

Matthew 20-04-26b

Well, as usual, we have had to restart for the second session. I should probably just make that a formal part of the service. But we are back and we're going to pick up in Matthew chapter nine, looking at verses 32 through 34 with the healing of a mute individual who is demon possessed.

When the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. Now, this brings up the issue of demons, and as I said, this is something that we began looking at in terms of our study of angels on Thursday night. And there is a connection in fact, to the Old Testament with demons where they are primarily linked, not so much with possession.

You don't have exorcism or Elijah or Elisha going out and trying to cast out demons. It doesn't seem to be a problem in the United or the divided kingdom. There does seem to be some demon activity, some spirits.

You can think about the Witch of Endor, perhaps as an example. The Law of Moses proscribes interaction with demons. So we know that they were present and that they were known, their presence and their function was known, but they don't seem to pose the problem in Israel that we have in the New Testament age.

There's no ritual, for example, in Leviticus 15 for the restoration to fellowship and function for someone who has had a demon cast out the way there is for a cleansed leper or someone who has been restored from another kind of impurity or uncleanness. You could imagine there would be no more vile impurity than to be inhabited by a demon and that if it were something that occurred in Israel, it would have been addressed in the law. So demons seem to have been outside the realm of national Israel from the days of the Exodus through the close of the canon.

You just don't find incidents of possession, although we do have them implicated in pagan worship. You can find this, for example, in Acts 17 and verse 18. And we'll probably just rely on this one passage.

There are plenty if you want to pursue this in a topical Bible or a concordance study. But Acts chapter 17, verse 18. Certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him and some said, what does this babbler want to say? Others said he seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.

The word babbler there is a seed picker, like a cotton picker. What does this cotton picker have to say? It literally, it's a spermatologos and sperma means seed. And he's a seed picker.

And what does this babbler say? Others said he's proclaiming foreign gods because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. They misunderstood. And the word for

resurrection in Greek is anastasis.

Paul was evidently preaching in Greek and they got anastasis as a female deity and like Eshtart or Venus or one of the other Greek pantheon. So they thought, well, this is a god and a goddess, Iesus and anastasis. And so they said, well, it's the latest addition to the niches in our temples.

And Paul mentions this again in first Corinthians 10, 20 and following. But if you go back in the Old Testament, you can just write these down. Deuteronomy 32, 17, Psalm 106, 37 and a few other passages implicate demons in idol worship and in pagan practice.

But they seem to have been content to work their powers and their influence outside of Israel. God had reserved Israel for himself and created something of a wall of fire around them. Of course, famously in Job, you remember, there is a dark spirit that comes at night and scares one of Job's friends.

But why is there such a rash, a sudden explosion of demon activity? And it seems to be known. Jesus is accused at one point of having a demon. You are a Samaritan and you have a demon.

So even before Jesus began casting demons out, it was a problem and people recognized it. So we see here that this demon is implicated in the man being mute. And you say, well, so were demons behind sickness, the kinds of sicknesses that Jesus healed? And most of the time in the gospel accounts, demon possession and the exorcism or the driving out of these demons is separate and distinct from disease.

There are a few times, such as the passage before us, where they seem to be linked. But in Luke 13, 32, Jesus describes his ministry as casting out demons and healing. And they're not the same thing.

And you see them differentiated in a lot of passages. You can flip back to Matthew chapter eight, our preceding context, and in verse 16, it says, when evening had come, they brought to him many who were demon possessed and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. And these are not cause and effect, these are two different things.

So there are many parallels to this that I could name, but in Luke chapter 13, verse 10 and following, you have the woman who is bowed down with a spirit of infirmity. And it's another example, parallel to this one, where there seems to be a demon involved in crippling her and bowing her over. And Jesus, when he heals her, seems to eliminate the spirit of infirmity.

And so there are times when the two are linked. So we have six clear stories, six clear examples in the scriptures of Jesus casting out demons. We have some other allusions, like the woman who has the spirit of infirmity.

We assume that the spirit was a demon and that the demon was cast out as a part of the cure. You also have Mary Magdalene mentioned in Luke chapter eight, verse two and Mark chapter 16, verse nine. Of course, Mark 16, you have to kind of be careful where you end the inspired account.

But it says out of whom he had cast seven demons. And it's a clear passage in Luke eight, two, but we don't have that story recorded. It's just mentioned in passing.

