



Jesus Heals A Demonized Boy

Luke's Gospel: Investigating the Man Who Is God - Part 40
Pastor Mark Driscoll | Luke 9:37-45 | August 08, 2010



Luke 9:37–45

³⁷ On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. ³⁸ And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹ And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. ⁴⁰ And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." ⁴¹ Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." ⁴² While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. ⁴³ And all were astonished at the majesty of God.

But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, ⁴⁴ "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." ⁴⁵ But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

INTRODUCTION

All righty, Mars Hill. We continue our two-and-a-half-year, yes, two-and-a-half-year journey through Luke's gospel. Today we look at the fact that Jesus heals a demonized boy in Luke 9:37–45. As you're turning there in your Bible, I want to show you something. This is actually a well-known painting from Raphael, the great master. This was his final piece of work and it is taken from Luke 9. He was inspired by the section of Scripture that we find ourselves in today, and he was struck, rightly so, by the distinction between Jesus in glory, and a young boy in misery.

And what happens in Luke 9 is there is an occasion where Jesus goes up onto a mountainside with his disciples, and he is transfigured, revealed as the God of glory. Meanwhile, below that mountain, there was a crowd that was gathering, and among them was a young boy who was attacked, troubled by a demon and was suffering in great misery. And so the great painter Raphael in examining the Scriptures was struck by this stark contrast, and so he painted this painting showing some of the transition that Jesus had to go from as he enjoyed his moment of revelation in glory, back to his ministry in misery.

SATAN CAUSES SUFFERING

And so we pick up the story that inspired Raphael, and the first thing we learn is that

Satan causes suffering. In Luke 9:37–39 “On the next day,” that’s the day after the glorious transfiguration of Jesus, “when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, ‘Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him.’”

Let me give you a bit of a cultural understanding of what’s going on here. In that day, children were highly treasured, greatly valued among the people of God. The culture, in general, would oftentimes throw children away and discard them, and these children would be used for prostitution, and gladiatorial games, and the like. But the people of God who believed the Bible, they read the Bible’s words that children are a blessing. And so God’s people aspired to be married, and have children, and they considered that a blessing from God.

That’s why earlier in Luke’s gospel when Elizabeth, as an older woman, was still unable to have children, and then God enabled her to give birth to John the Baptizer, she said that, “The Lord has lifted my shame,” taken her disgrace. She felt blessed by God.

Additionally, alongside this spiritual reason why they’d want to have children, there was also a very practical reason, and that was that unlike our modern day, which is very urban—for the first time in the world’s history, the majority of its citizens live in major cities, and the demographers tell us that by 2030, 60 percent of the world will live in cities and urban centers.

It was exactly the opposite in the days of the first century, where the majority of people lived in very small towns. Most of the towns that Jesus travels to, as you’ve seen, are less than a hundred people. And in that day, being a rural society, most people were involved in fishing, farming, and the like, and so the more children you had, the better, because it was more hands to help the family earn a living. It’s exactly the opposite of today. The closer you get to a city, less people get married, less people have children, and children are very expensive. They’re not a financial contribution to the family.

I know this. I have five children, they contribute zero to the family income. I love ‘em. I adore ‘em. They’re absolutely worth it all, but they’re not a huge financial support system. Recently after vacation, getting ready to go back to work, Gideon, my four-year-old, asked, “Dad, what are you doing?” “I’m getting ready to go to work.” “Why?” “Well, how many of us are there?” “One, two, three, four, well, there’s seven of us, Dad.” “How many of us have a job?” “Well, one of us gets paid.” “Okay, yeah, your mom has a job. Your dad has a job. I’m the one who gets paid. I gotta go to work and pay the bills.” In that day, the whole family would work on the farm, or work in the fishing industry, or work in the family business, and the more hands, the more helpers, the more income.

And here was the one of the problems: the infant mortality rate was very, very high. Only about half of children lived to see their fifth birthday. They oftentimes wouldn’t even name a child till the child was a week old because so many children died during the first week, they didn’t want to suffer even more grief with an intense

emotional attachment like a name. Less than 40 percent of people who were born would actually live to see age twenty. So if you can imagine this, if you wanted to have two adult children, you would need to birth five and bury three. And so it was a very difficult day in which to have children.

Furthermore, one of the reasons you would want to have a child, in addition to the spiritual and the financial, was this issue of legacy. The Bible's filled with genealogies, and the hope is that from one generation to the next, God's people have children who love and serve God, and that legacy continues. That's why even in our own day people have last names like Jackson, or Nicholson, or Michaelson, why? Because it's Michael's son or it's Jack's son or it's Mick's son. There's something of that lineage and legacy carrying on the family name. And so children were important for a multitude of reasons, and sons, in particular, were valuable because there wasn't social security. There wasn't retirement as we know it. There wasn't Medicare, Medicaid. There weren't such things as hospice or nursing homes. Instead, you had a son, and when your son was little, you'd look after him, and change his diaper. And when you were old, he would return the favor, and that's how it worked. And so there were a multitude of reasons to aspire to want children. There would be a multitude of reasons to have a number of children, and particularly to pray for sons.

That leads us to the story. Jesus comes down the mountain after being revealed as the God of glory, and to him comes a father, a desperate father who says something that is terrifying. He says, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my," what? "Only child." We don't know if they've had other children, and they've died. We don't know if this man's married, widowed, divorced. We don't know if they struggled from infertility. We know nothing of his wife, his marital history. At this point, all we know is here's a man who has one child, a son. Everything's riding on this boy. This son is all that he has.

