Jesus has given us authority to do battle in his name and by his power. He told his followers, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go… (Matthew 28:18-19). “I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy” (Luke 10:19). He told them, “These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons…” (Mark 16:17). “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

And so, when you and I engage in spiritual battle, we don’t fight with our own power, but we fight in the name and in the authority of Jesus Christ. You can be victorious over the Dark Side because the Bible tells us,

“The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

And yet, the Dark Side is relentless and more wicked than you could ever possibly imagine. It’s an evil force that wants to steal, kill, and destroy everything that matters to God. These fallen angels, Satan and the demons, want your family, your finances, your health, and your relationship with God. They are on a mission to steal, kill, and destroy; but you can resist in the name and in the authority of who you are in Christ.

You can do battle, fighting with the spiritual weapons of warfare, fighting with faith, the armor of God, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. Never in your own strength, but in Christ’s authority and in his power. James tells us how you fight. He says,

“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you...” (James 4:7-8).

And so, this is how you do it, this is how you battle, you submit yourself to God. When you know the truth, the truth will set you free. When you’re under attack, when a demon from the pit of hell, an evil spirit from the Dark Side is twisting, deceiving, and distorting your perception of reality; you just tell him, “Get behind me. You can’t have my family, my marriage, my children, my finances, my health, or my relationship with God” You tell him, “I know God’s word, and it’s written that Jesus Christ disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, and he triumphed over them by the cross” (Colossians 2:15).

And so, you can say with all the authority of Jesus Christ, you wicked evil spirit, this is who I am in Christ. This is what I have in Christ. You’re defeated. I’m not fighting for victory, but I’m fighting from victory. You get behind me, because you’re a defeated foe.

And then next, this is important, the Bible says this in James, “Come near to God and he will come near to you.” And so, that’s what we’re going to do right now as we close. In the name of Jesus, we’re going to draw near to God and we’re going to let him win the battle. Let’s pray together.

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