

Matthew 20-02-23b

We are going to continue our study now in this notion of demons in the world today, and there is a verse I want to commend our attention to. I think it's somewhat underappreciated in terms of warning from Scripture, and it is the Lord Jesus talking to the Apostle Peter. If you'll turn over to Luke chapter 22, you know as you approach the end of any of the Gospels, you're getting close to the time of the crucifixion.

In Luke 22, you have the account of the Lord's Supper, and as Jesus talks about the bread and talks about the cup, we understand the significance of that. This is my body, which is broken for you. This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you, in verse 20.

But in verse 21, behold, the hand of my betrayer is with me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed. They began to question among themselves who of them it was who would do this thing.

Now, we've done the Gospel of Luke, and anybody that's done the ritual of the Lord's table with the grape juice and the cracker and so on, understands the scene here, the representative metaphorical use of the bread and the cup for the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, both in His life and in His death, to redeem us, to reconcile us, to propitiate God in His righteousness and justice, and so on. But here, follow the thought path of the disciples. Jesus is here communicating one of the most important and central truths of the faith.

His essential, necessary work, which is the object of our faith for salvation, is here being pictured. These men are believers. He's not evangelizing them here.

He is emphasizing to them the central nature of the work He is about to perform on the cross. So who is this about? Who's at the center of Christianity? Christ. And He Himself is the way to the Father.

So, we focus on Christ in the power of the Spirit to arrive in the presence of the Father. That's the Trinity. That's God at work reconciling us to Himself through Christ, power of the Spirit, right? That's the main idea.

It is the essential picture in the bread and the cup. Where do the disciples' minds go in the wake of this very clear, very emphatic picture? You really have to be almost shocked into consciousness, eat this bread, it's my body. Drink this cup, it's my blood.

How can you not be drawn into the effort to understand what that means? Are you saying we're cannibals? You have to basically die for your body and blood to be sacrificially beneficial. So, who ought to be occupying their thoughts at this moment?

The Lord Jesus Christ. What is He saying? Why is He saying it? Why am I a partaker of His body and His blood? This goes all the way back to John.

Remember when many turned back from following Him? Because He previewed this truth back then. It's like John 6 along in there. Many turned back from following after Him.

Eat His flesh, drink His blood. What are you talking about? Well, here's revisiting that truth. What did they think about? Look at the next verse.

They began to question among themselves which of them it was who would betray Him. When the focus ought to be on Christ, He says, look, it has been determined beforehand that I'm going to be betrayed into the hands of men. Woe unto the one by whom I am betrayed.

Interestingly, if you do your gospel study, Judas has already left. Actually, I'm wrong about that. Judas doesn't leave until after the bread and the cup.

It's one of the reasons I think he's a believer. In fact, I know he's a believer. But they began to question among themselves which of them it was who would do this thing.

You remember in the other gospels there is this He that dips the sup, the disciple whom Jesus loved. Jesus tells John, watch who puts his hand in the dish with me. He's fulfilling Old Testament.

The prophet, the one who eats my bread, has lifted up his heel against me and so on. But you see the damage that subjectivity introduces here. They're seizing on something that Jesus said.

Jesus said, there's somebody that is going to betray me and woe unto him. Which is the more important truth? The centrality of salvation through the sacrificial work of Christ or the fact that somebody is going to fail and betray the Lord? Not that anything Jesus says is unimportant, but which is the more important truth? There's a great lesson here. You can seize on a biblical truth and you can make it the focus and you can make it the driving center of your thoughts at a particular moment.

And it's right and it's biblical. But in the moment, what if there is a different and more important truth that we are supposed to be focused on? Instead of majoring on a minor, instead of being distracted by what is a truth, but it's a subjective truth. That guy over there is going to fail.

One of us is going to fail. Who is it? Who is it? Who is it? They've immediately forgotten what Jesus just graphically demonstrated with the bread and the cup. It's gone.

All they can think about is one of us is a rascal. Who can it be? Lord is it I? Subjectivity,

eyes on self. Subjectivity, eyes on people.

Is it a truth that Jesus spoke from his own lips in that moment? Yes. Is it what they're supposed to be focusing on in this moment? No, it is not. This is one of the most subtle forms of failure in the Christian faith because we can look at what we're thinking about and say, you know, this is absolutely right.

