

GLIMPSE OF A WORLD SET FREE

“And he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them.”

None went away disappointed.

LUKE 4:40c

What comes to mind when I invoke the name *John F. Kennedy*? A grave and flame at Arlington? A grieving first lady with two small children, one immortalized in a short-pants salute? Perhaps the youthful idealism of the Peace Corps or lines from a famous speech, “Ask not what our country can do for you, but rather what you can do for your country.” But to understand the man and his times, you’d have to dig into one of the standard biographies.¹

How about *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*?² Can you recall the confusion of your own struggle with racism? I can. What images come to mind? The march to Selma? The oratory of *I Have A Dream*. Death on a balcony in Memphis? A national holiday. Names of the famous evoke images that often bear little resemblance to the real person in all their complexity and contradictions.

So how about a third, *Jesus of Nazareth*? What comes to mind? A gentle man with robe and long flowing hair gliding six inches above real life? A stained glass window of the Good Shepherd. The agony of a lacerated back and a crown of thorns?

But I bet none of you thought of Jesus as the Spirit-anointed Son of God

¹ e.g., Barbara Leaming *Jack: The Making of a President* (Phoenix, AZ: Orion, 2007).

² e.g., Clayborne Carson, editor, *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York, NY: Warner Books, 1998).

who spent much of his time dealing with the demonized and liberating them from the intrusions of evil.³ Like the others, we have *pop* images of Jesus that have little of the depth of the portraits offered in the church's four biographies.⁴ J. Ramsay Michaels has written, "Nothing is more certain about the ministry of Jesus than the fact that he performed exorcisms."⁵

Nothing about Jesus is more offensive to our modern sensibilities than this fact. He believed we are all bent by rebellion and blinded by sin but that— in addition— some need to be freed from bondage because their integrity as a person with boundaries has been pierced. Everyone is sin-sick with multiple symptoms— we want to go our own way and make our own rules, but some have their personal integrity breached, like a cell wall pierced by the Covid-19 virus. All are sick and debilitated, but some have a plague. Jesus offers mercy and forgiveness and healing, but also restored freedom where spiritual bondage is

³ On the world view issues, see Paul Eddy & Gregory Boyd, *The Jesus Legend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), Chapter 1, "Miracles and Method," 39ff.; Gregory Boyd, *God At War: The Bible And Spiritual Conflict* (Downer's Grove, ILL: IVP, 1997), Chapter 7, "War Of The Worlds: The Warfare Theme of Jesus Exorcisms and Miracles," 192-214; N.T. Wright, *Simply Jesus* (San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2011), "Battling The Satan," 120-127; Craig A. Evans, "Inaugurating the Kingdom of God and Defeating the Kingdom of Satan," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 15.1 (2005), 49-75; Clinton Arnold, "The Kingdom, Miracles, Satan, And Demons," in Christopher Morgan, Robert Peterson, *The Kingdom of God* (Wheaton, ILL: Crossway, 2012), 153-178. For an official statement from The Church of England, see *A Time To Heal: A Report for the House of Bishops on the Healing Ministry* (London, England: Church House Publishing, 2004), Chapter 9, "Deliverance From Evil," 167-181. For a brief summary of evidences in the Gospels, see James D.G. Dunn, *Jesus According to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 14-15. On the theological and philosophical issues of evil, see Chad Meister, James Dew, editors, *God and the Problem of Evil: Five Views* (Downer's Grove, ILL: IVP, 2017).

⁴ On the interesting story of gospel formation, see Michael Bird, *The Gospel of the Lord: How the Early Church Wrote the Story of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014).

⁵ "Jesus and the Unclean Spirits," in *Demon Possession*, edited by John Warwick Montgomery (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany, 1976), 41.

an issue.⁶ And as our culture slips off the foundations of a biblical worldview and as more citizens experiment in the soft and hard occult, this will be more of an issue. You can't play on that playground without serious consequences.