But there are six accounts. There was the demon possessed man in the synagogue in Mark chapter one, verse twenty three. And that's also recorded in Luke chapter four.

Secondly, you have the two men, the garrison demoniac and his companion, when Jesus crosses the sea. We saw that in the last chapter, Matthew eight, twenty eight through thirty four. And it's also given in Luke eight and in Mark five.

Third, we'll see this in some chapters hence, but the Syrophoenician woman has a daughter who has a demon and the Lord will cast that one out. That's going to be in Matthew 15 and its parallels. Coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration, you remember Jesus comes down and his disciples, other than Peter, James and John, who are on the mountain with him, have encountered a man who has a son who is having fits and has a demon.

This is another case where these seizures seem to be a part of his demon possession. And that's the we'll see that in Matthew 17. And it's paralleled in Luke and Mark.

This situation here in Matthew nine, thirty two through thirty four, the mute man. And then finally, in Matthew 12 coming up, we're going to see a mute and blind demoniac. Now, we've had blindness and muteness in separate incidences here.

So. You can put a post it here that when we get to Matthew 12 and Jesus is going to talk extensively about demons and about the power by which they are cast out, there's an accusation which we initially have here. He casts out demons by the prince of demons, by the ruler of the demons.

That's going to be expanded in Matthew chapter 12. And so part of our discussion, we may save for that time because Beelzebub or Beelzebul is going to be mentioned. And you remember, there's there's quite an exchange binding the strong man Beelzebul equated with Satan by the Lord Jesus.

So we know that the prince of the demons, the ruler of the demons, when you get to Matthew 12, is in fact Satan. It's not a separate core or a different group. So this is the fifth of those six accounts that are detailed.

We have other general references to Jesus casting out demons on a particular day with no details given. But. The symptoms and this is where you want to pay attention

because, in fact, I'll give you the reason for paying attention instead of just saying, pay attention.

This is why we should pay attention. Here's here's my thought. You remember, and I gave you a quote and I made a copy of it so I could remember it exactly.

A very extensive body of scripture bears on the last days for the church. It's a restricted time at the very end of and yet wholly within the present age, though this brief period immediately precedes the Great Tribulation and in some measure is a preparation for it. These two times of apostasy and confusion, though incomparable in history, are wholly separate one from another.

The. Problems in the church in the last days are not the same as the problems in the tribulation itself. We are pre-tribulation rapture.

People, because that's what the Bible teaches. The scriptures that set forth the last day for the church give no consideration to political or world conditions, but are confined to the church itself. You remember this point.

We made it a couple of weeks ago in our in our end time study, the last days of the church. No signs are given about earthquakes, world conflict, wars, pestilences. None of that is given as a sign of the end of the church age or a symptom at the latter days of the church age.

Certainly you could imagine that there would be preparation, that things would be building up, but these are not the signs of the end for the church. This is Dr. Chaffer's point, and it is a classic. It is a good one and one that's important for us to remember at this time.

Scriptures setting forth the last days for the church give no consideration to political or world conditions, but are confined to the church itself. These scriptures picture men as departing from the faith. First Timothy four, one and two.

There will be a manifestation of characteristics which belong to unregenerate men under the profession of a form of godliness. This is second Timothy chapter three, a form of godliness, but denying its power, lacking its power, refusing to function under its power. The indication is that having denied the power of the blood of Christ, the leaders in these forms of righteousness will be unregenerate men from whom nothing more spiritual than this can proceed.

Now, Dr. Chaffer believed that these were actual unbelievers rising up in the church like tares amongst the wheat. I respectfully, very respectfully disagree with Dr. Chaffer. These are, in my view and my understanding of what scripture teaches, enemies within the household.

A man's enemies will be in his own household. And these are the believers who are so far gone that you can't distinguish them from the unregenerate that he speaks of. But I want to turn real quickly here to once again to first Timothy chapter four, because here's the reason we're going to pay attention to what I'm about to say about what demons did to people in Jesus day.

Here's why. Remember when I made this point last time that that the problems that describe the end of the church age are spiritual. We are a spiritual people and our instruction is spiritual.

Our conduct is guided by spiritual truths, not forms and rituals. We've pretty well laid aside, certainly at Grace and Truth, overt observance of rituals because these belong to the previous age. And it's really hard to shake.