It's righteous. It's in the Bible. I know it's true.

I've seen it proved out time and again. You know, people always fail the Lord. There are people who fall back into perdition, blah, blah, blah.

You can document it nine ways to Sunday, but it's not the pertinent central truth of the moment. You can be distracted with truth. You can be deflected by the Bible itself.

An absolutely solid biblical truth can distract, deflect and neutralize us because it is not enough that it's a right thing. It has to be the right thing in that situation, in that moment. A quick example, when Paul, you know, doubtful things in Corinth, all things are lawful, but not all things are edifying.

You've got to discern the better things. I pray that you will come to discern the better things Paul says at the beginning of one of his letters. So look at where this leads.

You think I'm majoring on a minor just by pointing this out. Look at where it leads. The first thing they do is get subjective and they've got their eyes on themselves and each other's who would do this thing.

And they've forgotten all about the Lord Jesus and this historically greatest moment in the history of the world that Jesus is explaining to them. They've got their eyes on each other, eyes on themselves. Where does it lead? Look at verse 24.

Now there was also a dispute among them as to which of them should be considered the greatest. Seriously? Is this what happens after a communion service in church? We all look around and say, well, you know, in the resurrection I'm going to be seated closer to the throne than you. I mean, you ask yourself, is this not just the biggest head-scratcher in the world? The Lord Jesus has just graphically demonstrated the cross.

What are you thinking about? It started with a theme that Jesus mentioned, which was the betrayal is coming. Don't be shocked. Just prepare yourself.

When this happens and I am betrayed, it was determined beforehand. So don't let it knock you off your pins. That's the reason Jesus gave them that information.

Why does Jesus tell the disciples one of them is going to betray Him? So that they would get subjective and start trying to figure out who it is? Or that they would be ready? What is the other accompanying truth? For every given truth in the Word of God there is at

least one other truth that balances it, that keeps us from carrying it to an extreme. To avoid carrying the truth that somebody is going to betray the Lord to an extreme, what is the other truth that Jesus includes right in the sentence? This was determined beforehand. As the British say, don't get your undies in a bundle.

Don't get wrapped around the axle. Don't be distracted and deflected. When this happens, don't think that the plan of God is coming apart at the seams.

This was determined beforehand that the means by which the Lord of glory is going to be delivered for crucifixion is a betrayal by the disciples. It's coming, I'm telling you now, so that you won't be dislodged and destabilized by it. But they don't get that part.

They don't think about that part, much less what Jesus just introduced. So what happens? From that they move now to another subjective truth that Jesus said nothing about. Jesus has said exactly nothing about who is going to be great in the kingdom in this context.

He says it in other places, the last shall be first, the first shall be last, and so on. But not in this context. This is a time for different truths.

But now they are arguing with each other. First of all they were trying to figure out who is the worst, who is so bad that he will betray. And that ping pongs over to the other side of the table.

Well, if somebody is going to be the worst, who is going to be the best? It certainly can't be me, because I'm going to be seated at the right hand of Jesus' throne. My mother already talked to him about it, imagining that James and John might be involved in that discussion. I kind of doubt that they were.

Which of them should be considered the greatest? A much greater devolution into subjectivity. Who's the greatest person in the room? While this discussion is going on, who's sitting in the room? We should be appalled and shocked that our human soul is capable of this level of blindness. And we see it exemplified.

We see it illustrated. We see it portrayed for our benefit and the disciples. Don't let yourself get distracted by subjectivity.

In our first session this morning when we were talking about demons in general and yoga in particular, and I said this is going to be an example. It is one very easy to point out illustration of how demons operate. What is the essential element in yoga? What is the trinity in yoga? The mind, the body, and the spirit.

I look to myself. I am subjective. You can't do yoga without this strong encouragement to subjectivity.

Well, I've just stuck my thumbs in my chest. How do I feel now? I'm breathing in saying the word, I. I am breathing out saying the word, love. By the way, what does the Bible say about our love? I've got a memory verse to this effect.

We love because He first loved us. Not because we stuck our thumb in our chest and opened our heart. Not because we're saying Yom, which means I love.