"And behold, a spirit," a demon, an unclean, unholy, unhelpful spirit "seizes him, and suddenly he cries out. "It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him." The language here is of a young boy, not an infant or a toddler, and not a boy who is in puberty or later. Gideon Joseph is my four-year-old son, Calvin Martin is my eight-year-old son, and Zachariah Blaise is my ten-year-old son. The language here of this son being a child would fit that kind of age range.

GOD IS GOOD, SATAN IS EVIL

So think about a boy who's entering into elementary school or who's in elementary school, and this boy has a horrible condition. He's being physically attacked by an unclean spirit, a demon. If you forget everything that I say, remember this, God is good, Satan is bad. I know that sounds simple, but what's amazing is some people get confused about that because of eastern religion, or pantheism, or panentheism, where God is good and evil, and all is one. No, the Bible says God is good, Satan is evil. God is only, always, altogether good. Satan is only, always, altogether bad.

There is a conflict between God and Satan. God is creator, Satan is created being who's rebelled against God. With Satan, there are unclean, unholy, unhelpful angels called demons, and we see repeatedly in Jesus' ministry, these kingdoms collide in conflict as Satan, and those who are suffering from his work, are presented before

Jesus to be conquered and delivered through the power of God, present in the person and work of Jesus Christ. And here the battlefield is the body of a little boy.

And Luke is seeking here to get us to emotionally identify. For those of you who are daddies or granddaddies, imagine this is your son, your grandson. This is your boy. This account appears as well in Matthew 17 and Mark 9. So as you study for yourself, with your family, and in your community group, there's a bit more detail that is added in those accounts. Luke's was written last. He gives us the briefest account I think, knowing that the other accounts already existed, and that we would fill in the details from them. But a few other details are given in Mark 9 and Matthew 17.

It says that sometimes this unclean, unholy, unhelpful spirit, this demon, would take the boy, and throw his body into the fire. It says as well that sometimes it would throw him into water. Why? Because Satan is a murderer, that's what Jesus says in John's gospel. He's always about death and killing. He's never about life and joy. We also learn in those accounts that occasionally this boy would also be rendered mute.

Now, if you're a parent, imagine this, imagine a boy who has the equivalent of epileptic seizures, who is overtaken by a demon, whose body is ravaged and wracked. This is a little boy covered in burn marks, and scars, and scabs. You have no idea when this demon might attack and harm him. And occasionally if he's rendered mute, that means he won't scream or cry for help if he's burning or drowning.

Parents, this is our worst nightmare, right? I just back from a nice break with my family, no computer, no laptop, just like heaven, no Internet. The kids are swimming every day, which is wonderful, but you're terrified that one of them's gonna drown. And at night you build a fire to roast marshmallows, but you're terrified that one of them's gonna fall into it. That kind of heightened anxiety and concern is this father's constant concern.

I'm speculating, but I can see this dad fearful of going to work in case his son might die in his absence. I can see this dad literally pulling his son from water, and from fire, holding his son weeping, crying, praying as his son shakes violently, and is being destroyed. As a daddy, I can tell you he probably slept at the foot of his son's bed, just to be there in case in the middle of the night, something happened to his son.

This father is in a desperate condition, and Mark 9 adds this additional bit of information, that this boy has been like this since infancy. This has been his whole life, essentially. It's always been like this, and he comes to Jesus, and he says, "Jesus, he's my only son. Please help me." The truth is that some people do have physical, emotional, chemical, hormonal troubles, and sometimes it's demonic.

God is good, Satan is evil. Don't forget that because what will happen is when you are suffering or someone you love is suffering, Satan will whisper in your ear and say, "God has done this to you. God has done this to you." The truth is when God was done with his work, he said that everything was very, what? Good. Was there suffering? No. Sickness? No. Death? No. Satan arrives. Lies to, tempts our first parents. They participate with him in his rebellion against God—sin, suffering,

sickness, and death come into human history. God is good, Satan is evil.

And don't let your Reformed theology confuse you. Many of my pastoral counseling appointments in recent months have been, Christians who are suffering asking, "Why does God do this?" My answer is, "God's not evil, Satan is." God is good. If something evil is happening, that's not God. Now, God in his sovereignty can use everything for his good. He used something as horrible as the betrayal and murder of Jesus to atone for the sin of the world. So God is sovereign, and God does work out everything for good, but that doesn't mean that everything that happens is exactly what God wants because there's sin, folly, rebellion. God's not in heaven, for example, saying, "I want her raped, him beaten, and that kid demonically tormented." That's not our God. Our God is grieved at sin. He is angered by sin. He comes to take away sin, to crush Satan who instigates sin, and who brings suffering.

Satan causes suffering. Satan is bad, and he's real, and some of you would say, "I do not believe in a devil. I do not believe in a spiritual evil." And I would say you have already succumbed to his great lie, to tell you that he does not exist, so that you will overlook him, and just continue forward with your life, oblivious to the fact that there really is a war, there really is an enemy, and there really are casualties. There is darkness and light. There is lie and truth. There is Satan and God. There is hell and heaven.

And Satan is so horrendous that he actually sends a demon—and let me say that Satan is not equal to God. He's a created being, but he's powerful nonetheless, and he commissions one of his demons to, what? To attack a little boy.

Some of you are curious about the darkness and spirituality. You're fascinated with, perhaps, dark spirituality, Wicca, witchcraft, the occult, clairvoyance, powers, supernatural ability. Some of you have, what you believe to be, spiritual insight, or power, or a comforting spirit, or a guiding force. Here the Bible shows us what demons do. They pick on children, and they torment little boys, and they break fathers' hearts.

