

Extreme Warfare – Luke 8:26-39

Series – Going to Extremes

Extreme Love; Extreme forgiveness; Extreme evangelism (Christian)

Extreme warfare – spiritual warfare

SW – one of those mysterious topics; either ignore or obsess

Passage exposes issues; highlights some truths

Begs for explanation of SW

Luke 8:26-39 – Explain as read; Draw some conclusions; Give overview of SW

27 – *had demons* – fallen angels/spirits had taken up residence within him

28-29a – Scared to death; tormented from within and without (29)

Fell down before him . . . (28)

Repeating theme – Jarius, 8:41; Bleeding woman, 8:47

Shows their recognition of who Jesus is; Humility – both key when fighting SW

30 – *What is your name?*

Only time Jesus engages in a dialogue with a demon

Emphasizes the severity of his problem

Legion – 6000 in Roman military terms

31 – *Abyss* – place of final judgment; they expected it

32-33 – Devilish ham

Shows the destructive desire/power of demons

Apart from God's purpose for this man, he too would have been dead

They exist to kill, murder, and destroy

If can't do that to you, they will try to influence you to do to others

By any means possible, make life miserable for all

34-37 – stark contrast; Christ's power to heal and deliver is absolutely effective

36 – *demon-possessed* (Gr for demonized)

Covers the whole range of demonic influence –

From a demon oppressing an unbeliever from the inside out

To a demon oppressing a believer from the outside in

Either way, think of it as *influence*

35b, 37b – people *were afraid; seized with great fear*

The power of God, especially to those who don't know him, is a fearful thing

Asked him to leave, but not before he commissioned the man to spread the word

38-39 – that's the purpose of SW; Indicator of genuine deliverance

Passage meant to show . . . Unbelievers can be inhabited by *many* demons

Jesus is more powerful than all of them at the same time

Demons exist to torment and kill; Some people are freaked out by SW

Demonic deliverance is meant to magnify God, not the participants

Also raises many questions

Is this kind of extreme SW still going on today? Yes

The battle rages

Rev 12:12 – *Woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!*

Satan *is* real and demons *do* exist

Bible is clear – Rebellion in heaven; Satan thrown down w/ 1/3 of angels (Rev 12:7-9)

Purpose – destroy, kill, oppose God anyway they can (Jn 10:10)

Battle rages whether you believe it or not

That's why . . .

Eph 6:11-13 – *Put on the whole . . . For we do not wrestle against . . .*

1 Pet 5:8 – *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil . . .*

The battle rages – for lost souls and God's glory

Example of Elisha's servant – **2 Kings 6:15-17** (read)

Syrian king sent army to kidnap Elisha; Servant was scared

Battle rages – just because you can't see it, doesn't mean it's not there

Armies of Satan are looking for ways they can rob God of his glory

By influencing believers to live contrary to Scripture

And unbelievers to reject Christ

We're under attack – God's glory and people's lives are on the line; but . . .

The war is won

The outcome is certain – there's no doubt who will win

Col 2:15 – disarmed (rendered them powerless) through the Christ's death on the cross

1 John 3:8 – *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.*

Heb 2:14-15 – through death Christ destroyed Satan

The war is won because of Christ's work on the cross

The war is won because of . . .

God's power over Satan

He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4)

Even greater than a legion of demons

God is totally in control

He put everything in subjection to Christ, and *left nothing outside his control* (Hb 2:8)

Those who are with us are more than . . . with them. (2 Kings 6:16)

Which means there's nothing to fear

Don't have to worry who's going to win – it's already decided

Don't have to look over your shoulder

On the one hand . . .

All-powerful God, in total control, with greater numbers, and a certain outcome

Versus – a weakened foe, with limited influence, and certain doom

There's nothing to fear – we can expect victory

Expect victory

Not only at a cosmic level, but at a personal level

James 4:7 – *Resist the devil and he will flee from you*

That's victory – victory you can expect because you're a child of God

No wonder – when demons look at you, they see the Holy Spirit

Bible says – Even their knowledge of God makes them *shudder* (James 2:19)

Can imagine what his *presence* does?

Put that together with your resistance – Satan doesn't have a prayer

Nor can he touch you as a believer – you’re untouchable

1 John 5:18 – *evil one does not touch* those born of God

Even if there *were* a devil behind every bush, you have nothing to fear

Like bully who picks a fight w/ you until sees your big brother come around the corner

There’s nothing to fear – you don’t have to fight

All you have to do is stand firm and resist

Let the presence of your big brother run its course

Resisting is the key; Standing firm; Being strong in the Lord (1 Pet 5:9; Eph 6:10)

This is where 99% of SW is fought – at the level of resistance in your heart/soul

Not trying to figure out how Satan works

Or staying up on the latest thoughts of those who have over active imaginations

Or trying to understand just *how* demons influence you

99% of SW is won or lost in the resistance your own heart/soul

It’s the key to victory over Satan, and means . . .