I remember as a twelve years old coming home from a week at Camp Coker, our local Boy Scout camp. All of us were dirty, but some had lice, and that is a fit analogy for the distinction between pervasive sin and the particular problem of spiritual infestation. One is fixed with soap and water; the other requires a medical version of Orkin in soap and shampoo, and then a special comb, the *nitpicker* for the tiny eggs, *the infesting nits!*

So in answer to their question, "Have you come to destroy us?" Jesus' answer is, "Yes, I have; you've been squatters on my Father's property for way too long. Now get out!" The human being, in other words, is permeable to evil; it can take up residence within, and it's not an *it* but a *who*, personal angelic beings who have a hostile conversation with Jesus, who— as God the Son— is their Creator before their rebellion. They've know each other for a long time.

At this very moment your immune system is fighting on multiple fronts against all kinds of bio-invaders; each of us is a perpetual battleground on the biological level, but also on a spiritual level. The effect of Sin and all that comes with it is to make you allergic to God— i.e. to see your helper as a threat, and evil is always looking for an opening to become an insider rather than an outsider. We live on a battleground; we are a battleground. It's how Jesus sees us, and he has the clearest vision of all, full of compassion and wisdom.

Unlike his pagan contemporaries, Jesus— the chief warrior of God's kingdom— invoked no long lists of deities hoping to find one that worked. And, unlike some of his fellow Jews, he recited no spells, incantations, and used no paraphernalia in his work of hand-to-hand spiritual combat. He was not a magician seeking to manipulate unseen powers. The authority of *his Spirit-empowered word* was enough to expel the darkness because of his constant

⁶ For a checklist on *possible* openings for evil for self-diagnosis, see Appendix 1.

dependence on the will of the Father and the energies of the Holy Spirit.⁷ He is the visible member of the Triune God, God the Son at ground level.

Jesus never met a demon he liked; he threw them out, except perhaps the ones people wanted to keep, say Judas for example at the end.⁸ What pest control does for roaches and vermin, Jesus did for people; he rids them of defilement, of torment, of their deceit and fear, lies and obsessions. Jesus restores function and heals our relationship with God with a love that has real power to evict intruders and restore integrity. And he did it everywhere he went as we see in the text before us: in synagogues, in homes, in public, in other towns. And if he did so much of it, why do we hear so little about it? We understand that people have *social diseases* caused by bacteria, but a spiritual disease caused by a different kind of invader— a fallen angel, a demonic being— somehow disturbs us as spooky, and yet it’s true.

Let me be clear, less you misunderstand. I believe in medicine; I believe in psychiatry, psychology, therapy and counseling. I believe in anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medications, but none of what clinicians know excludes the possibility of people having their basic human integrity breached by evil. Jesus has resources that go beyond all that the rightful use of science can offer, and we must use all the healing resources God offers.⁹ So pray when you take your medicine! But the question is even more basic. Was Jesus on target here, or was he just a primitive Jew with an outmoded pre-scientific understanding of the

⁷ On how Jesus’ ministry differed from his Jewish and pagan counterparts, see Graham H. Twelftree, “EI DE... EGO EKBALLO TA DAIMONIA...” in *Gospel Perspectives*, vol. 6, edited by David Wenham and Craig Blomberg (Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1986), 361-40; also his *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007). See also Sharon Beekmann, Peter Bolt, *Silencing Satan: Handbook of Biblical Demonology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), Chapter 28, “Jesus and the Demoniacs,” 156-160; Darrell L. Bock, *Who Is Jesus: Linking the Historical Jesus With the Christ of Faith* (New York, NY: Howard, 2012), Chapter 6 by Craig F. Evans, “Jesus and Exorcism: Authority, the Kingdom of God and Cosmic Force,” 79-92.

⁸ Luke 22:3.

⁹ For a start, see the U.M. statement on healing in our *Book of Worship*, 613-614.

possible distortions of human personality? I believe he was right, and so when I meet with people and run them through my pastoral diagnostic grid, this is category I consider— last on the list perhaps, but not excluded. And if they've had some occult curiosity and involvement, or some family heritage in such, I ask followup questions. And if they get really agitated when I mention the name of Jesus or his blood, I wonder what might be going on below the surface!