Mars Hill, trust me, there's nothing in Satan that is of any benefit to you. There's nothing that a demon could bring to you that would be of benefit to you, because Satan causes suffering. And this little boy is, to be sure, suffering.

SATAN CANNOT BE DEFEATED APART FROM JESUS

The story continues that Satan cannot be defeated apart from Jesus. Religion won't cast out a demon; morality, spirituality, medication, counseling cannot, will not deal with a demon. None of those things have authority, spiritually speaking, over a demon, only Jesus does as Creator God. We read that here in Luke 9:40–43. The father says, "And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation," echoing Deuteronomy 32, "How long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. And all were astonished at the majesty of God."

Satan attacks people. We don't get the impression here that the boy is demon-

possessed. He's demonically oppressed. He's attacked. Some of you, this is your life, night terrors, physical injury. You hear voices. You're terrified. You're harassed. You're harangued. You're hounded. There's fear, and pain, and suffering in your life. What do you do? And see, it looks here as if, up until this point, it appears as if God has failed. God has not failed this little boy. Now, the father failed his son. I say that not to be cruel and criticize the father, but to give heed to all the other fathers, including the mothers.

See, Jesus is the Creator God. Demons are created beings. They're under his authority, and for the believer who is a Christian, and belongs to Jesus, his authority is granted to us that we might command demons in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. But for that to happen, we need to be a Christian, and we need to actually have ongoing faith in Jesus, and we need to be living a life of repentance so that we're not giving Satan a foothold, to use the language of Ephesians 4, and we're not opening ourselves to his lies, and his works, and his ways. And if we live humbly and repentantly as Christians in relationship with Jesus, then the authority of Jesus is delegated to us, and we can command unclean spirits away in the name and authority of Jesus Christ as his ambassadors.

The father has seen his son suffer since he was a little boy. And there's no indication that he sought to, or was successful to cast this demon away from his suffering son. And again, in Mark 9, part of the reason is he really doesn't believe that God is powerful enough and real enough to deliver his son from demonic attack and torment. That's why he looks at Jesus and says, in Mark 9, the similar account, "Help me with my unbelief." He's saying, "Jesus, I really struggle to believe that there really is a God, that he really is powerful, that Satan and demons are real, and that if I have faith in the God of the Bible, that his authority will allow me to command evil spirits to leave."

Some of you are here like that today, and you say, "I'm there. I struggle to believe that Jesus is the Creator God, and that Satan and demons are real, and that authority is delegated to me, and that I can humbly exercise that spiritual authority to be liberated from demonic attack." Then you need to pray like the father did, "Jesus, help me with my unbelief. The truth is my belief here is real weak."

And the truth is, and I've done demonic counseling over the years, and dealt with people, and I have had occasions, one comes to mind, about a woman who was being demonically attacked, and oppressed, and harassed, and it was very obvious with physical manifestation, and torment, and voices, and it was a horrible situation. And as I was working with her, the demon manifested itself and started speaking.

And so I asked this unclean spirit, "If she were to command you to leave, depart from her in the name of Jesus Christ, is there any reason that you would not need to obey that command?" And the demon said, "Yes, I would not obey that command because she doesn't really believe that Jesus loves her more than me, and is more powerful than me." That's essentially what he said.

I know that demons do lie. John 8 says that Satan is the father of lies, and lying is his native language, so I checked with her to make sure it's a fact. "Is that true?" She says, "It is true." She said, "When I was little, I would be abused, and I had a

comforting spirit who would come to be with me and was my friend, my invisible friend." And she said, "That comforting spirit has grown up with me." And she said, "So I do wonder if Jesus loves me more than this spirit, but sometimes now this spirit does things, says things that are harmful and damaging, and I'm afraid of it. It's been with me since I was a little girl, and I do wonder if Jesus has enough authority to get rid of it because it seems very powerful to me."

I told her, "Unbelief is a sin to be repented of. You need to confess that you've sinned against Jesus by thinking that a demon loves you more than he loves you, and that a demon is more powerful than him. You need to repent of that as sin, and then command the demon to go. But as long as you're believing lies, you're giving your enemy a foothold, and how can you in your heart and mind believe, 'I don't really know if Jesus loves me, I don't really know if he's powerful. I don't really know if he can help me, and in Jesus' name, I command you to go.'"

Because faith is this: faith is an internal conviction that demonstrates itself with an external action. Faith is an internal conviction that demonstrates itself with external action. So men like Paul in the Bible, they write a lot about faith. They're talking a lot about the internal conviction, your heart and mind. You trust Jesus as Lord God, Savior, Christ, helper, and friend. And guys like James, they focus on the external action of faith. If you really trust Jesus, you live like it. You live a life of faith, and trust, and obedience.

And this father apparently lacked that. So Jesus uses this language, "O," what? "Faithless and twisted," crooked, bent up, broken, confused generation. "Faithless." The dad could have cast this demon away from his son many years prior, had he trusted in the God of the Bible, walked humbly repenting his sin, understood his identity in Christ, and commanded it to go trusting internally, and commanding externally in the name of the God of the Bible that this spirit would leave. So God didn't fail, the father did.

Additionally, the disciples failed. He says, that's exactly what he says, "I begged your disciples to cast it out, they could not." He brought his son to the disciples, "Okay, you guys are trained by Jesus. You're his pastors," as it were, it's the equivalent in that situation. "My son is suffering. I've heard that you guys have a demon-casting-out ministry. My son has a demon. Do it. Cast out the demon." Didn't work. Why? Did God fail? No.