It's a lot easier to observe a ritual than it is to be guided by spiritual truth, spiritual priorities, spiritual considerations. It's easier to just rely on something that is habitual, something that is easy to perform and go through the motions. So you can do a physical act, whether it's dropping money in the plate or dunking some money under the water or eating a cracker and some Kool-Aid or whatever it might be.

It's easy to do that when when people do this in good faith and invest it with spiritual meaning. It's the spiritual meaning that counts. It isn't that you have a certificate that says you were dunked.

It isn't that you participated in a bread and a cup ritual. It is to the extent that you yourself invest that with its spiritual truth. It is the spiritual that counts.

I don't personally see anything wrong with what are considered to be the two ordinances of the church. Fine. But in some cases, you almost have to exaggerate to make a point.

And the point is we are entirely a spiritual body with spiritual priorities, spiritual guidance, spiritual forms, spiritual, you know, one man observes the days, others observe every day alike. Some observe the feast, Paul says, others don't. That each one be fully convinced in his own mind, because it's what you are convinced of in your mind and your spiritual performance that counts.

This is why Jesus honored the widow with the two mites, because it's what was going on in her heart. It wasn't that she contributed or how much he contributed. It is that she understood and wanted to contribute.

That's what she gets credit for. So it isn't the form or the absence of the form. It is the spiritual, right? This is review.

We understand this. It's not what we do. It is why we do it.

Thoughts and intents of the heart. That's what gets judged. Doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction and righteousness is in the heart.

The word of God cuts through the externalities and gets to the spiritual. This is essential. So what kind of people are Israel? Earthly, physical, what kind of resurrection are they going to have at the inception of the millennial kingdom? Earthly and physical.

What kind of forms and observances do they have? Earthly and physical. What kind of signs are given to them when the Lord Jesus comes? Earthly and physical. The blind receive sight, he quotes Isaiah, he tells John when John asks him from prison, are you he that should come or do we wait for another? And he says, go back and tell John the physical signs are being accomplished.

I am he who is to come. And these are the harbingers of the kingdom where God's physical promises to Israel are going to be fulfilled. Israel is an earthly, remember that I've told you this several times, but if you look at the difference between an old Schofield and a new Schofield, one of the things they changed is C.I. Schofield put in his note, people of Israel are earthly and their kingdom is earthly and they're going to have a millennial kingdom that's earthly.

The church is the heavenly people of God. Well, he's right. And all of the wonderful and again, with great respect, I disagree with those who changed that note.

And they were some of the leading lights at the seminary I graduated from. But I think they misunderstood what Dr. Schofield understood. Paul says our citizenship is in heaven.

We are a spiritual people and it is what you think. It is how you are motivated. It is your faith.

It is your hope. It is your love that is at issue. So we are a spiritual people.

Now, having reviewed that, let's think about this. If demons are going to be active. At the concluding time of the age of Israel, what kind of stuff are they going to do? Physical stuff, throwing people around, causing fits, opposing the ministry of the Lord Jesus, giving occasion for there to be distraction and confusion about how Jesus is able to drive them out, preempting his timing and saying, I know who you are, the holy one of God, and he has to tell them to be quiet.

They are disruptive in the physical ministry of the Lord Jesus and in the physical coming to Jesus by Israel. So. I'm I am preceding, I am I am introducing this next section of the study of demons and what they did in Jesus day by suggesting to you that what demons did, opposing the coming of the earthly Messiah to establish an earthly kingdom for God's earthly people is one thing.

What demons are going to do with the heavenly people in the spiritual age is another thing. How do we learn spiritual truths for the church age when we read the Old Testament and when we read the Gospels, when we observe and interpret and apply, what do we do? Do we still follow the physical restrictions and requirements of the law of Moses, or do we draw from them the spiritual truths, the spirits of the law is righteous, holy and good? It is that righteousness that we ascertain and that we follow. We don't we're not sewing tassels on the corners of our garments.

We're not limited in our diet, but the righteousness of the law, consideration for the widows and orphans, a desire for purity and to avoid defilement, to be a holy people separated unto God with our spiritual guidance and in our spiritual capacities, we observe, we interpret and apply. So here's my here's my main thought for the morning. In looking at the end of this age, what are demons going to be doing? Are we going to suddenly see people being cast about with fits or being blinded or rendered mute or otherwise creating physical distractions? Turn to First Timothy chapter four.

