

Sunday, February 2, 2025 Sunday Morning Worship Sermon

" Casting Out Unclean Spirits " Pastor Takaaki Inoue

Isaiah 35:3~8, Luke 4:31~41

❶ 【The work of demons】

Jesus went to the synagogue on the Sabbath in the city of Capharnaum and taught. At that time, there was a man in the synagogue who was possessed by an unclean evil spirit, and he cried out loud. "Oh, Jesus of Nazareth, don't worry, you have come to destroy us. I know who it is. He is a saint of God." There are many stories of demons in the Bible, but in seminaries there is no subject or textbook about "demons," and there is nothing to be studied. At a certain seminary, people laugh at me when I talk about evil spirits. That's the old-fashioned way of thinking of the ancients, and they say that there are no evil spirits. The other day, I asked a Catholic priest, "Are there any priests in the Diocese of Osaka who perform 'exorcists'?" When I asked, the reply was, "No." Is it easy to dismiss the many articles about demons in the Bible as "there is no such thing"? Paul writes clearly about the work of demons. "The God of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, and has made blind them to the light of the gospel concerning the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (II Corinthians 4:4). Evil spirits blind people's minds and make them unable to believe in Christ. The devil tries to separate man from God or teach the wrong God or the wrong Messiah. It is the evil spirit that works to make us believe in the fake. Therefore, cult religions are completely the work of evil spirits. Even if you believe in Christ when you are in the church (when you are worshiping), when you are away from the church, you will not know God because evil spirits are at work.

❷ 【Human resistance】

Some people may be surprised that there was a man in the synagogue who was possessed by an unclean evil spirit. However, the people who tried to kill Jesus the most were religious people such as scribes and priests. It is possible that those closest to God become the tools of evil spirits (i.e., possessed) them, who are used by them. If they had the Holy Spirit, they would have believed in Jesus. The Holy Spirit did not dwell in them. If the real thing comes, the fake will be exposed. When the master returns, the servant must step down from his seat. When Jesus began to speak, it must have been clear to him that he was a fake. Yet the chief priests and scholars did not recognize the evil and deceit that lurked within them, and they did not seek to step down from their positions of power. It is the work of evil spirits that have made us cling to lies (idols) and power. However, this man resisted aloud because the light of Jesus had

illuminated his heart and exposed his false self. I knew I couldn't beat him, so I said, "Don't worry." Still better than the chief priests. This man said, "I know who he is, and he is a saint of God." I said, "It was the first time demons called Jesus a saint. Demons know Jesus better than humans. But he also says, 'Have you come to destroy us?'" Jesus is not the kind of person who destroys people. It is the devil's way to confuse truth and lies. That is why we should not listen to the confessions of evil spirits. It's the same with cults. Cults are not 100% wrong. There are lies, deceitfulness in it. Prayer and evangelism are both hard work and not wrong, but the idea of the Messiah and salvation is wrong. That's why Jesus commands, "Shut up." Verse 41 also says, "He admonished the demons and did not allow them to speak." This is so that people do not believe the testimony of the devil.

③ [What is the purpose of expelling evil spirits?]

When Jesus commanded, "Get out of this man," the demon threw the man down among the people and went out without any injury. People were amazed at the power of Jesus' words. The Bible says, "If I cast out demons with the Spirit of God (with the finger of God in Luke), then the kingdom of God has come to you" (Matthew 12:28), and "No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:3). Without the Holy Spirit, demons cannot go out, and we cannot believe in Jesus. Christ casts out demons with His fingers (with God's own fingers) in order to build the kingdom of God in him, to make the Holy Spirit dwell in his heart, and to make him believe in Jesus. But even if the demons are cast out, not everyone will believe in Jesus. Even if you quit a cult of 100 people, only about 10 people will become Christians. There are many vacant houses. Then even worse spirits will enter. It's a pity. In order for the Holy Spirit to dwell, we need our will. The human body is essentially the abode of God. It is not the abode of evil spirits. The words of Jesus have the power to cast out demons and bring a person back to sanity. A disciple of Jesus is one who has heard Jesus' words and turned upside down. "Exorcism" means "exorcism, deception, exorcism, exorcism, idolism, and imaginary image." It's not occult in any way. This happened on the Sabbath. Every Sunday, when we hear the words of Jesus, we are cleansed and returned to our true human form.

④ [What is the purpose of healing illness]

Next, let's talk about healing illness. Peter's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever. We learn that Peter was married and had a wife. He lived with his wife's mother and mother-in-law. "When Jesus stood at his bedside and was rebuked for the fever, the fever passed, and she immediately got up and entertained the all" (verse 39). I don't know how old Peter's mother-in-law was, but it's amazing that as soon as she was cured of her illness, she got up and

entertained everyone. "Hospitality" means "wait on" in English. This is where the purpose of healing the sick is written. It is not for oneself, but for serving God and one's neighbor. The miracles of healing of illness, which the Bible speaks of, are interestingly concentrated in the limbs and sensory organs. The healing of the feet is for us to follow Jesus, for the hands to receive like Jesus, for the ears to hear the truth, for the tongues to tell us about Jesus, and for the eyes to open our eyes to God's grace. In fact, the disciples also had a spiritual fever. It is the ambition to be greater than others, the disease of eagerness to pursue one's own desires. The spiritual fever was sticking to each other and making it impossible to hear God's word.

●St. Isaac of Syria in the 7th century wrote: "A zealous man can never attain peace of mind, and he who is deprived of peace is deprived of joy." "Among men, enthusiasm ... It is a kind of sickness of the soul that arises from a narrow mind and deep ignorance."

In the United States, an airplane and an Air Force helicopter collided and almost everyone died. It seems that there were many figure skaters from the United States and Russia on the plane. Some of them were ridden by their families. How fragile human life is! I believe that being alive is not something that we take for granted, but that we are kept alive by God. It makes sense. The other day I read II Corinthians 5. Verse 4 says, "Because I want to put on the dwelling that is given to me by heaven, so that what is supposed to die will be swallowed up by life." What is supposed to die is our life, our life in this world. To be swallowed up by life is to be "swallowed up by the resurrected life of Christ." Pastor Yasuro Enomoto writes about this passage.

●"It is said that we, who have no joy on this day, who suffer from the calamities, sorrows, and heartaches of everyday life, are 'swallowed up by life.' This is the life of faith. ... There are many people who are really worried about this dark life. But life is dark. And in this dark life, in the darkness, the light is shining. The time when the light shines is Christmas, when God gave His Only Begotten Son to the world. It is only at this time that our lives will change. If you're sick, stay sick, ... We are swallowed up and enveloped by God's love."

Darkness is swallowed up by the light, and the dead are swallowed up by life, so they are bound to be affected. One day, Christ came into this dark life. And He touched us. The sick were healed, and those who were in the cult were rescued from it. Jesus has restored each of us to the ability to serve God. Those who have been touched by life in this way and swallowed up by life will use the rest of their lives for the sake of the One who gave them this life.