I breathe in with the great I. I. I'm inhaling power to myself and I exhale my love that comes from me. The Bible says you are incapable of love. The only reason we can love at all is because the love of God, Romans 5.5, has been shed abroad in our hearts by God, the Holy Spirit.

It's subjectivity. Subjectivity is the single biggest weapon in yoga. It's that the forces of darkness use.

Satan started the process in the garden with Eve, got her eyes on herself. You're not as wise as you could be. You could better yourself if you would take some action without reference to the commands of God.

Well, it is good to look upon and it is desirable to make me wise. I could be smarter than I am. I could help Adam if I was smarter.

I could be more useful to God if I was smarter. I don't know what kind of machinations and rationalizations entered her mind, but she saw that it was desirable to make one wise. She believed the lie of self-improvement by action taken independent of God.

That's what yoga is and that is an element in virtually all elements of demonic attack that you want to name. We talked last time about the fact that in the Bible when you look at any passage where unclean spirits, demons, etc., are exposed, they are doing harm. We're going to see the woman that was bowed over with a spirit of infirmity and Jesus heals her on the Sabbath and He savages those who criticize Him and saying you would release an ox if it was bound on the Sabbath.

That doesn't violate Sabbath law in your mind, but here I release this woman who has been bound by Satan, bound by a spirit of infirmity for these number of years and you're saying I'm doing work on the Sabbath. Shame on you. But it is a spirit of infirmity.

It is a spirit that curved her spine into an unstraightening position. They blind. They cause fits.

They always take something away and you say well, but what about the girl that was following Paul and Silas around saying that they were preaching Jesus the Son of God, following them around, harassing them, yelling out to them. They finally turn around and cast the demon out because it's just pestering them to death. They didn't go looking for her.

She came to them and followed them around. And you say well, but she had a spirit of divination. She was foretelling the future and so isn't that an enablement? Isn't that a case where demons gave and conferred some power that isn't debilitating? Stop and think about this.

Why would demons give some sort of future predicting ability or fortune telling ability to this girl? Why would they do that? What's in it for them? You can really ask yourself the question what's in it for them to debilitate someone, to give them a disease or an affliction, to blind them, to give them fits, to cause them to harm themselves and the rest of it. What's in it for them? If they like inhabiting a body and driving it, then why would they cripple it? And a part of their healing by the Lord Jesus is to drive out the demon and then the physical affliction is healed. And you can almost see a two-stage process there.

We'll see this upcoming. But isn't this a gift? Isn't this a positive thing? She can tell the future. Why would demons tell the future to people? What's going to happen if a guy finds out, well, what sort of information would this be? It's going to be for my personal profit.

I've gone to the seer. I've gone to the mystic. I've gone to the psychic.

And I've got an edge. I know what the stock market is going to do tomorrow. I know a piece of property is going to become available at a certain price.

I'm going to aggrandize myself. I will advance myself. This woman is giving me the key to improving my life.

I'm getting self-improvement by going to this manifestly ungodly source. It's consistent with every demonic attack. We'll talk about infirmity here shortly.

But as you continue in Luke, after they seize on some of these things, you'll see something Jesus said, and turn it into an occasion for subjectivity. Their subjectivity immediately multiplies and gets worse. Who will be the greatest? And so Jesus says to them, the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise over them are called benefactors.

Not so you. On the contrary, who is greatest among you, let him be the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table or he who serves? It is not he who sits at the table, yet I am among you as the one who serves.

Notice how gently Jesus is trying to bring their attention back around where it's supposed to be. Who is greater? I am the one who serves. But you, verse 28, are those who have continued with me in my trials, and I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as my Father bestowed one upon me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon. Indeed, Satan has asked for you that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you that your faith should not fail, and when you have returned to me, strengthen your brethren.

Now, I'll tell you what's interesting about this, and it's a sad thing that we've lost the these and thous. But Luke 22, 31 in Greek, Simon, Simon, edu, behold, ha satanas, the Satan has demanded to have all of you. That is you, plural.

Satan has demanded to have you all in order to sift like wheat, to winnow. Sifting and winnowing, it's the same word. To shake in a sieve, to separate, to find out who is of one sort and who is of another.