First Timothy chapter four. We've we've visited this a couple of times now, but it is worth reviewing again. The spirit expressly says, notice who's talking here, it's not the law, it's not the prophets, the spirit says, God's Holy Spirit, we are a spiritual people in a spiritual age.

It doesn't relieve us of the we're not Gnostics, we're not saying, well, the body, you can do what you want to with it because we're spiritual people and what the body does is not important. That's a faulty conclusion. But we are guided by spiritual principles.

The spirit expressly says this is not an accident that Paul introduces this truth with its source. This is a spiritual truth from God's own spirit. The spirit expressly says, emphatically says, says in a way that we need to revisit and be conscious of expressly says in latter times.

This is now now is the latter times. Some will depart from the faith, giving heed to what? Deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, we're not suddenly plagued with with demon possession, are we? It's their deceptions and it is their doctrines. This is spiritual opposition to a spiritual people in a spiritual age.

So we're not waiting to see a rise of demon function and opposition like there was in Jesus Day manifest in that form in the latter days of our age, it is a similar level of opposition. You think about the demon activity in Jesus Day, it is just a plague. It's everywhere.

Every region he goes to, he is casting out demons. He goes across the the the lake and he's casting out demons on the far side. It's not even in the region of Gadara.

He's he's casting out demons over there. What are they doing? They're all over the place

because they don't know exactly what God's plan is. They don't know where Jesus the Messiah is going to go or what he's going to do.

And so they have preemptively occupied the area. It's occupied territory. And Jesus goes on the offense against their defense.

Have you come to destroy us before the time? If you don't send us into the abyss, are you waging the attack that is going to send us away permanently? But in our day, the level of demon activity that you see in the Gospels and in the early days of the church is mirrored in the spiritual realm. So when we look around, where are we going to spot demon activity? It is in deception. The thing about a deception is.

You don't know you've been lied to, you don't know that you've been fooled, a successful deception makes you think you know the truth and you don't. Who is the target for this deception? Believers. Look at what the verse says, it doesn't say in the latter days, many will never come to the faith because they are deceived.

What does it say? In the latter days, what happens? What's the verb? Many will depart. You can't depart unless you've been somewhere. You can't depart the faith unless you started out in the faith.

So who are the victims of these demons? Deceiving spirits, believers, believers will depart from the faith, giving heed. They will listen. They will be fooled.

They will think they know the truth and they don't. We will think we know the truth and we don't. If we give heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

Now, there's a fascinating study you can do on the on. Is there a difference between spirits and angels or spirits and demons? In passages like this, some will point to them and say there's two categories of fallen operatives. There are demons and there are spirits.

And of course, spirits are ascribed to men. You go to Hebrews and it says you've come to you haven't come to quaking Mount Zion, but you've come to the New Jerusalem and the spirits of just men made perfect. And so, well, are these departed people who are coming back? I mean, there's all kinds of speculative ideas about this, but.

A deceiving spirit and a doctrine of demons, these are two different areas, doctrines of demons. What's the thing about a doctrine? All scripture is God breathed, spirit inspired and is profitable for doctrine. I don't use the word doctrine too much.

It has some historical baggage with it, pro and con. But what is a doctrine? Doctrine is incorporated into the formal fabric of belief, the creeds, the statements of faith from various places and churches and denominations and such are doctrines. You believe in the doctrine of the resurrection, which is a formal understanding of when, where, how

and for whom resurrection is going to take place.

You have a doctrine of angels. What do we know about angels? It's an organized and systematic collecting and parsing of the information in the word of God about a subject. Well, what would a doctrine of demons be? This is in the church.

It's causing people to depart from the faith and follow a doctrine that actually comes from demons. This is the co-opting and subverting of organized, systematic belief into something that is actually evil. Evil gets incorporated into the fabric, into the policy, into the function, into the operation, into the belief system of the people.

So how would that contrast with deceiving spirits? Doctrine is the foundation on which your belief rests. It's the object of your faith. You believe the promises, principles and doctrines of the word of God.

What would a deceiving spirit do? What's the first deception in human history you can think of? Hath God not said, that's your doctrine. What are you going to do with this twisted doctrine? What's your practice going to be? What are you encouraged to do? What's your application? A deceiving spirit is going to take the doctrine, make it a doctrine of demons and then work it out in twisted and ultimately evil application. It's the application side.

