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Trinity Lutheran Church  
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## **Rubbing Shoulders With Demons & Conquering Them!**

God's PEACE is ALWAYS YOURS' in Jesus!

Hear the Word of God from Mark 1,

“Just then a man in the synagogue, who was possessed by a DEMON, cried out, ‘What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come at this time to destroy us? I know Who You are! You are the Holy One of God!’

Jesus said sternly, ‘Be quiet! And come out of him!’ The evil spirit shook the man violently, and came out of him!”

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST,

It was the Sabbath Day, so Jesus heads to the synagogue with His four new fishing buddies: Peter, Andrew, James and John. Catch that: Real men worship. And so do Real women. Why? Real life, real forgiveness and real salvation are really received as we give God our sins in repentance and He gives us free forgiveness by the power of His Word. So Jesus and his four new fishing buddies head to church on the Sabbath.

Now, as Jesus steps onto the scene to give sinners their lives back, their eternities back, and to rescue sinners from death and the devil, Jesus stands up to proclaim the time of God's favor, to help the blind to see the forgiveness that is theirs', and to set the prisoners free from the devil's tyranny. But something strange happens!

The worship service is disrupted not by crying babies, but by a scream'n demon! Now while this may seem unusual, it's not unusual at all. There are two key places you can expect to find demons: in unclean places, and in holy places. First, you should expect demons to dwell in unclean places. Why? Demons are unclean spirits. They love what is unclean, unholy, and evil. Not surprisingly, this is where the demons and the sinful world want us to go: to unclean places, to do unclean things, and to become unclean, which is a portal for the devil in your life. Now every sin is unclean -for teens unclean places revolve around drunkenness, drugs, sex outside of marriage, pornography, the occult, and rebellion; for adults, unclean places revolve around idols and idolatries, fame and fortune, pride and pleasure. Since unclean places are where unclean spirits dwell, if you spend time in unclean places, doing unclean things, you open a portal for unclean spirits to enter you, desecrate you, defile you, un-holy you, and destroy you!

Secondly, and this may surprise you, another place you will often find demons is in Holy places – especially the church. Why is this? Here's why. The reason that Jesus meets with us, wherever two or three are gathered in His Saving Name, is to forgive us, cleanse us, and holy us, through the blood of Jesus, and to save us from the devil. The Good News of Jesus, "***Be of good cheer. Your sins are forgiven!***" actually enact our deliverance from the devil. Jesus' words unlock our prison cell. His blood sets us free from satan's tyrannizing of us, by forgiving every sin that satan accuses us of.

The reason you can expect to find the devil and demons in the Holy Place of God's house, or wherever God's Word is being proclaimed, is because this is where Jesus is literally defeating the devil, and rescuing us. God's house, and the worship service are often the front lines, where the devil is fighting his hardest, trying to distract and disrupt us from hearing the Good News that we are saved in and by Jesus' blood. In John 10:10, Jesus warns us: "***The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy!***" And in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5 Jesus says, "***Be alert and sober-minded. Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, standing firm in the faith.***" So don't be surprised if the place where the devil is most active is in the church, where the flock of Jesus gathers in Jesus name to be covered with the blood of Jesus, like a Teflon coating, so that the enemy's attack slide ride off of us; for no matter how much the devil attacks us, because of the blood of Jesus he can't make his charges against us stick. So He comes to disrupt and silence Jesus. **Page 2**

The devil will work his hardest so that you and I do not hear the Good News of Colossians 1, which declares, ***“For He (God) has rescued us from the dominion of darkness, and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in Whom we have (present tense) redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”***

As a result, when Jesus got up to teach about the grace of God that is already ours’, the devil was not about to let that happen without a fight. Jesus didn’t even have to call out the unclean spirit, the unclean spirit revealed itself, as soon as Jesus started rescuing sinners through the Word. You see, your forgiveness and mine is totally unacceptable to the devil. And he will fight fang and claw to take us down to hell. Sadly, we are often more than willing to go back into unclean places, to do unclean things, which gives the devil a foothold in our lives, than we are to come to the Holy place of God’s house, where Jesus is stuffing His cross and resurrection down the throat of the serpent that sets us free from satan’s tyranny.

Why come to God’s house? To hear the Good News. 1<sup>st</sup> John 3, ***“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s works.”*** Why comes to God’s house? This is where your prison doors are swung open wide. Hebrews 2, ***“Jesus shared in our flesh and blood, so that by His death, He might destroy the One who held the power of death – that is the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”*** Why stop worshiping at St. Mattress, and come to God’s house? To be equipped to defeat your enemy. Ephesians 6, ***“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, the authorities, the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”***

Why come to God's house? On the night Jesus was betrayed He said in John 16, "***The Prince of this world now stands condemned.***" And then He said, "***Take and eat my body given for you. Take and drink my blood shed for you!***" We come to receive the Holy Meal by which we conquer the devil, and die not, in the forgiveness of sins.

We're told that as soon as Jesus began teaching the Good News, "***Immediately there stood up, in the synagogue, a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come at this time to destroy us? I know Who You are! You are the Holy One of God!"***" Notice! The presence of our forgiving Savior, Jesus, brings the unclean spirit out into the open, in an attempt to silence Jesus. In other words, the disclosure of Jesus, as our Savior, ushers in the counter-disclosure of the demon trying to silence him.