Jesus daily program was singular. Everywhere he went he preached the rule of a God who was near at hand, then demonstrated the same in healings and deliverance for the sake of love. Jesus taught the kingdom,¹⁰ then gave demonstrations of how God comes to rule in the life of one afflicted with disease or demonization.¹¹ And he did not require a religious resume or a confession of sin. It was enough that people were in pain and misery.

With Jesus it's always a three-way operation. He was no independent agent; he *said* only those things he heard the Father say; he *did* only those things he saw the Father doing, and nothing happened without the Holy Spirit applying the divine energies of love.¹² To use a crude analogy, the Father is the nuclear generator, the Spirit the heavy transmission wiring, and the Son is a bright light in a dark world. Jesus' authority was rooted in his radical dependence on and consistent obedience to the Father's promptings and the Spirit's empowerment. You see only Jesus, but you are dealing with the Holy Trinity.

¹⁰ Luke 4:16-30.

¹¹ On the kingdom as *word and deed*, see five pastor/theologians of the Vineyard Movement: Derek Morphew, *Breakthrough* (Cape Town, South Africa: Vineyard International Publishing, 1991), *The Mission of the Kingdom: The Theology Of Luke-Acts* (Cape Town, South Africa: Vineyard International Publishing, 2011); Don Williams, *Start Here: Kingdom Essentials for Christians* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2006); Gary Best, *Naturally Supernatural* (Cape Town, South Africa: Vineyard International Publishing, 2005), Alexander Venter, *Doing Healing* (Cape Town, South Africa: Vineyard International Publishing, 2009); Joshua S. Hopping, *The Here And Not Yet* (Cape Town, SA: Vineyard International Publishing, 2017).

¹² John 5:19-30 captures this deep cooperation well. Read it and note just how radically dependent Jesus was. On his own, helpless. It's hard for us to grasp.

I pick up my iPhone, ask Siri questions, and get back nearly immediate answers from what we call *the cloud*; and whatever information Jesus needed that he did not gain from ordinary observation or inference was available by divine revelation from the ultimate cloud.¹³ He knew the secrets of people by divine whisper. Nothing that was necessary was hidden from him.

Jesus believed people were physically and spiritually porous, that the fact of universal sin and opportunistic evil rendered people vulnerable to objective damage. Just as something outside can get past the body's natural defenses and immune systems to cause illness, so with mind and spirit. When you come under Jesus' rule, you are inviting in one who will—over time—expose all that is dark in you. We are the battleground, and people need to be loved and freed before much change in the right direction is possible.¹⁴

The kingdom of God is not just an intellectual concept for a perfect world; it's an ongoing divine invasion to recapture life at ground level and give us a glimpses of a new creation already on the way.¹⁵ It's more D-Day than play day. In Jesus, the rule of God is brought to bear on people with immediate results.

One evening in 2009 I was flying home after giving a lecture on Methodist doctrine at Asbury Seminary and found myself sitting beside a professor of neuropsychiatry at the East Tennessee Medical School. Since so many of my church members were on anti-depressants, I had lots of questions. Just that day he'd given a lecture to other psychiatrists on the effects of Cylexa on neurotransmitters. Our discussion eventually moved past the pharmacological revolution in psychiatry to the issue of evil and the books of Dr. M. Scott Peck.

¹³ On the *word of wisdom* and the *word of knowledge*, see Sam Storm, *Understanding Spiritual Gifts: A Comprehensive Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020).

¹⁴ My pastoral experience is that therapy works much better and takes a much shorter time after one of more sessions of prayer for healing.

¹⁵ On the work of evil in larger cultural issues and in more hidden forms, see Peter Bolt, *Living With The Underworld* (Kingsford, NSW: Matthias Media, 2007); for a fresh treatment of the Kingdom of God, see Nicholas Perrin, *The Kingdom of God: A Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2019).

What he said next caught my attention because his booming voice was reduced to a whisper as he leaned in my direction, “I am an orthodox Episcopalian who happens to believe in the Nicene Creed, and in thirty years of practice there are three cases I’ve referred to my priests for exorcisms.”

We are porous people, and the simple fact is that some folk need to be spiritually fumigated before much else— like therapy for instance— is going to find traction. When spiritual darkness takes up residence within, it needs to be evicted by the loving pressure of the Father’s kingdom. Third world Christians know this well, and we are embarrassed by the same. Hello?