What do you believe? What do you practice? Belief, doctrine of demons. Practice, influence by deceiving spirits. Well, this is what we ought to do.

We ought to embrace this and we ought to support that and we ought to vote for this and we ought to get rid of that. And this is old and traditional and patriarchal and benighted and medieval and partakes of lack of scientific knowledge. And this is what we ought to do.

So it's a two pronged approach. We're going to hit the foundation and we're going to hit everything you build on top of it. Deceiving spirits.

That's what you see on the superstructure built on the sand of doctrine of demons. Speaking lies in hypocrisy. Notice a doctrine from demons has to be false.

It's not from God. It's by definition false. Deceiving spirits is alternate truth.

And speaking lies, speaking lies, these doctrines and these exhortations for application are lies. They have a false promise. What's the first lie? It's a great exemplar.

What's incorporated? What's inherent in that first lie? Well, God knows that if you eat this fruit, you'll be like him. It's an advancement. It's an improvement.

It's a good idea. And it will lift you up. What happened to the two guys who received their sight when they went out and started proclaiming this news? They were lifted up.

They were celebrities. They had their 15 minutes of fame. It appeals, it hooks into our sense of, well, this is good.

Not only can I see, but now I'm on a mission for God. I'm going to talk about God all the time and what he has done for me. And it's a twist.

Is it a wonderful thing to celebrate God and what he has done for us in a proper context for proper reasons? It is. But you can take a good thing and twist it just a little and it's no longer good. I've got a wonderful long carpenters level that was given to me because it doesn't work.

The bubble is off. It's a wonderful level. But if you use that thing, everything you build is going to be off.

I keep it and use it as a straight edge. It's great for making marks on long boards. If you can't find your chalk string, your chalk line.

And there are times when if you want to score a thing and you need a reference, I can, I amp that long level down and I can use it as a guide when I'm trying to make an exact cut through a thing. It's got a use, but as a level, it's useless. You can't trust it.

But if I just handed it to somebody and here's a level and they relied on it, everything they build with it is just going to be slightly off and out and they're going to come back later. And well, that's what these deceptive doctrines do. They're almost right.

I mean, this thing is is close. You can might build a small doghouse with it, but it's a long level. It's supposed to help you across great distances.

And the longer a level is, the more accurate is supposed to be. Well, this one is way off that I got dropped or something. Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.

No. What's the problem with a seared conscience? Just like a seared finger or seared tongue. When you burn a thing.

Can't remember if I told you the story the last time I burned myself, I don't think I will, though. Trust me when you and you know this from your own experience, if you if you get a burn, that place is now insensitive. There's a blister there or there's a patch of dead skin that has to come off and it doesn't sense properly.

A conscience seared is unable to distinguish between good and evil. Can't tell the difference. Have you ever had a deeply calloused finger and then you're trying to find the end of a piece of packing tape that's wrapped around the clear, you know, the little dispensers never work.

It always comes off and sticks to the roll and you're picking around there with your

fingernail, trying to find that little tiny end. A seared conscience can't find the end of the tape. It's insensate.

You can't tell. This would be blindness so severe that you can't even tell day and night. A lot of profoundly blind people can still sense that the lights are on or off.

They can't make out shapes or or navigate, but there's some light sensitivity, profound blindness, some blindness from birth, congenital blindness. There is no light sensing whatsoever. Well, a conscience that is seared with a hot iron.

This is not, oh, I touched a stove. If it's been seared with a hot iron, this is what they would do on purpose to brand people for crimes in the ancient world. And people understood this.

When you take a hot iron and sear someone, that scar has no nerve sensation whatsoever. It's completely insensate, unable to to perform the function. Your conscience is supposed to make you feel guilty when you do something bad.

Conscience is what prompts us toward Christ. Conscience is what prompts us to confess our sins. If you have no consciousness of sin, I've known little dogs like this.

They just have no conscience. If they, you know, break the rules, they're just looking at you with their little floppy ears and their big round eyes, and they're they're they're guiltless because they just have no awareness of what they just did is horribly wrong. It's impossible to tell them.

If you if you try to scold them or in some way rebuke them, they're confused. They can't associate what they just did with your attempt to correct them because there's just no link. Conscience seared with a hot iron.

You look around today at young people and the decisions they are making, lifestyle decisions, priority decisions, level of interest in the things of God. Conscience seared with a hot iron. What is the hot iron? It's in a holster on your hip.