Strong's says, by inward agitation to try one's faith to the verge of overthrow. It's only used here. It's almost a version of Sinai.

Of course, Sinai is derived from Hebrew, but this is Sinaiasai, S-I-N-I-A-S-A-I, Sinaiasai. He wants to Sinaiasai you, to winnow you all. He wants to find out in this group who is of one sort and who is of another.

Who can he overthrow? Who can he overturn? And of course, he's going to go on to predict that Peter is going to fail in a way, but his is not the worst failure. There is one that is going to be separated out by this sifting process that is going to actually betray the Lord. And in fact, he's already made the arrangements for the 30 pieces of silver.

But the desire is for you all. The demand is for you all. And there is a sifting process.

Some are more vulnerable to attack, to subversion, to co-opting than others. So our objective should be, A, to realize that there is a sifting process. This is why Satan roams the earth seeking whom he may devour.

He can't devour everyone, but there are some that he can. If you look at 2 Corinthians 2, verse 11, 10 and 11, Paul writing the second letter that we have preserved to the Corinthians. In the first one, he said, get rid of the guy that's shackled up with his father's wife.

But he says, if you forgive anyone, I also forgive him in 2 Corinthians 2, 10. And if I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven it in the presence of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan should not outwit us, for we are not unaware of his schemes. This is Paul talking about Satan at work in the church, to divide the church, to find people who are weak in the church, who can be distracted by this situation that requires a group decision.

How are we going to treat this man? What do we know about his having this woman that was his father's wife? We need discernment. We need objectivity. We need to continue to primarily focus on the Lord Jesus Christ and not let this turn into an issue in and of itself.

We are not unaware of Satan's schemes, and it is possible that Satan could outwit us, the church. So we tend to think, well, I'm a believer, Satan's off at work amongst the unbelievers. Paul says, no.

Satan has schemes to outwit believers in their own fellowship, to do the same thing that happened in the upper room with the disciples, and that is to start with subjectivity and move that subjectivity into self-centeredness, and from self-centeredness, it follows the pattern when lust has conceived, when desire for personal improvement, personal betterment, personal advantage. When lust is conceived, it brings forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. This is operational death.

This is a dead branch on the tree bearing no fruit. It has nothing to do with salvation. He is talking about the saved when he says lust conceives, and sin is brought forth.

And sin, when it comes to fruition, doesn't bear fruit. It is fruit unto death. You flip over a page there in 2 Corinthians 4, 3 and 4. This is a verse my mother taught me.

We learned it together out of a verse pack when I was a tiny child. If our gospel is veiled, if our good news is veiled, if the Word of God is not having a beneficial effect, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The God of this age, 2 Corinthians 4, 4, has blinded the minds of the faithless.

Blinded the minds of the faithless so that they cannot see the light of the good news of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. What happened in the upper room? Jesus is revealing the basis for His name being above every name. Philippians chapter 2, humbled himself, became obedient, came in the form of a servant.

What does he talk about right after that? He says, you are sitting at my table, and yet I am the one serving. What's wrong with this picture? Subjectivity. Who's going to be the greatest? Who's going to be a betrayer? Who's going to be on the opposite end of the spectrum? Let's sort ourselves out.

Let's figure out who we are. The God of this age blinds the minds of the faithless ones so they cannot see the light of the good news of the glory of Christ. If it can happen to Jesus' chosen disciples in the upper room, it can happen to you and me.

It can happen via subtleties of things like yoga. It can happen through blinding the mind by giving it distorted information so that you draw faulty conclusions and you are convinced that you are right and you are wrong. There was a documentary about a lady that got drawn into a self-help group that became a company, that became an industry, that became a cult called Nexium.

It's N-X-I-V-M, I think. And horrifying. Smart, intelligent woman sucked into this thing, ends up naked on a table getting branded with a mark that's supposed to be a symbol of self-control and self-discipline.

And she couldn't figure out what it was. It looked kind of like one of those... Who was the guy that did the woodcut prints way back when? And his initial is an A. Can't think of his name right now, but his woodcut prints are really famous and valuable. And he's got this really unique signature that is a capital letter A with kind of a special shape.