The disciples asked Jesus that very question in Mark 9, "Why couldn't we cast the demon out?" Jesus' answer was, "You should have prayed." Should have prayed. You can't do Jesus' work without Jesus' power. Think of it this way, an electronic device and an outlet. The electronic device is without power unless it's plugged into the outlet. Faith, faith is like that. God is the living God, and we have spiritual life, authority, and power when we're plugged into him by faith, but if you don't really trust him, you're disconnected from the source of spiritual authority, power, and life.

And so he looks at the disciples, he said, "You thought you could go out and do ministry, and cast out demons, and command unclean spirits in my name, and you didn't even talk to me, didn't even pray? You weren't even seeking help, or guidance, or power." You're like, "We got this covered. We went through demon-casting-out

school, some of us got Cs, but we all passed. We've kicked out a few demons already. We got this, no need to pray today. We're just going to work."

Question: how much of our life is like that? You say, "You know what? I don't even need to pray about my job today 'cause I know how to do my job. I don't need to pray about this decision, or activity, or relationship." Why? "Because I know exactly what I'm doing. I've done this before. I'm trained. I'm skilled. I'm seasoned. I got this one nailed. I don't need to pray about it, and talk to God, and connect with him relationally, and look for power and wisdom. I could just take care of this."

Jesus says, "That's why you failed. Apart from me, you don't have any power. Apart from me, you don't have any authority. You're faithless. You don't trust me. I told you guys what to do, and you didn't do it."

JESUS IS ANNOYED

How does Jesus feel about all of this? The failure of the father and the disciples, to have faith, to trust him. He's annoyed. Does that shock you? Jesus got annoyed.

Some of you are hyper spiritual, you will criticize your friends. You'll say, "You should never be annoyed. The Bible says to be loving, and patient, and kind, and you should never be annoyed." You say, "You know what? I find that very annoying, that you would tell me that I cannot be annoyed. That doesn't help my problem at all. In fact, now I'm really annoyed with you."

Jesus is annoyed. Here's what he says, "How long am I to be with you and bear with you?" Most of the translations say, "How long do I have to put up with you?" Okay, and Jesus says this in front of a large crowd. This is a bummer day to be a disciple, right? You are now an illustration for a negative point, right? Some of you are like, "I don't want to talk about my sin or my unbelief. It's a private matter. We're not gonna talk about it in community group. We're not gonna talk about it with my friends."

Jesus just calls them out in front of everybody, "Faithless and twisted generation, how long do I have to put up with you disciples?" Oh, I'm sure that's a weird moment. Like, "I don't know. I hope for a long time." That's an odd moment. "How long do I have to put up with you?" How many of you would say, "Boy, that, I don't know"?

Now, what this tells me, there's a holy way to be annoyed. I know this is tangential. It's okay to be annoyed if they're annoying. Hang with me on this. Now, how many of you are easily annoyed? Okay, how many of you are easily annoyed? I am. We just had a nice long vacation, I was with my wife and children continuously for about a month. Like I said, no phone, no Internet, no computer, no demons, none of that stuff. And on a few occasions my wife said, "You're very picky. And you're kind of grouchy, a little irritable, and you get annoyed easily." Yes. That's true. It's not a redeeming quality. I get annoyed with myself. That's how picky I am.

Most of the time that I get annoyed, it's really not for a holy righteous reason like Jesus. Jesus is annoyed 'cause a little boy's been suffering for a really long time, and the dad says he's a believer, and the disciples are believers, and they haven't helped him, and they could have, and they should have, and they didn't, and this boy is suffering. And it frustrates Jesus that he didn't get the help that he needed from the

men who were supposed to give it to him.

Most of my annoyances aren't that redeeming. It's like, "You're talking on the phone, and driving, and you're in front of me. You should die, or pull over, 'cause you can't do two things at one time. Don't you know who I am?" I just—people annoy me. Just, I can give you—we could do this for a long time, but there are a lot of people who annoy me. I went to a water slide park in Idaho. I was annoyed. From bathing suits to corn dogs, I mean, just everything about it was profoundly disturbing at every level. I am always constantly annoyed 'cause I'm the guy with a critical eye. I notice everything that's wrong with everything, so I'm always annoyed, and I've had to repent of being annoyed.

For those of you who are like me, this is not a verse for you. You're like, "Jesus was annoyed. I'm annoyed. I'm like Jesus." That's not the point. No, that's not the point. The point is though that sometimes there is a holy, righteous reason and way to be frustrated or annoyed, and that is when people who profess to know, love, and serve God, don't listen, don't pray, don't serve, don't obey, and other people are suffering. That can be a little frustrating. And Jesus is a bit annoyed. Jesus is a bit annoyed.

Let me ask you a hard question: how annoyed is Jesus with you? Because see, what annoys Jesus in the context of this story is they don't trust him. They're not praying. How annoyed is Jesus with you? You don't trust him, and you don't talk to him. And what parts of your life are just kind of on autopilot? Like, "I don't need to pray about that. I don't need to start my day in prayer for my commute, or my job, or my relationships. I've got all that figured out."

And see, what happens is sometimes we don't even talk to Jesus until we've made a mess of everything, and that's exactly what happens here. This boy is suffering. Everything is a mess. "Oh, I guess now's the time to talk to Jesus." And Jesus is saying, "You know, we call it prayer, but you should have talked to me before you made a mess of it." And see, that is the way that we, as disciples, oftentimes work. We just live our life. It falls apart. We wonder if God is good, and then we talk to him as a last resort. God is good, and we should talk to him as a first priority.