TURNING TO THE TEXT

Disruption In The Synagogue (vv.31-37)

If I had my way, all it would take to transform people would be better information. Teach them, give them the right book, and they’ll do it. Right? Wrong! Jesus also taught. Go to the synagogue, read the scrolls, teach the kingdom. But it takes more than truth to free people; it takes God’s presence. And when Jesus moved from lecture to lab, the dynamic shifted.

Twice Luke says that Jesus instruction was *with authority*.¹⁶ I’m much like the scribes. I read commentators, quote experts, and use footnotes; Jesus needed none of that. He *was* the authority; his teaching was self-authenticating. So what we have in the first scene of Luke’s “a day in the life of Jesus” is the Son of God reading the Word of God in the midst of the People of God and waiting for the Spirit of God to turn on the lights and stir up some trouble.

Here we see the faithful of Capernaum keeping the habit of Jewish worship on the Sabbath, when all of a sudden the divine light comes on, verse 32, “and they were *astonished* at his teaching, for his word was *with authority*.” Before there was a *power encounter* with one of Satan’s minor henchmen, there was a *truth encounter* with God’s Word. Jesus knew that when the Holy Spirit cut the lights on, the enemy would be exposed. This was Jesus’ method.

¹⁶ The word *authority* (4:32 // 4:36b) is a verbal bracket for the synagogue scene.

You know what it's like. You come home and flick on the lights. It's then you see them. Those disgusting roaches, or a mouse scurry into some crack. Had you walked in without turning on the lights, you'd never have seen them. Same way with the man in the synagogue. Whatever was *in him* was undisturbed by the level of spiritual illumination of synagogue worship. It happens in our churches; people bring their *little friends* with them, but our level of illumination is so low these beings are not disturbed; they love the rituals, so long as the Spirit is kept at a polite distance and Jesus not made too much of. Yes, the first demon Jesus met was in a worship service.

Here was a Jewish man in village worship, but an area of his life, a piece of his pie, was occupied territory. He could mix and mingle unnoticed, but when the full illumination of the kingdom turned on, something inside him felt the painful pressure of the holy, "And he cried with a loud voice...." says Luke in verse 4. So, if God were to turn up the lights here from level 1 or to level 5 or 6, who knows what might pop up or pop out among the Methodists?¹⁷

If we think of demonization on a scale from mild to severe, this was a moderate to severe case.¹⁸ His personality subsides as another speaks through him in fear and hatred. The cold front of evil collides with the warm front of God's love, and there is the spiritual equivalent of thunder and lightning. These entities do not like being exposed; they do not want to leave their host through whom they have influence. There's no common ground between them and Jesus.¹⁹ Two forces vie for the life of a man who's already in worship! They love religiosity but hate Jesus. Spiritual illumination and the powers of divine love must be brought to bear, and that is what Jesus did. He cut on the lights, picked a fight, and freed a captive.

¹⁷ On John Wesley's experience with demonization, see Daniel Jennings, *The Supernatural Occurrences of John Wesley* (Sean Media, 2005), Chapter 2, "John Wesley's Experience With Spiritual Warfare," 8-37, for sixteen examples from Wesley's journals. This fascinating book is now a free PDF on he web. Google the title.

¹⁸ The most severe case is Mk. 5:1-20// Lk. 8:26-39// Mt. 8:28-34.

¹⁹ The Greek phrase *ti hemen kai soi*, here translated "What have you do with us?" is an idiom for "What between us?" or "We have nothing to do with one another."

It was standard Jewish theology that the Evil One and his underlings would be destroyed at the end of the age.²⁰ But here they are surprised to be dealt with *ahead of schedule*. Their question “Have you come to destroy *us*?” means, “Have you come to destroy *us now*?” Jesus in effect says, “Not destroy you yet, only evict you from this child of God. Now be muzzled, quit barking, and come out him!” God is going to deal with sin and rid the world of evil, with Jesus is the preview of coming attractions.