Well, this looked kind of like that. And she didn't find out until after this thing is cut into her flesh. She thought she was going to get a tattoo and that that might be painful.

This is seared into her flesh with a hot iron. She and all these other ladies who have just been duped down this road of subjectivity and self-improvement. And then after she got over it and started looking, you turn the thing sideways and it's the founder's initials.

And also the initials of a lady who's his right-hand person. Those two initials combined are this mark. And she's been branded with this guy's initials.

And it turned out to be this just sick cultish thing. But it was by degrees. And the tool that co-opted the mind of this very erudite, well-educated, smart woman was subjectivity and an appeal to self.

Do you have the self-discipline? Do you have the self-control? Look at the benefits, look at the peace and happiness you have by being self-possessed and self-controlled. And I don't know how you could find that. I don't know if I recommend it or not.

It's really kind of horrifying. But to see smart people taken in and co-opted, you're not protected by your mind. In fact, the mind can be the tool by which subversion takes place.

The only insulation, the only inoculation, the only protection we have, even as believers from demonic, subtle attack, co-opting, distracting, deflecting, and leading to self-destruction into a place of neutralization and ultimately into spiritual death, not in the sense of loss of salvation, but in the sense of complete fruitlessness and uselessness to God in the conflict is right here. The God of this age blinds the minds of the faithless. It's not enough to have some scraps of scripture and bring them to bear on a situation.

We like to think, well, I've been to Bible class and I know some truths that pertain. The disciples in the upper room seized on a truth that Jesus spoke from His own lips in the moment, but it was the wrong truth. It's true, but it's not the one to be thinking about in that moment.

And you can tell it's the wrong truth because of where it leads. It leads to overt, blatant, obvious subjectivity. Jesus is sitting at the table, and who are they looking at? Each other.

And in the next verse, who are they looking at? Themselves. Well, I think I could be great. Look at the things I did.

When Jesus sent us out and I cast out demons and healed some people, certainly that ought to earn me a place well up the rank. Which of us is going to be the greatest? I'm comparing myself to the other disciples and figuring out where I fit. Jesus Christ is going to be crucified the next day.

He's going to be arrested in a couple of hours. He's sitting at the table talking about that. He mentions another truth.

That's the one they seize on. This, I think, is one of the most subtle forms of attack for us because we can be nudged, we can be influenced, and we can't identify it as a blatant falsehood, we don't identify it as a big part of the lie, because it's true. It's a biblical truth.

Touch not the unclean thing. Have no truck with tax collectors and sinners. And we can go down that road and be wrong, wrong, wrong.

Pharisees had all kinds of scripture, and they would bring it to bear. Well, we know the Messiah doesn't come from Nazareth. This guy's from Nazareth.

They're looking at a biblical truth, but they are using it in the interest of their own agenda, their own view, their own worldview. So subtle. Yoga is so subtle that many Christians don't see the danger of subjectivity, misusing scripture in the service of our confirmation bias is a danger for us.

And we can be blinded because we're not actually in the faith. So how do we avoid this? It's one thing to say, I sure don't want to be that guy with the Legion and have all of these demons, but we don't have time to turn to all the passages. But I encourage you to look at some of the passages that, I'll just give you one example.

You remember the Mount of Transfiguration? Turn back if you're still in Luke, just go back to Luke chapter 9. I don't want to use Matthew necessarily. Go to Luke chapter 9. This will be our closing thought this morning. Beginning at verse 27, if you look right above that, verse 23, if anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.

There's some textual problems there, but for our purposes, we'll leave it stand. Whoever desires to save his life will lose it. Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

This is a warning against subjectivity, no matter how you eventually resolve the textual issue in verse 23. 24 is clear. If you're worried about your life and you're getting ahead, you're going down a path of destruction.

You're going down a path of destruction. So don't forget about yourself. For my sake, you will save it.

What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and is himself destroyed or lost? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him the son of man will be ashamed when he comes, in his glory and his Father's glory and of the holy angels. But I tell you truly, verse 27, there are some standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God. Now, we talked about the upper room.

Now we're talking about the Mount of Transfiguration. Another signal moment in the experience of the disciples with the Lord Jesus Christ. You want to talk about a mountaintop experience, you know what happens here.