Aren't you amazed at how normal and average these disciples are? I mean, they've been with Jesus for a while, and they have some pretty impressive moments, and other times, you're just not that impressed. To be a disciple is to be a follower of Jesus, the truth is if you're a Christian, you're a disciple and we, you and I both, are often like this. We're not praying. We're not listening. We're not trusting. We're just living our life, wondering if Jesus is good, and then asking him to help when it all falls apart.

It's really this simple: faith or failure. Faith: I'm gonna trust God internally, and obey God externally. Or failure: life is just going to eventually fall apart, and I am or someone I love is going to suffer as a result. It's faith or failure. And he says that they are a faithless and twisted generation. They just lack faith.

But I want you to see here that Jesus is the one who casts out the demon. The only way to cast away an unclean spirit is in the name of Jesus, the name above every name, the name at which every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is

Lord to the glory of God the Father. There is no name like the name of Jesus Christ. That is a strong name. That is the powerful name. That is the revealed name of the Creator God of the Bible.

And when you and I are humbly, repentantly walking with Jesus, connected to him by faith and prayer, we positionally enjoy his authority, so that in his name as his children, we can command with his authority those kinds of unclean spirits to depart from us. This is an amazing gift to the children of God. And Jesus' frustration is that he has made all of this available to a father and disciples who do not access it, just like you and I. And so the truth is that you and I, we frustrate him, I am sure, as well.

JESUS SUFFERED TO DEFEAT SATAN, FORGIVE SIN, AND END SUFFERING

So what is the hope? If the hope is not in the father, and the hope is not in the disciples, then the hope must be in Jesus, and there we learn that Jesus suffered to defeat Satan, forgive sin, and end suffering. Luke 9:43–45, “While they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Let these words sink into your ears—’ he’s saying, “Listen to me.” “‘The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.’ But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.”

The crowd is mesmerized. We’ve never seen anyone like this Jesus. There were Jewish exorcists in that day. We read about them in Acts. They apparently have no luck. The father couldn’t get it done, the disciples even failed. The demon is victorious. Oh, wait, here’s Jesus, easy. There’s no talking television, no freaky priest, no holy water, no bizarre cross, no voodoo. Jesus just says, “Demon, go,” done. So much of what passes as demonism and spirituality in our day is just to cause Satan to look big, and powerful, and spooky, and religious leaders to look crazy and kooky. With Jesus, he just exercises his authority. “I’m Creator, you’re creation, good-bye.” Done.

And as the crowd is mesmerized, they’ve never seen this kind of authority. Jesus is in a category unto himself. He tells the disciples, and those who are present, “Listen to me. All right, you’ve not been talking to me, maybe listen. The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.” What he’s saying is, “I’m gonna be arrested. I’m gonna suffer. I’m gonna be crucified. I’m gonna die.”

Something very important is gonna happen in just a few verses that we’ll hit next week. In Luke 9:51, it says that Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem. Up until this point, all of his ministry essentially has happened in smaller towns, rural villages, dozens of people. And Luke 9:51 it says, that Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem, and he begins his journey toward the big city of Jerusalem, toward the temple, and the priest, and the sacrificial system, and the atonement for sin, and he is going there to fulfill all prophecy, and to die, and to shed his own blood. As our temple, the presence of God; as our priest, our mediator between us and God; as our sacrifice, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

He’s coming to fulfill all prophecy, all righteousness, all history. And we’re right on the brink of his beginning journey toward Jerusalem. And he reveals to them who he

is because they're wondering, "Who is this Jesus?" And he says, "I'm the Son of Man, and it won't be long before I suffer." What he's saying is that he's a greater Son than this son, and he will endure a greater suffering than this son endured. That yes, a great battle had been won in that moment for the life of this boy, but a great war was still looming, that Satan and demons still had access and authority over people because of our sin.

And here's the way it works, because we are sinners by nature and choice, we have aligned ourselves with Satan in rebellion against God, and Satan has claim to us because of sin. And Jesus, our great God and Savior, he comes to live without sin, to die as a substitute in our place for our sins, to break, to break the bondage that binds us to our enemy. This was prophesied early on in Luke when Jesus was born, and it was said that he would come to set the captives free.

That's why the Bible says that we are by nature, children of wrath. Jesus comes to cancel our debt of sin, to release us from the possession of Satan and demons, and to delegate, designate to us his spiritual authority to live in spiritual victory, to have a new life like this little boy did that ultimately one day culminates with our own resurrection from the dead patterned after Jesus' where like this boy, we enjoy physical healing, spiritual deliverance, and a brand-new life. That's what Jesus does.

THE SON OF MAN

He says he's going to suffer, and that's why. And he does so as the Son of Man. This is a very important title. In the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Jesus refers himself as the Son of Man roughly eighty times. This is his most favorite self-designation. If you walked up to Jesus, and asked him, "Who are you?" It's very likely he would have said, "I am the Son of Man," because he said it about eighty times. What does that mean?

And some would say, this is where it's theologically important, some would say, "Jesus was a moral man, a good teacher, an enlightened guru, a great example, but he was not God. And he didn't consider himself to be God, and he didn't claim that he was God. That is something that Christianity invented long after his death." It's not true. Jesus repeatedly, emphatically, clearly declared himself to be the only God. And this is one way that he does it, "the Son of Man."

He takes this title from Daniel 7:13-14, the prophet Daniel under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, hundreds of years prior, looking at sin, and rebellion, and human folly in history is answering the question, who will be our deliverer, who will be our redeemer, who will be our savior, to deliver us from Satan, sin, and death?