Now because these entities are vicious, and because they delight to bring misery, they throw the man down before vacating the premises. But the Jesus who has power to deliver him also has power to protect, and so Luke notes that no harm was done to the man. The people who had only a few moments ago been *astonished* at Jesus’ teaching are now *amazed* at his deed of power and mercy. Jesus has an authority in the realm of the unseen spirits they’ve not witnessed before. Such events are hard to keep quiet: verse 39, “And reports of him went into every place in the surrounding region.” I admit we preachers can be boring; Jesus Christ never is, and it is him that we seek.

Methodism, which was once a fresh form of classic, apostolic Christianity, has now largely placed its focus on institutional maintenance, structures, programs, clergy benefits, and intellectual trends because we’ve lost touch with the power to actually touch and transform lives through partnership with the Triune God. We’re spiritually infertile and evangelistically impotent. We need a fresh visitation from on high. We’re running on fumes, and the engine is sputtering because the tank is empty. This is us, with only a few exceptions, and what if God is waiting and giving us grace to humble ourselves, to repent, to fast and pray, to seek a fresh awakening. Only a resurrection will do.

A Family Matter (vv. 38-39)

Did you know Dr. Jesus makes house calls? There was a woman that day who

²⁰ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 147. See *Testament of Moses* (300BCE) 10:1, “And then his kingdom will appear in the whole creation, and then the devil will have an end, and sorrow will be led away with him.” Jesus was operating within this set of expectations.

could not be in synagogue. Her daughter married a Capernaum fisherman, Cephas, and thanks to decades of work by some fine Catholic archaeologists, you can visit the ruins of their home. It was venerated early in the second century as a place of pilgrimage and later on churches were built over the sight. During the excavation some fish hooks were found between two layers of stone floor.²¹ Imagine holding one of those in your hand!

The demon was gone, the man freed, the benediction pronounced, and the guest preacher went home with Simon for a meal. Luke's retelling of this homey family story differs slightly from Mark's.²² He heightens the temperature to a *high fever*. They do not merely inform Jesus about her; they *besought him for her*, making it a clear prayer of intercession.

And what a strange fellow this Jesus is. He stood over her and *rebuked the fever*. He spoke to it, whatever *it* was, a word of command coming down with authority, not a prayer of petition going up in hope. We do not often hear with his clarity; we pray for healing and open ourselves to spiritual gifts, but on occasion the Spirit may prompt someone to offer a prayer of command and speak directly to a condition. And if it's God— and not just presumption— something happens on the other end of the transaction. I have seen it, and it always surprises me, “Oh me of little faith!”

I've seen people touched by God and it make almost no change in their character. The penetration of grace was only skin deep. They were self-centered before they were healed, and they were self-centered afterwards. But to be touched by God ought to make me want to touch others in service. Five minutes after the fever left, five minutes after the laughter and tears stopped, you could hear chicken frying! Verse 39: “And it left her, and immediately she rose *and served them*.” Healing restores capacity for service.

Creating A Kingdom Zone (vv. 40-41)

²¹ James Charlesworth, “Excavating ‘Peter’s House,’” *Religious Book Journal*, Spring 1989, 21-22.

²² 1:29-31.

Our movement thus far has been from a religious setting— the synagogue— to a family setting, and now thirdly out of doors in a public setting. Jesus apparently is an everyday, everywhere, everybody Savior. And notice how the Sabbath is respected by the village. Not until the first evening star is visible is the Sabbath over and the people free to travel to Peter’s home. Word had gotten out! And if you are looking for a justification for public services of healing, here it is. Did you know that we have eighteen pages of official healing services for pastors to use in our *Book of Worship*.²³ They are rarely used, but there they are!

Two things about verses 40 and 41 need to be noted before we move ahead. First, no one went home disappointed. Healing in the church is very much a *hit and miss* affair, and those bold souls who have practiced it for years have more stories of failure than success.²⁴ Much mystery remains. We live amidst ambiguity, paradox, confusion, and often utter ignorance. We are granted preliminary signs of the kingdom, but the kingdom in its fullness remains future. But to see something happen even once in response to prayer is to be hooked at a level way beyond curiosity.

