

“Test the spirits”

Acts 16; Mark 5:1-17

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- First experience with demonic infiltration
 - James 4:7-10-- *“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”*
 - Matthew 12:43-45-- *“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of man is worse than the first. So shall it be with this wicked generation.”*
- Connection between the physical/psychological and demon infiltration?
 - Some see no connection at all. All human suffering can be explained by psychology or physiology.
 - Some see a demon behind every problem.
 - Jesus differentiates between illnesses that had psychological or physiological causes and those caused by demonic infiltration.
 - Matthew 4:24-- *“His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.”*
 - Demons can be the cause of physical diseases
 - Matthew 9:32-33a-- *“As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke.”*
 - Demons can cause seizures
 - Matthew 17:14-18 -- *“A man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, ‘Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him.’ Then Jesus answered and said, ‘O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me.’ And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.”*
- *How can we discern if a person’s problems are emotional, mental, physical, or whether they are demonic?*

“Test the spirits”

1. We must **RELY ON THE SPIRIT OF GOD.**
 - a. Crucial for a proper diagnosis
 - b. Ways in which the Spirit gives discernment
 - 1) Through the Scriptures
 - a) We learn the *“schemes of Satan”*
 - b) We know the goals of Satan.
 - 2) Through the *“still small voice of the Spirit”*
 - Romans 8:16— *“the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”*
 - Acts 16:17-- *“These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.”*

- Acts 16:18-- *“But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And he came out that very hour.”*

2. We can **RECOGNIZE THE SYMPTOMS** of Demonic Infiltration.

• Mark 5:1-17-- *“Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwellings among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.*

When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, ‘What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.’ For He said to him, ‘Come out of the man, unclean spirit!’ Then He asked him, ‘What is your name?’ And he answered, saying, ‘My name is Legion; for we are many.’ And he also begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.

Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. So all the demons begged Him, saying, ‘Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.’ And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. And they who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine. Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.”

- a. Six Characteristics from Mark 5:1-17
 - 1) Incapacity for Normal Living
 - 2) Super-human Strength
 - 3) Disintegration or the splitting of one’s personality
 - 4) Emotional and mental instability
 - 5) Preoccupation with death and self-destructive actions
 - 6) Resistance to spiritual things

- b. Characteristics from Extensive Counseling of Demon-afflicted people
 - 1) Compulsive desire to curse God
 - 2) Revulsion against the Bible
 - 3) Compulsive suicidal or murderous thoughts
 - 4) Deep feelings of hatred and bitterness
 - 5) Compulsive temptations to sin
 - 6) Compulsive desire to tear down other people, to destroy homes, marriages, churches
 - 7) Deep depression and despondency
 - 8) Terrifying panic attacks
 - 9) Horrific dreams or nightmares
 - 10) Sudden, uncontrollable fits of rage
 - 11) Hearing voices, or other clairvoyance phenomenon.

- c. Conditions that medical or psychological services could not help or bondage to sinful habits and self-destructive ways that refuse to be broken.