And notice, you can learn a lot from a demon. Even the demons believe that Jesus is God's Son. The demons also believe Jesus has and will conquer them. We often believe the devil's winning and God's losing, don't we? That's a lie, and the demons know it. Listen to what the demon says to Jesus in Mark 1 "***Have you come at this time to destroy us, O Holy One of God?***" Listen to what the demon says in Luke 8, '***What do you want with me Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you not to torture me!***" Listen to what Revelation 12 says of the devil, "***He has been cast down to the earth, and he is filled with rage; because he knows that His time is short!***"

However, although Jesus' forgiving blood defeats the devil, do not underestimate the power of the devil to destroy Christians, divide churches, and take down pastors. Wherever Jesus is setting sinners free, you can expect the devil to fight his fiercest. Which is why our Lord tells both Pastors and Christians in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5, "***Be sober-minded, and vigilant, your enemy prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith.***" Now if the devil wants to destroy a church, who do you think he'll try to destroy first? The pastor, and his family. Why? The pastor is God's instrument to deliver the blood of Jesus, that forgives our sins, that nullifies the devil's hold on us. The devil will fight his hardest to keep sinners from hearing and believing God's Word in Colossians 1, '***God reconciled the whole world to Himself, by making peace, through Christ's blood, shed on the cross.***"

The devil does not want me to proclaim that Good News, or you to hear and believe it. So he will try to stop it at any cost. Trinity is the sixth church I've served. And while I've seen the devil attack me, my family, and the sheep I've served in countless ways, in one of those churches – not Trinity – he nearly destroyed myself, my faith, and my family. This is war folks. And you need to pray for God, His angelic army, and Jesus' forgiving blood, to protect the pastor and His family, as we also pray and fight for you.

The Good News is: the devil is no match for Jesus. So Jesus says to this disruptive and distracting demon: **“Be quiet!”** In the Greek Jesus literally says: **“Shut Up!”** If there's one time you and I don't need to be polite, it's when we're fighting the devil. Next, Jesus orders the demon: **“Come out of the man!”** Jesus is exercising complete authority. Jesus sort of sounds like someone scolding a puppy for chewing up the curtains – in other words this puny demon, and the devil, are no match for Jesus. Now they are much more powerful than you and I are. We can defeat the devil and the demons, but only with the blood of Jesus, and the power of God's Word.

Luther said, *“Our Lord did not even need to speak the word. All He had to do is ‘will’ the demon out of the man, and the demon would be forced to leave. But Jesus speaks the Word so that His listeners, and you and I, may know that Jesus has complete authority over the devil and his demons.”* And then Luther gives us this example, in his own words, of how we fight and defeat the Evil One. Luther says, *“When the devil comes and shows me my sin, I say to the devil, ‘Yes, I have done those sins, and I am ashamed of them. But you still haven't defeated me.’ At which the devil shouts back: ‘What do you mean I haven't defeated you. I've got you to sin again, and the wages of sin is death?’ To which I say to the devil, ‘You still have not defeated me, because you have not defeated Christ. You could never get Jesus to sin, not even once, and He has covered me with His own righteousness. Nor could you keep Jesus from going to the cross, and by His blood God says I am forgiven. And so, dear devil, until you can nullify Jesus' forgiving blood which cleanses me of all sin, and can get Jesus to sin, and nullify His righteousness that I am clothed in, you still haven't defeated me. For until you can do that, God says I am righteous and forgiven in His sight through Jesus so if you've got a problem with that, then take it up with God, but don't bother me any more.”* Or, as another person once said, *“Whenever the devil reminds you of your past, you just remind him of his future. That's how we fight the devil and win! **Page 5***

The war is already won. And the devil is already defeated. Although the devil is much more powerful than you and I are, in Jesus we don't need to be afraid of him at all. In fact, the description in Mark 1 sounds sort of like a little child throwing a temper tantrum in the candy aisle, when you don't buy them candy. Jesus tells the demon, *"You can't have the man! He's mine! Now come out of him."* And the demon shook the man violently (that's the temper tantrum), and came out.

Not only did Jesus perform that exorcism, and set that unknown church-goer free, but He made sure that this was written down in God's Word for you and for me; so that we know Jesus power over the devil and the demons that sets us free from Satan's tyranny. This Good News should knock your socks off. In fact, it did knock the socks off of the worshipers that day, who declared, ***"What is this? A new teaching! And with authority! He even commands unclean spirits, and they obey Him!"*** Where the people once feared the demons, they do so no longer. They now fear and revere Jesus as their Savior, who utterly defeated the devil for us and our salvation! And if the demons obey God's Word to their damnation, we can trust Jesus' words that we're forgiven and risen to die no more to our salvation!

In closing, the reason that the devil and the demons attack our faith so hard is because they know what we're slow to believe. Even the demons know we're saved by Jesus. But the demons fight their hardest to get us to not believe in Jesus, because they want us damned in hell with them. The devil and the demons will try to convince you that you're not forgiven by the blood of Jesus. You are! They'll try to convince you, you won't rise from death to life. You will! Their dirty little secret is: they're lying! The devil's just shooting blanks. He's all out of ammo! It's all smoke and mirrors. It's all propaganda. He's judged the deed is done. So why come to worship? Every divine service is a hidden "exorcism", and every sermon is an act of delivering sinners from satan's tyrannizing lies. In worship, you and I are participating, with Jesus, in His authority and victory over the devil and demons, and like Jesus, we are setting sinners free, and we ourselves are being set free, from the Evil One. Amen.