My batting average in this arena is in the low single digits, but Dr. Jesus batted a thousand that evening, as Luke reports in verse 40 “...*all* those who had *any* that were sick with *various* diseases brought them to him. And he laid his hands on *every one of them* and healed them.” Such is his compassion. Sometimes in my mind’s eye— while preaching— I picture Jesus walking up and down the aisles of a church laying his hands on people, and under his touch they melt. One of the reasons our medical system is so overwhelmed is that Christians are not living healthy lives and praying for the sick.

A second item of note is that Luke distinguishes between illness and

²³ 613-629.

²⁴ For a popular history of the rise and fall of healing ministry in the church, see Francis McNutt, *The Nearly Perfect Crime: How the Church Almost Killed the Ministry of Healing* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005). For a book of testimonies and apologetics, Cecil Murphey, *I Believe in Healing* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2013). For a reading by a church historian, see Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford, England: OUP, 2005), especially Chapter 1, “Jesus: Exorcist and Healer,” 21-42.

demonization.²⁵ To say Jesus and the early believers were ignorant and taught that all illness was demonic is simply false. Organic diseases and malformations he healed, demons he cast out, and he knew the difference between them.

We are complex creatures, and no one treatment cures all ills. But he who is good with a hammer often thinks everything is a nail. Not so with Jesus. It was never once-size-fits-all with him. Every encounter was customized; no one was a number. And when he finished that night, all went home to the sleep of the blessed. A husband rolled over and whispered, “Sarah, he did for you what I could not. He freed you from pain and shame. Should we join his movement?” Jesus lay on a mat in the corner of Peter’s home and looked up:

“It’s been a good day: synagogue, Peter’s mother-in-law, and all those people tonight. Looking forward to tomorrow. Wake me up early so we can spend some time together. May the holy angels protect me this night. Oh, and about this man Peter. He might make a good disciple. He opened his home to the whole town; perhaps he can open his heart to the world. Good night, *Abba*.”

No To Capernaum’s Demands (vv.42-44)

There is tiredness that comes from labor, and from it the body is renewed by rest and good food. There is another type of exhaustion that comes from the labor of ministering to the needs of others. Sleep and food help, but the depletion of the soul’s energies is replenished by three additional remedies: 1) solitude, 2) prayer as communion, and 3) a burning sense of call that helps set boundaries with demanding– and often selfish– people.

Jesus woke up before all the household. See him slip out the door and down the starlit street for his day’s first appointment. But as soon as Capernaum rouses they’re on his path, begging him to stay and never leave. They’ve tasted the new reality and want more for themselves, and that I understand.

²⁵ For a sophisticated (British!) analysis, see *A Time To Heal: A Report for the House of Bishops on the Healing Ministry* (London, England: Church House Publishing, 2000), Chapter 9, “Deliverance from Evil,” 167-181.

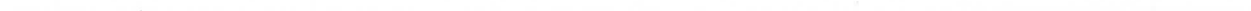
On the Sabbath Jesus said a profound Yes to the needs of Capernaum and made it a *kingdom zone*; the next morning he gave them an uncompromising No, “I *must* preach the good news of the kingdom of God in *other cities* also; for I was sent for this purpose.”

A church without a clear sense of mission grounded in love for God and people is a patsy for any faddish agenda that comes along. Jesus could say *No* because a bigger *Yes* was burning in his bones. Blessing is meant to be spread around. We keep only what we’re willing to give away. The final test of spiritual renewal is not, “Am I blessed?” though it’s a good place to start. The test is, “Am I in mission because of the blessing of God?”

CONCLUSION

What images come to mind when I name *John F. Kennedy*? *Martin Luther King*? *Jesus Christ*? After today I hope you never think of our Lord in quite the same manner. Jesus Christ is bigger and better and bolder and badder and more disruptive and dangerous than we’ve been taught. He’s not a mascot. He’s near; he’s alive; he’s here. He’s good, but he’s not safe, and he’s calling us to turn to him with all we are, because otherwise our smoldering candle will go out. No program or project can save us, only a person.