It came to pass, they go up on the mountain to pray, Peter, James, and John. Verse 29, the appearance of his face was altered, his robes became white and glistening. Two men talked with him.

Moses and Elijah appeared in glory, spoke of his decease, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Transfiguration exposes the glory of the Lord Jesus and also focuses on his soon to be accomplished sacrifice. Remember the rest.

Voice from heaven, verse 35, my beloved son, listen to him. Comes down from the mountain, man from the multitude, and verse 38, cries out saying, Teacher, I implore you, look on my son, he is my only child. A spirit seizes him and he suddenly cries out.

It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth. It departs from him with great difficulty bruising him. I want to point something out.

The two men that we just saw in Matthew 8 are constantly in the tombs, roaming the streets naked, can't keep them in chains. It seems to be a pretty constant situation, but how many demons are there? Most people think a legion in Roman days was 6,000. There's a couple of thousand pigs that run into the drink.

This is a lot of demons and if they're taking turns, these guys basically get no peace. This boy has a demon. Verse 42, the demon threw him down and convulsed him.

Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, singular. So notice what the father says in verse 39. It is occasional.

The boy will be going along doing fine, he's normal, and out of nowhere the spirit seizes him and causes him to cry out, convulses him, he foams and it departs from him with great difficulty bruising him. It comes and it goes. It's episodic.

It's not constant, this single demon. You find other places where it's not always there. It picks times, it picks occasions and does these things and then it leaves.

Jesus rebukes it, healed the child and gave him back to his father. They were all amazed, verse 43, at the majesty of God, but while everyone marveled at these things which

Jesus did, he said to his disciples, look at the red ink, if yours is like mine, let these words sink down into your ears. The son of man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.

Remember the upper room? Let these words sink down into your ears. Prepare yourself. Bad times are coming, don't be thrown off.

Look at verse 46. What happened? The very same thing. A dispute arose among them as to which of them would be the greatest.

People, if it can happen to the disciples, it can happen to us. Of all the things you can say about demons, and there's a lot I'm not saying because using my first analogy, I don't want to talk about all kinds of darkness and stir up a big cloud of ash. What is the threat? What is the practical application for you and me, knowing the demons are present and active in the world today, and that their attacks are subtle? The subtlety of the attack always goes at the same vulnerability.

What happens when you get a lot of left-leaning mainstream media reporting of what's going on in the world? What happens to you? My eyes are on these people. Look at these fill-in-the-blank here who are causing these problems, creating these issues. It's either a group in the population, it's a group in the government, it's a political party, it's a political candidate.

It's the threat of this candidate's leanings. Some people are afraid people will be re-elected. Others are afraid two-fold the child of hell is going to get elected.

Eyes on people. Eyes on circumstance. What will happen to me? What will happen to my fill-in-the-blank here, health care, job, minimum wage, student loan? What happens there? Just step back and take a look at it.

Forget the issues. Forget whatever your political persuasions are and think about what is happening. Let these words sink down into your ears.

The important subject is the son of man and what's happening with him. Where is he being attacked? Where is he being betrayed? By his own people. To the extent that you and I are succumbing to subjectivity and are successful in doing so, we're going to be successfully co-opted, deflected, and distracted by demonic activity.

That's what happened to Judas. That's what happened to Peter. He got his eyes on himself and his own fate instead of thinking about the Lord Jesus in there facing crucifixion.

Jesus warned them here early and their response was to go subjective. He warned them in the upper room and their response was to go subjective. When you see world politics, when you see international relations, you see economic crisis, environmental crisis, this, that, and the other, all of this stuff, you don't have to know where, how, and to what

extent demons are involved.

The fruit is subjectivity. We have to be on the guard against subjectivity. How is our mind as a believer blinded to the good news of Christ? If our gospel be hid, it's hid to those who are perishing.

You can be a believer and be perishing. Judas is uniformly called the son of perdition, the son of loss, the son of Apollia. And Apollia is translated in other contexts, perish.

Your fruit, your effectiveness, your usefulness in the conflict, your usefulness in reflecting the glory of God can absolutely and utterly perish. And your future in the resurrection is going to be in the darkness which is outside, roasting weenies over your inheritance which is in the second death lake of fire. Everything you could have accomplished, everything you had by way of potential, you're there, but you're on the outside saying, Lord, Lord, wasn't there something? Not if you got co-opted by subjectivity.