And he says this, "With the clouds of heaven there came one like," very important word, "a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

Who's coming? A savior, a rescuer, a deliverer, a hero, a conqueror is coming. He'll be coming from heaven. He does not originate from earth as a mere man like the rest of us. He's coming from heaven, from the kingdom. He's the King. This is God. And

he's coming like a Son of Man. He's not just a son of man. He's the God-man, but he's God who becomes a man, so he's like the son of man. So we're looking for this one to come from heaven who would be God become a man, and he came to the Ancient of Days, that is God the Father, and was presented before him, and then commissioned on his ministry into history.

"And to him was given," and this is all God language, "dominion, glory, kingdom," that he would rule and reign as King of Kings, Lord of Lords, "that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him." The language of serve there is a word for worship, honor, obey him as God. All nations, all languages. We don't need multiple religions. Everyone needs Jesus. It doesn't matter where you live, when you live. It doesn't matter your race, your ethnicity, your heritage, your socioeconomic status, your gender, your skin color. Here's what matters: Jesus, one God for all people.

"His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed." He would establish a kingdom as a king, as an eternal king with an unending kingdom. That kingdom was inaugurated at his resurrection, and it will be culminated at his second coming. And so Daniel the prophet signified for the people of God, here's the one who's coming to defeat Satan, to forgive sin, to reconcile people back to God, to—like this little boy—deliver them from demons and give them new life. And Jesus says, "I'm the Son of Man."

Back to Luke 9, that's exactly what he says. "Let these words sink into your ears," "listen to me, hear me." Jesus is saying, "Please don't miss this. Let me be as clear as I possibly can. I'm the Son of Man, and I'm going to suffer and die for you." To what? To defeat Satan, to forgive sin, and ultimately, to end suffering, that we may have a season of suffering as this boy did, the king and the kingdom are coming, and the suffering will come to an end. This is amazing. This is amazing. This is our Jesus.

A FEW QUESTIONS

Let me ask you a few questions. Number one, do you have faith in Jesus? Are you part of the faithless generation? Do you have saving faith in the person and work of Jesus? Some of you would say, "I have faith, but not in Jesus." Faith alone does not save. Faith in Jesus alone saves. You can have faith in the wrong object, the wrong person, and it does not save. If you're sick, you can have faith in a medicine that does not cure. You could be sick with sin, and have faith in someone or something other than Jesus, and there's no forgiveness. Do you have faith? How is your faith? Is it in the person and the work of Jesus?

Number two, how's your prayer life? Are you talking to Jesus, before it all goes bad? Now, what I love about Jesus is they talk to him after it all goes bad, and he still helps and serves them. That's amazing. That's amazing. I mean, I'm amazed Jesus, at the base of the mountain, didn't have a job fair, right? Like, "These disciples are obviously defective. I'm now accepting applications for the office of disciple." He doesn't do that. One of his disciples gives up on him, a man named Judas Iscariot, but you know what? Jesus doesn't give up on his disciples, and you know what? Jesus doesn't give up on you.

I talked to a woman today, she was bawling because her husband who is now sixty-five years of age, had not walked with the Lord for many, many, many, many years.

Like the story here, he hadn't prayed, and he hadn't listened, and he wrecked his life. But now he asked God for forgiveness, and he's applied for pastoral training, and at sixty-five, he wants to work toward doing ministry. He doesn't know how many years he has, but he doesn't want to waste anymore of them.

You know what? Jesus this is the God who says, "Yeah, you wasted years, and you didn't listen to me, you didn't pray, and that's pretty frustrating, but I'm still here. I love ya. As long as you're breathing, I'm gonna help. I'm gonna help you be sanctified. I'm gonna help your life count." I love that our Jesus is like that. People give up on him, but he doesn't give up. How is your faith? How is your prayer life? Are you talking to Jesus? Are there parts of your life, you don't even talk to him about it? You got that covered. No, you don't.

Number three, how's your listening? He tells the disciples, "Listen," and then he teaches them, and they don't know what he's talking about 'cause they weren't listening. That's amazing. That's what it says, right? He said, "Now listen, I'm the Son of Man." "What'd he say?" "I don't know, something about listening." "Were you listening?" "I wasn't listening." "You listening?" "I wasn't listening." "Why don't we ask him?" "I don't think we should. He just said he's annoyed with us. We'll let this one go."

How's your listening? Are you reading the Bible, you redeeming your commute? You listening to Scripture, Bible teaching, good counsel, people in your community group, all right, the sermons? Are you listening? How's your listening?

And number four, are you aware of the reality of spiritual warfare, and the work of demons in our world? Are you aware of it? And I think one of reasons that Luke keeps interjecting, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, these power encounters between God and demons, between Jesus and demons, is to show us that Satan is alive and well, and demons are at work in the world, and we can't be oblivious and blind to it. Are you aware of spiritual warfare in your own life, temptation, lies, accusations, vain regrets, maybe, terror, attack, physical illness, deception, false religion? Are you aware of the work of your enemy in your life, and in our world?

Talk about those things in your community group, talk about those things with your family. How is your faith? How's your prayer life? How's your listening?

SATAN IS ALIVE AND WELL

In closing, let me go down a rabbit trail. A theological excursus, and a cultural critique. Let me preface it by saying, I'm not an old-school, angry fundamentalist. I watch TV. I TiVo. I like music. I like film. I like sports. Smoking is not a sin. I don't think it's a good idea. You wheeze a lot, but it's not a sin. Drinking is not a sin if you're of age, and don't get drunk or 'cause anyone to stumble. Feel free to get a tattoo, I don't necessarily need to see it, depending on where you put it, you know, whatever. I'm a pretty flexible guy. I'm not an old-school, guy in a suit, angry fundamentalist against everything.