- Renouncing sin and cutting ties

Acts 19:18-19 – *Many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all.*

Renounce sin and cut ties; Make it as irreversible as possible

- Choosing to believe the truth

About who you are in Christ – child of God; adopted by him

About God’s forgiveness and grace

- Persevering in obedience

Can’t resist Satan if you’re not living right

- Linking with God’s people

Can’t go it alone; Must consistently fellowship with other believers (SG’s)

- Asking for God’s help

Talking about those times when you feel like you’re being oppressed

When you feel like there’s an evil presence overshadowing you; nagging at you

Some would advocate speaking directly to the demonic presence – telling them to leave in the name of Jesus

While it’s not the worst thing in the world, it’s not in the Bible

You’ll find no biblical example or teaching for believers to speak to directly to demons that may be trying to oppress you

But you find *plenty* of examples of people asking for God’s help in times of trouble – demonic or not

Resist the devil and he will flee from you – you can expect victory

The battle rages; The war is won; Expect victory; and . . .

Keep it simple

Little doubt that demons can exert control over people (**Read Mounce**, 167)

Question is – what to do about it; This is where we need to keep it simple

When comes to *believers*, Paul told us not to give Satan opp

Eph 4:26-27 – *Do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil*

If you choose to *harbor/continue* in sin, you open yourself up to demonic influence

Not automatic; But just like flies and rats are attracted to rotting garbage, fallen spirits are attracted to ongoing sin

Stop the sin, stop the influence – it’s that simple

Trouble starts when people resort to excesses; unbiblical practices

Obsession over the powers of darkness

Distracts you from worship, causes fear, results in all kinds of excesses

Opens the door to the very thing they’re trying to prevent

5 Excesses in SW we need to avoid

1. Conversing with demons

Just because Jesus did it on this one occasion, doesn’t mean it’s the norm for us

Apostles and early church in Acts didn’t do it; Neither should we

2. Relying on formulas/mantras

Say the right thing (prayer, command, statement), at the right time, right way . . .

That’s the occult – realm of dark magic and witchcraft

No emails of prayers!

3. Identifying territorial demons (spiritual mapping)

Some would advocate the need for this so the gospel could be preached and heard

Not in the Bible; Hocus-pocus

4. Resorting to ceremonies

Some people are obsessed with the dramatic

Candles, darkened rooms, people scribbling on paper – drama down

What if it works for me?

God may be pleased on occasion to show his power despite the presence of unbiblical beliefs and practices

When at least some prayer is sincerely offered; Some truth is presented

Some repentance is expressed

But the end does *not* justify the means

Especially when it leads to false hope, shallow discipleship, bondage to superstitions

5. Deliverance ministries that purport to cast demons out of believers

Deliverance ministries advocate that deep-seated sin in your life might be caused by more than your own will

That you might not be fully responsible for your sin – a demon might be part of prob

You may need to be delivered from your demon or demons

Try to identify and name your demons of sin – anger, hatred, lust, pride

Or identify your “generational” spirits

Then cast them out, bind them, chain them, put them in cage

A – there’s nothing in the Bible that says we should name demons

B – there’s no evidence in the Bible that demons have those sin-names

C – slavery to sin is a problem of the heart, not alien demons co-habiting with you

D – there’s no biblical basis for generational spirits; Sins, yes; But not spirits

E – believers *cannot* be inhabited by demons

2 Cor 6:14-15 – *What fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial* [synonym for Satan]?

Your heart is Christ's home; He will not share you with another; Not semantics
HS sharing you, a child of God, with Satan or a demon, is like you sharing your home
with the worst, unrepentant sex offender, in order to parent your kids
Oppressed, from the outside in; but not influenced from the inside out
At best, these excesses are based on inference and long leaps of logic – avoid them

What about *unbelievers*?

How can we know if they're demonized, and what can we do?

You'll know it

Deliverance Example (Ben Peays email, April 17th, 2002)

One day, while waiting for a late bus at the station, Eric decides it is a good time to evangelize. He stands on a bench and starts out with, "Even though we do not know when the bus will come, we can be sure it will. The same is true with Jesus, for He will deliver the world from its sins..." and no joke there must have been 200 people that gathered over the next 30 minutes as he preached. Then Eric began laying hands on people and praying for them. One girl complained of terrible headaches when she tried to pray, so Eric put his hand on her head and began to pray. When he said Jesus, she began growling and fell on the ground twisting and crawling and Eric cast a demon out of her. She later stood up and cried and put her hands in the air praising God.

No check list necessary – it was clear that she was demonized

It was clear she wanted help – she was trying to pray

When it's clear, and they want help – you can help them by *praying* for them

Ask God to intervene

To remove any demonic influence in the name of Jesus, and by his authority

To protect them; To save them

Pray out loud

So the person can hear you, others can hear you, and the demons can hear you

So you can bring the full force and weight of God's power and presence to bear on everyone involved – especially the demon(s)

Urge them to repent, believe, and resist; Again, out loud

And help them understand what just happened so they can give full praise to God

Doesn't have to be dramatic; It doesn't have to be complicated

It *does* have to be done in faith, trusting that God will act on your behalf

Summary

Pretty extreme – Keep it simple

Resist the devil; Give him no opp

Expect victory – because although the battle rages, the war is won

Close

6 more Sundays

Challenges – musical, parking next week

Building – chairs, carpet