The demonic attack from beginning to end, Satan with Eve in the garden to the present time and into the future is subjectivity. Eyes on self, eyes on people, eyes on circumstances. That's what too heavy an investment in politics will do.

That's what too heavy an investment in personal relationships will do. That's what too heavy an investment in how do people perceive me? How am I thought of? Am I greatest? Will I be well thought of in the kingdom? Every time Jesus brings up, look at the red ink. The son of man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.

Are you thinking about him at all? Are you thinking about the larger plan and purpose of which that is the central truth and the biggest part? He brings it up here and look at the context. He brought it up in the upper room. Look at the context.

Look at the response on the part of the disciples. Don't be those disciples. You want to talk about demons in the world today, you can read all of Dave Hunt's books, wonderfully informative.

It will really open your eyes. Matt mentioned another one. America, the Sorcerer's New Apprentice was not on that list that Amazon gave.

Wonderful reading. Taking nothing away from that, here's what to be on guard for. Don't let the ash cloud distract you.

The attack is subjectivity, beginning to end. So, look at the Lord Jesus Christ drawing the attention of His disciples back to Himself. You're sitting at the son of man's table.

He is serving. You should follow His example of serving. Sacrificial towards self, beneficial towards others.

We love, not because we've got a chakra and we say Yom when we breathe in and out and we've got our heels on our thighs. We love because He first loved us. That's objective truth.

You want to be protected from the influence of demons in the world today. Merrill Lunger's 1970-ish book was the point of the spear of telling the modern Christian world about the modern day effect of Satan's minions. But what we really need to know is the shield, the shield of faith.

It is the faithless who succumb and fall for this attack that leads to subjectivity, that leads to spiritual unfruitfulness and death. That's the message. It doesn't have to be the legion doing over and over again demonic things.

All it has to do is succeed in getting our eyes on ourselves, our eyes on people, our eyes on circumstances. And it has succeeded as effectively as if we were in the tombs running around attacking people and gashing ourselves with stones. That's all it takes.

So it's a warning against subjectivity. Every other demon passage you want to look at, every other unclean spirit. What about these infirmities? I said we'd talk about why does a demon create infirmity? What does that do? What did the disciples ask Jesus when they saw the blind man? Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Who do I no longer have to worry about, the Lord Jesus and my relationship with Him? I'm looking at Him and what's His relationship to God or His parents maybe that He was born blind? Jesus says, look, these things are allowed for the glory of God.

And when you see someone healed and when you see a demon driven out, you should be looking to the glory of God. Why do they bow people down? It creates a huge subjectivity. All this person can think about is how can I escape this affliction? And it's very difficult, not impossible, but very difficult to go in the direction of the Savior.

The people that did were released because they saw the Lord Jesus and they were looking at the Lord Jesus. I know if you will you can make me clean. I know if you will you can release me.

Focus on the Lord Jesus and what does the demon possessed man do to close out our study of this chapter? What does he do when Jesus says, you don't need to come with me, go back to your home and talk about the Lord? And that's what he did. He didn't talk about himself, he talked about the Lord. That is the necessary function of believers when we speak the truth to one another and to the world in love.

The truth is not here's what ought to happen in politics, here's what ought to happen in any other circumstance. Here is the Lord God in heaven, here is His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He delivered me, He can deliver you.

He's coming back soon, let's be ready. And when He comes, may He find His servants

serving, not sitting at the table saying, which of us is going to be in the top seat? So that concludes our study of demons. That's as much as I'm going to say about those rascals.

And we're going to continue on with the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew chapter 9 next time. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the divine protection that we experience, the divine peace that we enjoy, Your presence and power in our souls as we focus on the things that are central and important, as we allow Your Word and Your Spirit to work in us far more effectively than any human artifice or any demonically inspired tactic or stratagem.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will enliven these truths in our souls, make them flame and make them live in a way that reminds us of who we are and why we're here. As the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, as He came to do Your will, may we be likewise dedicated to accomplishing Your plans and purposes in this life as we prepare for the next. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.