Preaching is such a foolish business, and it is so by God’s design. I can only point; I cannot deliver these realities. If I could, it would make me a magician or sorcerer, not a disciple. Presence is something God reserves for himself. So, “Come, Holy Spirit. Get these realities off the page, into our lives, and into the streets of Cheraw. Reclaim us, or we will die.”



Appendix 1: A Checklist of Possible Spiritual Openings For Evil (See Ephesians 4:27, 6:10-18; 1 Peter 5:8-9.)

As you read through the passages and questions, ask the Holy Spirit to recall every involvement you've had. Keep in mind that many of these activities are clearly occult; others may not be as apparent. Mark any and all activities, even if there is a question in your mind as to their nature, so that you are confident that you renounce all *possible* influences of evil in your life. Place a check beside each item in which you have participated, whether "just for fun," out of curiosity, or in earnest. Write them down in a list. Confess each one to God as sin and turn away from them. Destroy any occult items. Ask Jesus to remove and free you from any negative effects. If there are issues that go beyond simple confession and forgiveness, you may wish to make an appointment with a pastor for counsel and prayer to break any bondages in your life associated with which are forbidden to Christians. Do a good house cleaning!

Soothsayers/Fortune-tellers: See Deuteronomy 18:9-16; Isaiah 2:6; Daniel 2:26-28; Acts 16:16.

1. Have you ever had your fortune told by tea leaves, palm reading, a crystal ball, a fortune-teller or any other means?
2. Have you ever read or followed horoscopes, or had a chart made for yourself to predict your future? Have you every read any other type(s) of birth signs?

Necromancy, Spiritualism: See Leviticus 19:31, 20:6; 1 Samuel 28:7-11; 2 Kings 21:6; Isaiah 8:19-22.

3. Have you every attended a seance or spiritualist meeting?
4. Do you believe in reincarnation? Have you ever had a reincarnation reading?
5. Have you every played with a Ouija board, crystal ball, Dungeons & Dragons or other occult games?
6. Have you ever had a tarot card reading or practiced cartomancy (using playing cards for fortune-telling or other magical purposes)?
7. Have you ever played games of an occult nature, using ESP, telepathy, hypnotism, etc?
8. Have you every consulted a medium, spiritualist or numerologist? Have you every acted as a medium? Have you every practiced channeling?
9. Have you every sought healing through magic spells or charms or through a spiritualist? Have you ever used a charm or amulet of any kind for protection or "good luck?" Are you superstitious?
10. Have you every practiced table lifting, levitation of objects, pendulum swinging, lifting of bodies, automatic writing, astral travel or soul travel?

Occult Books, "Contact" Objects and Other Media: See Exodus 19:25-20:6; Deuteronomy 5:8-10, 7:25-26; 2 Kings 23:1-25; Psalm 97:7; Isaiah 42:17; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

11. Do you have anything in your home that was given to you by someone in the occult? Do you have anything in your home of an occult nature? Have you followed the writings of Edgar Cayce, Jean Dixon or a New Age author? Do you own or like to view demonic types of books or movies or music? Have you ever invoked a curse on yourself or others?

Sorcery, Magic, or Idolatry: See 2 Kings 17:17, 21:6; Malachi 3:5; Acts 8:11, 13:4-12, 19:19-20.

12. Have you every practiced sorcery or magic?
13. Have you every practiced mind control over any person or animal, cast a magic spell or sought a psychic in person or through a psychic hotline?
14. Have I ever worshiped other Gods, or engaged in the rituals of pagan or polytheistic religious systems.

Sins of the Flesh, Sins of the Eyes: See Matthew 5:28; Romans 6:12-14, 8:13-14; 1 Corinthians 6:13, 18-20; Galatians 5:16-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; James 1:14-15; 1 Peter 2:11; 1 John 2:16.

14. Have you ever used LSD, marijuana, cocaine, crack-cocaine or any mind-expanding or mind-altering drugs? Have you ever abused prescription drugs? Have you ever had a problem with alcohol? So you have any addictions or compulsions?
15. Have you ever exposed yourself to pornography? Does it have a hold on you as an obsession?
16. Have you ever been involved in sexual deviation, homosexuality or lesbianism, group sex?
17. Have you ever had sexual relations with a person who was not your legal spouse?
18. Have you had an abortion? Have you fathered a child who was aborted? Have you been involved in abortion in any way: viewed/witnessed one, assisted in one, performed one, encouraged a friend to have one?