But I do want you to be discerning when it comes to culture because I believe one of the ways that Satan works in our day, is he will take things out of the category of religion and spirituality, put them into the category of entertainment, and we

completely fail to be discerning. We just think, "Oh, that's not demonic. That's a movie." A movie is a sermon with pictures. "That's not demonic, that's a song." Satan can write music. He can inspire story-telling and filmmaking, music. He sets ideology, and worldview, and he's at work in the world.

I'll back this up, give you an example. I have a thirteen-year-old daughter. My daughter, Ashley, recently turned thirteen. So now I am the proud daddy of a teenage girl. It's awesome. I love her. Some people say, "Oh wait till she's a teenager." She's there. It's fantastic. It's great. I adore her. She's a voracious reader. She reads a lot, and she's got a big library. She's a discerning reader. She's starting to write, and we're getting ready to publish her blogs, which are recommended readings and critical book reviews for preteen and teenage girls so they don't read garbage, which I think is awesome, and I really am excited about that. It was her idea.

So I was talking to her, and she was telling me about reading, and what her friends are reading, and some of the garbage that's out there. 'Cause I don't know if you know this, I'm not really up on all the preteen girl literature. It's not where I just go to in my free time. So she orders a lot of books for her Kindle, and you know, in print through Amazon. So Amazon recently sent a "Hey, it's summertime, here are the best-selling big new books for preteen and teenage girls." And I thought, well, I don't know what that is, but I have one. I better click. So I clicked on it, and it was unbelievable what it brought up. It brought up all these vampire, werewolf, blood-sucking, weird relationships books that all come out of the *Twilight* series.

I'll show it to you, some of these books. The first one that came up was *The Necromancer: The Secrets of the Immortal Nicholas Flamel*. Now, that means you're consulting with dead people. It's about sorcery, witchcraft, divination, Wicca, dead people. You know what? Dead people don't talk to you. Demons pretend to be dead people. "I'm your Grandpa." "Oh, hi, Gramps." No! That's a really bad idea. The book should be called, *It's a Really Bad Idea*.

Next book, *Eclipse*, part of the *Twilight* series. We'll come back to that, since you asked. The other one on the preteen/teen Amazon.com bestseller list was *Spirit Bound: A Vampire Academy Novel*. That is a girl on the cover giving her neck to a vampire. Some of you are like, "Don't be a hater." Okay, I don't think it's a good idea for any boy to suck blood out of your neck under any circumstances! I'm old school that way. That's just how I roll. "Here's my neck." No!

Dark Flame: The Immortals. Most of these book covers take young girls, dress them up like divas around candlelight, practicing witchcraft, waiting for a vampire or a werewolf. I'm not even making this up.

Okay, now, *Twilight*, *Eclipse*. There on the cover are the beast, the false prophet, and the Antichrist. We'll get back to that in a minute.

Another book on the list, *The Sorceress*. That's not even subtle! "Honey, why don't you read your Bible?" "I don't have time, I'm reading *The Sorceress*." That doesn't sound good, *The Sorceress*. You don't need to have the gift of discernment to go, "That does not sound good, *The Sorceress*."

We'll just keep going. *Love Bites: A Vampire Kisses Novel*. Look at that cover! That's wrong. She's like twelve waiting for a vampire to kiss her on her lipsticked lips. I'm a dad, no! Don't do that. It should say, "If he loves you he'll never bite you." That's what it should say.

Spells. Spells! Do you know what a spell is? "No." You're under a spell if you don't know what a spell is. A spell is where a witch casts a spell on you. It's called "Brilliant and Lovely." "Oh well, it's a lovely spell. Well, that doesn't even count." It's like a lovely car wreck. It's a good one.

All right, this was on the list. It's called *Hell's Heroes*. Just so you know, hell doesn't have any heroes. That's the whole point of hell. It's called the "Demonata." I can't even believe some parents are like "Well, at least they're reading." Oh, oh, yeah. Just look at that cover. It's a werewolf, a girl, and some guy who's into rave or something. I can't even figure out what's going on.

Twilight. Now, does this cover imagery remind you of anything? A woman holding an apple. This is Genesis 1 and 2, where the whole deception started, and you open the book up and it quotes Genesis 2:17. It actually goes right back to Genesis when Eve was deceived. It's like, "Oh, it's a good thing." All right, I think that's the last one.

"So what's he gonna say? Is he gonna lose his mind? I see the vein in his neck." These books are a whole genre about the occult, witchcraft, sorcery, divination, consulting with the dead. They all come out of the *Twilight* series. These are all part of a new genre. So I'll give you a little bit of history on the *Twilight* series. We'll start with Mormonism, okay? Just hang in there. Just hang in there.

Mormonism was founded by a guy, started by a guy named Joseph Smith who says, "I got a visit from a spirit being, and this spirit being said that all the Christians are wrong, and they alone were right, and they had books in addition to the Bible, and we should start a new religion. The angel's name was Moroni." I would just say as a general rule, any angel named Moron, "What's your name?" "Moron...i" You should probably not go with that. And Joseph Smith would say, "Oh, this was an angel, not a demon." But Galatians says, even if an angel should come from heaven and preach a false gospel, don't listen them, they're cursed. They're cursed.