It's ringing when somebody wants to talk to you. It's giving you the Internet. It's giving you social media.

It's giving you twisted, slanted news. It is giving doctrine of demons. It is giving deceiving spirits.

And we can't live without it. We carry it with us everywhere we go. If you think that the news is not manipulated, I saw a set of clips recently.

I think my I think my brother Dan said this. Dan suggested this video to me and we watched it. But they just picked one news story and went to all of these different channels and all of these different networks and all of these different outlets in

completely different unrelated places.

And the exact same phrase was repeated over and over and over and over and over and over and over. I've noticed this on the major networks. Why is it the same stories always lead? How do they know what the other guys are going to lead with? It's all coming from the same source.

I say that to say this. Forbidding to marry. I want to read you something about the word forbidding.

I looked this up in my Fritz Reinacher, Cleon Rogers. This is a great little Greek commentary. It's not what I'm recommending that you pick up.

But if you work a lot in the Greek, this is a really wonderful reference. My fellow seminary student in Tulsa, Rick Caradini was like from New York and had a real thick accent. And he always called this Rednecker and Rogers.

It's got a red cover, but it's Reinacher, Reinacher. But he said, if you got your Rednecker, I want to look something up. Anyway, on this verse on First Timothy, Chapter four, the word for forbidding to marry here.

Is. The word that means to. Discourage, it doesn't necessarily mean to forbid, it can mean to oppose.

This is in in verse three, and it is the word. Coluantone, and it's a participle, these are people who do this as a as a habitual thing, it's like an ing word. They are ones who are forbidding this all the time.

But it doesn't mean forbid. It also means Coluo. K-O-L-U-O means to hinder, to stand in the way of.

And when marriage is a good thing and your practice and your deceiving spirit and your doctrine is such that you no longer emphasize the importance of one man, one woman as God's model, when you no longer consider it important to define who it is that enters into a marriage, when you opt for social gospel instead of God's gospel, you are hindering. You are an obstacle to marriage. Well, look around today, even in the church, there is no big deal made at all of people who have opted out of marriage, who think shacking up and and living together is no big deal.

Of cohabiting prior to marriage is no big deal. In fact, it's really wise and smart because you might find out something in that intimate setting that you want to know for later and you don't want to enter into something that you can't get out of. So try before you buy.

And and well, what is marriage anyway? And it's an old, outdated custom. This is doctrine of demons. It is deceiving spirits and it is.

It is weakening and tripping up and reducing the importance of marriage. Marriage is one of the most important concepts in the Bible. It is all through the Old Testament.

It is all through the New Testament. Paul has a lot to say about it. Moses' marriage was an issue.

Abraham's marriage was an issue throughout scripture. Joseph's marriage was an issue. Joseph has a picture of Christ.

You go back and look. It's it's hugely important. You think about Hannah.

You think about David's wives. You think about Solomon's wives. You think about the Song of Solomon that we just finished and what marriage is supposed to mean.

And it has gone by the wayside. This is not we don't have to wait in the closing days of the church for people to say, well, you can't get married. I'm not going to perform your wedding ceremony.

This is not forbidding people to marry. This is. Diminishing any attention to marriage, we're just not going to consider that important, you you kill it with with lack of attention.

You don't have to go chop down your flowers to kill them. Just don't water them. Just don't nurture them.

Don't care for them. Don't keep them in the right light. They'll die all by themselves.

The sign of the last days, I think this particular sign has been hidden under a false impression that people are going to are going to somehow forbid people to to have a marriage ceremony. This is you've cut the legs out from under it. You've made it meaningless.

You've diminished it by not emphasizing it, by not honoring it, by not respecting its role in the plan and purpose of God. You can't get out of Genesis. The first three chapters without for this cause shall a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife.

You can't get past Adam and Eve, you can't get past the creation of Eve without the Bible emphasizing marriage. What do you have at the other end? What do you have in Revelation 22, the new Jerusalem? That looks like what? A bride adorned for her husband. Revelation 19 and following all of that, the new Jerusalem is a bride adorned for her husband.

Singular, it's a bride. There's a feminine and a masculine. It's an important biblical concept.