Devil Worship: See 2 Chronicles 11:15; Psalm 106:37; 1 Corinthians 10:20-22; Revelation 9:20-21, 13:4.

19. Have you ever made a pact with Satan or been involved in or witnessed Satan worship or black magic?

Witchcraft: See 1 Samuel 15:23, 28:7; 2 Kings 9:22, 23:24; Isaiah 8:19, 19:3, 29:4; Micah 5:12.

20. Have you ever attended witchcraft or voodoo activities?

Death: See Exodus 20:13; Job 3:20-23; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

21. Have you every planned or attempted to take your own life? Is there a dark fascination with violence and death?

Appendix 2: AN INTRODUCTION TO HEALING SERVICES AND PRAYERS

(Taken from *The United Methodist Book of Worship [1989], 613-615*)

Scripture strongly affirms ministries of spiritual healing, which in recent years have received renewed emphasis throughout Christ's holy Church. The root of the word healing in New Testament Greek, *sozo*, is the same as that of salvation and wholeness. Spiritual healing is God's work of offering persons balance, harmony, and wholeness of body, mind, spirit, and relationships through confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Through such healing, God works to bring about reconciliation between God and humanity, among individuals and communities, within each person, and between humanity and the rest of creation. The New Testament records that Jesus himself healed the estranged and sick and sent out his disciples on ministries of healing. James (5:14-16a) calls us also to pray for and anoint the sick, that they may be healed.

All healing is of God. The Church's healing ministry in no way detracts from the gifts God gives through medicine and psychotherapy. It is no substitute for either medicine or the proper care of one's health. Rather, it adds to our total resources for wholeness. Healing is not magic, but underlying it is the great mystery of God's love. Those who minister spiritual healing are channels of God's love. Although no one can predict what will happen in a given instance, many marvelous healings have taken place.

God does not promise that we shall be spared suffering but does promise to be with us in our suffering. Trusting that promise, we are enabled to recognize God's sustaining presence in pain, sickness, injury, and estrangement. Likewise, God does not promise that we will be cured of all illnesses; and we all must face the inevitability of death. A Service of Healing is not necessarily a service of curing, but it provides an atmosphere in which healing can happen. The greatest healing of all is the reunion or reconciliation of a human being with God. When this happens, physical healing sometimes occurs, mental and emotional balance is often restored, spiritual health is enhanced, and relationships are healed. For the Christian the basic purpose of spiritual healing is to renew and strengthen one's relationship with the living Christ.

Patterns of healing services grow out of both Church traditions and the needs of the moment. Prayers for healing, accompanied if desired by anointing with the laying on of hands, may be incorporated into any service of congregational worship as a Response to the Word. Also, there may be a healing service at a stated time each week or month, or healing may be ministered privately to individuals. Many find not only prayer but also Holy Communion, laying on of hands, and anointing with oil to be healing.

Laying on of hands, anointing with oil, and the less formal gesture of holding someone's hand all show the power of touch, which plays a central role in the healings recorded in the New Testament. Jesus often touched others--blessing children, washing feet, healing injuries or disease, and raising people from death. Biblical precedent combines with our natural desire to reach out to persons in need in prompting us to touch gently and lovingly those who ask for healing prayers. Such an act is a tangible expression of the presence of the healing Christ, working in and through those who minister in his name.

Anointing the forehead with oil is a sign act invoking the healing love of God. The oil points beyond itself and those doing the anointing to the action of the Holy Spirit and the presence of the healing Christ, who is God's Anointed One. Olive oil is traditionally used in anointing but can become rancid. Sweet oil, which is olive oil with a preservative, is available in any pharmacy. Fragrant oils may be used, but care must be taken because some people are allergic to perfumes.... It is important that those ministering in services of healing be sensitive to the differences that exist among those who come for healing ministries. Sound preaching, teaching, and pastoral care are essential for healing ministries to accomplish their purpose.