So a demon comes to Joseph Smith, gives him a crazy new religion. He invents Mormonism. What does this have to do with *Twilight*? Years later, a woman named Stephenie Meyer, who's a Mormon, has a dream. She says, quote, "In my dream, two people were having an intense conversation in a meadow in the woods. One of these people was just your average girl. The other person was fantastically beautiful, sparkly, and a vampire. They were discussing the difficulties inherent in the facts that A, they were falling in love with each other while B, the vampire was particularly attracted to the scent of her blood, and was having a difficult time restraining himself from killing her immediately," end quote.

[<http://www.stepheniemeyer.com/twilight.html>]

So a religion started by a demon is adhered to by a woman who has a dream—this is all very spiritual—where a young girl is visited by a vampire who loves her but wants to suck her blood. And she writes a series of stories that result in movies, and T-

shirts, and promotional material, and kids' meals at some burger joint, called the *Twilight* series. It is all very spiritual. And in that we see humans, vampires, and werewolves. We see as well this bridging between good and evil, darkness and light, the living and the dead. We see the co-mingling of that which is spiritual, human, and animal. We also have a concept of how to be born-again, and live forever, but it's not through faith in Jesus and resurrection. It's through becoming a vampire so that you're forever young with an eternal life. So the whole concept of salvation and eternal life has nothing to do with Jesus. There's the repeated attempt of the murder of a young woman. There is blood lust and blood thirst throughout the course of the book. There is the birth of a baby who's half human, half vampire.

And what's crazy is this is for preteen and teenage girls, and you know who else has really picked it up as the rabid fan base? Their cougar mothers with fetishes for sixteen-year-old vampires. Like, let that sink in. That's nasty. They get together and have *Twilight* parties, and mom's asking her thirteen-year-old daughter, "Oh, would you rather be with the werewolf or the vampire?" She should rather be with Jesus. This is crazy.

Now, some of you say, "That's twisted. You're just overstating your case." Okay, let me reverse it. Let's say that I really like Miley Ray Cyrus—and I don't, but for the sake of this point—and I knew a lot of teenage and preteen boys who really liked Miley Ray Cyrus, so I started buying all of her albums and T-shirts, and I was her BFF, and I followed her on Facebook. And every time she Twittered, I just—I stopped everything I was doing to just meditate on it. And I decided to get all of the preteen boys together from the local junior highs to do Miley Ray Cyrus parties, and we talked about how awesome she looked and how hot she was. Would that bother you? Yeah, 'cause it's nasty. It's extra nasty with a side of nasty, because I would be a pedophile. But somehow you could be a cougar pedophile, oh and it's okay because they're a vampire. It's a nasty little world we live in. It's weird. So you got these cougar moms lusting after sons, boys the age of their son. It's unconscionable.

And then some Christians come along and say, "No, it's a good story 'cause they didn't have sex until marriage." Oh, well, then it's totally fine. I mean—are you kidding me? She was seventeen, married a one-hundred-and-eight-year-old vampire. If my daughter brings home a one-hundred-and-eight-year-old vampire, I'll be like, "Well, you haven't slept together. I think you guys have a fantastic relationship. I've been praying all my life for a one-hundred-and-eight-year-old vampire to marry my daughter. Praise God. Answer to prayer." They then do consummate their relationship and give birth to a half-human, half-vampire baby. At no point is this a good idea. The Christians are like, "Well, they practiced chastity." It's vampire chastity.

As an aside, if you're a Christian parent whose child is reading this stuff, read it with them to teach them discernment.

Do you really think that things are any different than the days of Jesus? Do you? Do you think that Satan doesn't do anything? You think he's not teaching anybody? You think he's not deceiving anybody? He is. And see, if you were to take a Hebrew from two thousand years ago and plant them in our culture, and put a *Twilight* T-shirt on them, and take them to a movie, they'd be like, "You guys are the most demonically obvious culture I've ever seen." We'd go, "No, it's a movie." And so we can look back

into the story of Luke and say, well, this obviously demonic, and I'm telling you they would look into our world and say, "Oh, you're blind to your own blindness."

Satan is alive and well. He's deceiving. He's lying. He's preaching sermons through music and film. I'm not against culture. I'm not against music. I'm not against film. I'm not against creativity. I just don't think it's good to encourage young women to be in witchcraft, and to want to consult with the dead, and to be spiritual which is to invite demons. I don't think it's good when their mothers encourage that, and participate in that, and model that, particularly if they claim to be Christian. Are your eyes open to the darkness of our day, and the deception that surrounds us? I'm gonna pray. Jesus rebuked the disciples for not praying. We need to pray, and some you need to pray for discernment, wisdom, faith, open ears.

Lord Jesus, we pray against Satan, and demons, their works, and effects. We believe the Scriptures that Satan is a liar, and a deceiver, and a murderer. We ask for the Holy Spirit to fill us, and lead us, and guide us, and protect us. Jesus, please help us in our unbelief. Please teach us to pray, and when we fail to pray and we suffer, God, teach us to be humble to pray even then, knowing that you will still help because you are good. God, I pray for those parents who would hear this sermon and realize that they have not, in any way, disciplined, trained their children, their children are watching, reading, studying things that they should be involved with and engaged in. Pray for those, Lord God, who have been involved in that which is darkness. They claim to be Christian and because it was in the category of entertainment somehow they didn't even consider it to be something to be discerning of. Please forgive us of our sins, cleanse us of our unrighteousness, and give us a new life like this little boy experienced. In Jesus' name, Amen.

[End of Audio]

Note: This sermon transcript has been edited for readability.