Where is it today in the church? Where is it today in churches? Now, there are still people getting married. But where is the where is the attitude toward those who are

flippant and disrespectful and just set this aside in a casual way by saying, well, we might get married if we feel like it later in the church, departing from the faith, heeding, seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, paying attention to lies, that this isn't important, that it doesn't matter, that it's an old antiquated custom. Not so.

Commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. And a lot of times these things come in sideways. They come in sideways.

That's all I'm going to say about that. In the same way that forbidding to assemble and worship. There is a precedent that this isn't the big nobody can worship anymore.

Churches are going to start meeting as soon as today and next week and so on. But the precedent has been set. The foot is through the door.

Anytime the government can create a sufficient impression of need, they can shut us all down. And right now, then the need is is easily justifiable. Well, what about the next time? Well, the reason you can't meet is what you are saying.

The particular passages that you are emphasizing, you're hurting people's feelings by talking about marriage and who ought to be engaged in marriage, you're hurting people's feelings by talking about Genesis chapter 19, you're hurting people's feelings by talking about the Benjamites in Judges 19, you're you're you're you have to stop. Because you're hurting others, that the one piece of morality that defines all others in the modern day extra biblical morality is is the sort of do no harm. Well, harm is in the eye of the beholder.

And one person's harm is another person's necessary statement of truth. So this is what demons are doing. Demons in the world today are not stretching people in strange positions and causing them to utter phrases and disabling them and causing blindness and such as they did in Jesus day.

They are working in the spiritual realm because it is spiritual opposition for spiritual people and it is everywhere. And beware of any square screen, any rectangular screen, even the one that you are watching me on right now. Be careful.

Are you getting truth? Are you getting doctrine from God or are you getting doctrine from demons? Are you getting virtuous, Holy Spirit, righteousness, faith? Laying hold of righteousness applications, or are you getting applications from deceiving spirits? Test the spirits, John says, to see if they are from God. Test everything. You have to have something to test with.

You've got to have an accurate level. And that's what the word of God provides for us. So this is our hope.

This is our prayer. And this is also a sign that we are nearing the end of the age. There has never been a time when the church was anywhere near the hockey stick graph of influence by these very things.

It's never been this way. Can you think of a time in history where the the propriety of marriage was not under actual attack, even within churches, where lax attitudes left it to die from lack of nurture, lack of emphasis, we'll overlook, let's go along to get along. We don't want to make an issue.

We don't want to cause a ripple. And by toleration, we let things into the church that are a part of the spiritual attack that characterizes the end of the age. So it's something to think about.

Whether it is foods. Whether it is vegans telling you you can't eat meat, whether it's people telling you that that marriage is not important, whether it is people saying that ecumenicity and everybody coming to God, it doesn't matter if it's Islam or a cult or whatever else, as long as they love Jesus, why let's go along to get along. It is a sign of the end of the age.

And it has never been at the levels that it is now. Not not a fraction. It is exponentially increased.

Look around. The spirit expressly says, watch for this and don't be lulled. Don't be don't be warmed and fed by a deceiving spirit.

Eve had no problem reaching out because the fruit looked good and it was desirable to make one wise. It had an attraction. It had a positive pull.

All deception that is successful works that way. Test the spirits. Are we heeding a doctrine of demons? Are we agreeing? Are we OK with the kinds of things that are a direct attack on on the Church of Jesus Christ? It's something we have to look at.

Well, we'll pick up with our explicit look at demons on Thursday. And what we're going to see is from these accounts, what is it they did in the physical realm? And you can you can do your homework if you like before Thursday night, because every action of demons in the Gospels, the types of things that they did that Jesus fixed by driving them out is a physical manifestation of a spiritual reality. And just as we look at the physical nation of Israel and observe, interpret and apply the action of those demons.

If you want to see what demons are doing in the world today, all we have to do is look at what they did in the physical realm in Jesus day. It has a direct message for us now. Do you want the the details of what they're doing and how they're doing it? Thursday night, that's what we're going to see.

There is a one to one correspondence between every detail of what the demons did then

physically and what they are doing now spiritually. We have a lot of information and it's going to keep us on our guard and alert. So that'll be Thursday night.

But we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for the truth of your word and the helmet that we receive from it, the breastplate that we have, the full armor that protects us from these attacks and keeps us wise to the ways of the enemy. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will minister these things to our hearts, that we will be children of the light and of the day, not be deceived, that the day does not overtake us as a thief.

We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen.