

Repentance Leads To Christ-like Character

Failing To Reveal Jesus To Others Yet Claiming To Belong To Him

“But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you My power and that My Name might be proclaimed in all the earth”

(Exodus 9:16).

In the midst of the mighty miracles God was doing among the Egyptians through His servant Moses, He explains His specific twofold purpose for His actions: *to reveal His power* and *to make His Name known*. God could have sent a plague that would have wiped the Egyptians off the earth (Exodus 9:15). But He had another plan. Through His instructions to Moses to set apart the children of Israel through a lamb’s blood smeared on their doorframes, the destroyer would pass over their homes. The Only True God would execute judgment on the demonic entities of Egypt:

*“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and **I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I AM the LORD**”* (Exodus 12:12, emphasis added).

- **Revealing His power**
- **Making Himself known**
- **Confronting demonic powers**

These three are among God’s primary purposes and means of intervening with mankind. When Jesus became the *“Son of man,”* God was revealing His power in the way in which our Lord was conceived, and revealing Himself in the incarnate Person of Jesus. The willing sacrifice of Jesus on the cross as full payment for the penalty we deserve is wondrous.

But also consider the unseen victory which He achieved over demonic entities: *“And having **disarmed the powers and authorities**, He made a public spectacle of them, **triumphing over them** by the cross”* (Colossians 2:15).

The powers and authorities referred to lay in the *invisible* realm. These are the same demonic entities Paul reminds us that we must wrestle with as followers of Jesus: *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but **against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms**”* (Ephesians 6:12).

Our Father has a special goal in mind as He intervenes among humanity through revealing His power and identity in Christ and confronting the demonic hordes of Satan. It’s the same goal and purpose He had for freeing the Israelites:

*“In days to come, when **your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’** say to him, **‘With a mighty hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery’**”* (Exodus 13:14).

Authentic freedom from oppression, including demonic enslavement, ALWAYS results in testimony! If you’ve been freed from bondage, you’re exhilarated. You can’t help but share that joyful witness with others, especially your offspring.

Our Lord came to set us free from slavery to the sin that separates us from our heavenly Father (Romans 6:6-9). In that freedom we can testify to His power and thereby make His Name known. The tragedy for so many within westernized Christendom is that they still live weighed down by demonic oppression. They’ve never experienced the freedom only Jesus can give: *“So if the Son sets you free, **you will be free indeed**”* (John 8:36).

For too many Christians, slavery to demonic oppression within their mind, will and emotions is all they've known. They've never been freed from the generational strongholds and sinful predispositions they inherited at conception. Until they choose to renounce their unseen captors by the authority Jesus has given them, they can't walk in the freedom He has promised. Sadly, demonic bondage continues to be their ever-present reality.

Does it surprise you that millions in faith communities throughout the world sit side by side each Sunday morning shrouded in demonic enslavement? As shocking as this may seem to you, consider the pervasive prison door that keeps them confined. Within the skewed doctrines and practices of Roman Catholicism and throughout much of Bible-as-intellectual-information Protestantism is a profound distrust, an unbelief in the power of Jesus's Name to free people to love and serve Him wholeheartedly in obedient trust.

All over Christendom people have been educated in Bible facts or taught the facets of their particular denominational creed, *but* they've never experienced a freedom-giving power encounter with the Name of Jesus. As a result neither their children nor anyone else in their relational sphere ever hears testimonies from them of the power of our Lord. How our Lord must grieve that their kids grow up believing that the core of Christianity lays in accumulating Bible knowledge and/or reciting denominational codes.

For centuries few within organized Christianity have even acknowledged the existence of the unseen forces that oppress and enslave generation after generation. We produced a video series on our website, *Certain Of What We Do*

Not See, to spotlight the activity going on in the unseen world around us, whether angels, demons—even the Holy Spirit. In many ways, this *invisible* arena has more effect on our lives than does the visible world. The invisible demonic entities are capable of enslaving people in the visible world by tantalizing and enticing their sin nature. And that's exactly what's happened both inside and outside Christendom so that there's little difference between their lives!

The apostle Paul is very clear in his description of the spiritual battle in which we're engaged. (Review Ephesians 6:10-18 as a reminder.) As followers of Jesus we MUST put on the full spiritual armor of God in our struggle against demonic principalities and powers. Jesus obtained the victory over the demonic powers, and He has left it up to those who belong to Him to struggle against the unseen malicious foe. Why? So that in *each generation* He can reveal His power and make His Name known. He intends that one generation tell the next about THE Source to their freedom.

Think of the awe of the seventy-two disciples when they returned to Jesus with joy and reported, "*Lord, even the demons submit to us in Your name!*" (Luke 10:17; see also Mark 6:7). Can you picture their amazed delight as they went from town to town and delivered the oppressed from demons, realizing that it was through the powerful Name of Jesus that people were freed? Don't you think that those who were formerly demonized excitedly told others *how* and *in Whose name* their freedom came about?

Are You and Those Close to You Still Imprisoned in a Demonic "Egypt?"

Egypt was more than a geographical location. It represented numerous demonic principalities worshiped by the

Egyptian populace. Each of God's ten miracles confronted one of these particular demonic entities which so deceitfully bound the hearts and minds of Israel's captors. Since His chosen people had been enslaved for 400 years, their understanding of His Person and His power had been sorely diminished. So God purposed not only to free them from Egypt's dominion but also to make Himself known by displaying His power against the demons whose "hosts" had enslaved His children.

Now carry this purpose over to us today. Jesus died on the cross and rose again not just to deliver us from eternal death, but to free us from demonic slavery.

Since so little of contemporary Christianity evidences the mighty power of God at work through His people, unbelievers in general hold followers of Jesus in little regard. To unbelievers Christianity is no better than any other religion practiced in the world. And tragically, so many within westernized, man-centered Christendom remain enslaved to the principalities and rulers that keep it powerless. Think about it. Modern Christianity has not only been unsuccessful in revealing the living reality of our Lord Jesus to a needy and lost world; the institutional religious system doesn't even recognize *how it has failed!*

Decades ago missiologists declared the United States and Europe to be "**POST-CHRISTIAN**," that is, a society in which Christianity is no longer the dominant faith nor does it influence culture or policy. Over time within post-Christian cultures, even those who call themselves Christian gradually assimilate unbiblical values, practices, and even worldview. They start out with "tolerance" and compromise with the world's ways, then adopt unbiblical ways themselves, and finally rise up to oppose those who love Jesus and live by His Word.

Consider this sorry fact. Despite such focused missions effort by numerous denominations and ministries in the past century, Islam has grown from 5% to over 41% throughout Africa. Why such worldwide rejection of Christ and submission to Allah? The Person and power of Jesus have been replaced by a "weak religion" of historical facts and rituals.

Centuries of intellectualized Hellenist influence and syncretized pagan practices which have melded into Christianity have resulted in self-satisfied churchgoers accustomed to the unseen demonic enslavement that keep them powerless. And since many developed societies are controlled by a scientific worldview that excludes the supernatural, rationale trumps faith even within the religious establishment.

By the 4th century Hellenist reasoning and Roman organization had woven a web of deceit that corrupted the pure spring of our Father's intent: followers of Jesus united through His indwelling Spirit to be a priesthood of believers (1Peter 2:9). Hellenism was syncretistic in nature, considering and adopting any practices and beliefs that seemed palatable. That's the situation Paul encountered on his journey to Athens: "*All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but **talking about and listening to the latest ideas***" (Acts 17:21).

Into that syncretistic framework marched Roman Catholicism, eagerly adapting the pagan practices of the heathen cultures it infiltrated to bring the populace into compliance. And with the enforcement power of Rome's hierarchical governing system, pagan idols and customs became revered as "church tradition" on par with or even greater than God's Word.

As much as large segments of Protestantism would like to believe its governing system and intellectualized approach to the Gospel are far removed from Rome's approach, the lack of spiritual power to penetrate the global demonic dominion testifies otherwise. Prayer that trusts our Lord Jesus to reveal Himself in power through His vessels seems to have low priority in most congregations.

Contemporary Christendom has become a religion of people with calloused hearts who are ever-learning (see Matthew 13:14,15) yet refuse to trust in the power of our Lord Jesus to free them to serve His Kingdom purposes. It's because of this distrust in His Person and power that Jesus is not being revealed to an unbelieving world. Even more grievous, a large part of what was once considered "Christian" has become post-Christian—and a skeptical world is becoming inoculated against the authentic Christ and His Word.

"A man is a slave to whatever has mastered him" (2Peter 2:19).

In Teaching E-mail 72. *Does the Deference of Jesus Abide in You?*, we pointed out that the *stronghold of deceit* keeps many from the fullness of a relationship with our Father and Jesus through the indwelling Spirit. Satan is a master deceiver, and deceit's symptoms of **rationalization, wrong doctrine or misuse of Scripture, syncretism, and delusion** make much of modern Christendom a demonic prison camp. How do the "prison bars of deceit" form?



- People rationalize in their mind what makes them comfortable in their religious practices.
- They then misuse Scripture to support their complacency, often redefining "grace" to excuse their sinful choices and actions.
- Next they syncretize unbiblical practices so they can be just like the world in goals, attitudes and values.
- Finally, the deceived congregate with others who are similarly deluded, finding a sense of compatibility and acceptance in their sin.

People who claim to belong to our Lord but fail to reveal Him to others through word or deed often find themselves putting their confidence in their spiritual leaders rather than in Jesus as their Lord. In 1Corinthians 1:12,13 Paul addresses this folly of trusting in mere men—a misplaced identification which lies behind a number of today's denominations and sects: *"One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?"*

Dr. Henrietta C. Mears addresses this propensity toward factions which revolve around specific leaders in *What the Bible Is All About*:

"Paul said, in effect, 'Your factional spirit is a sin. Can you follow a mere man, hoping that he can give you life? Was that man crucified for you? Trusting in what people [or institutions] have to say is foolish. [If you do that, you] see nothing in the cross of Christ. Christ alone has all the power and wisdom of God.'" (p. 476)

As Paul warns, people perish because they *refuse to love the truth* (2Thessalonians 2:10). Whenever deceit remains within a denomination or sect over a long period of time, God is then forced to act: *"For this reason God sends them a pow-*

erful delusion so that they will believe the lie" (2Thessalonians 2:11). Let's look at some of the delusions within contemporary Christendom. Maybe you're among those ensnared.

Roman Catholics and Protestants Each Have Their "Popes"

Have you noticed lately that whenever Catholic clerics are interviewed on TV the majority stand in front of a statue or painting of a formidable Mary holding the infant Jesus? This is a deliberate effort on the part of the demonic principalities and powers that rule Roman Catholicism to eliminate not only the centrality of Jesus as God Incarnate but to undermine the spiritual power ONLY He can give.

Within many matriarchal Catholic cultures such as Italian, Polish, Irish, and Hispanic, the underlying belief is that **Mary is the power behind Jesus**. The "Queen of Heaven" is the anti-Christ spirit which underlies the religious practices within Roman Catholicism. This demonic power has become so accepted that Jesus as the only Way, the Truth and the Life has been pushed into the realm of creedal obscurity. His existence may be verbally recited, but His power as God's only Son has been shoved aside in favor of trust in Mary and the intercession of the ever-growing volume of "saints."

While many within Roman Catholicism are enthralled by Pope Francis, we believe he is Satan's pawn to diminish any and all reliance on Jesus as Savior and Lord. It's important to recognize that Catholicism continues to hold to the false teaching that Mary is the *mother of God* rather than the mother of Jesus in His humanity. This is the bedrock on which the Queen of Heaven principality rests in order to dominate Catholicism by

placing a misrepresentation of Mary above God Himself. (After all, as a good son Jesus *has to* submit to His mother's wishes...)

If you watched international news lately, then you saw how this Pope spent his entire trip in Brazil emphasizing Mary rather than Jesus. And just before he left on this trip, the Vatican ordained that people could *gain indulgences* by signing up for the Pope's Twitter account. Indulgences are the means to reduce a Catholic's time in purgatory where they suffer punishment for their sins.

Indulgences and purgatory, however, nullify the victory of what our Lord Jesus accomplished on the cross to pay the penalty for the sins of mankind (John 3:16,17). Without trust in Christ's covering for our sins, *all* stand condemned before our Father's just wrath (John 3:36). *No one* can pay for their own sins!

This Pope also declares he won't confront homosexual priests. Since he has already disregarded the centrality of Jesus as the sole and fully sufficient means of salvation, it's no surprise that he sets aside the boundaries of God's Word and condones behavior which God Himself condemns. (See 1 Corinthians 6:9,10 regarding God's parameters for inheriting His Kingdom.) Many Catholics rave about the "people's pope." But we know from Scripture that *"Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve"* (2Corinthians 11:14,15).

If you're Protestant you may be thinking, "What's this got to do with me?" Plenty!!! Throughout the years of our ministry we've heard numerous people raving about their "popes"—a certain pastor or some famous religious celebrity

on Christian TV. Yet when we turn the conversation to how they themselves are serving the interests of our Lord Jesus, none can answer! Their vicarious identification with a particular leader causes them to excuse their own spiritual sloth. It's a cover-up for their unwillingness to put their own lives on the line to lift up Jesus by name as His servant!

Any misplaced focus that removes our Lord Jesus as the Source of divine power is an anti-Christ delusion. The denial of the power of Jesus throughout much of Protestantism is as blatant as the neglect of Him in Catholicism—it's *anti-Christ*. A large faction within Protestantism holds to the delusion that "the power of God is found in *His Word*." But the power of God comes through *His Spirit*!

The entire Word points to the power and authority of the Person and the Name of Jesus. It's through *His power alone* that He is revealed as the complete fulfillment of all of Scripture as Lord and King of the Kingdom of God.

We've never seen anyone delivered from demons or healed from disease by just quoting verses at them. But we've witnessed many freed and healed because of the all-surpassing power of the Name of Jesus! All the head knowledge of the Bible doesn't compare to *one testimony* in which the power of the Spirit through the Name of our Lord Jesus is revealed!

We want to encourage you:

Your heart's desire for others to be free in Christ from slavery to demonic influence is a clear sign that you're spiritually free yourself. Your trust in our Lord Jesus and His promises is exemplified in your yearning to see others experience the freedom only He can give. Our Lord wants *you* to be His tool for a power

encounter in which people experience Him through His Spirit working in you. As you demonstrate His power to free those in demonic enslavement, you're bearing witness to your own trust in our Lord's promises. Your willingness to free others shows that you've learned to trust in the authority of His Name rather than in your own limited natural abilities. That's an important distinguishing point: You *trust* in our Lord to be at work in and through you!

Through the "greater things" that He purposes for us to do in lifting up Jesus in power, the lost will see that He is Who He says He is. "*I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father*" (John 14:12).

Trust More In The Power of Jesus. Focus Less On Your Own Limitations

***"With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all"* (Acts 4:33).**

Our Lord wants to reveal Himself, His power and His Name, *through you*. Has this been an ongoing reality in your own life? See if you can answer a resounding "yes" to these questions:

- **First, have you been freed from demonic oppression by the power of Jesus's Name so that you're hearing only from the Holy Spirit?**
- **Do people experience the power of His Name—His delegated authority—being revealed through you?**
- **Do you delightedly speak with your children and other people of your freedom to love Jesus and to live in obedient trust?**

We who follow Jesus as our Lord and Savior are His ambassadors carrying our Father's appeal to others to be reconciled to Him (2Corinthians 5:20). You serve in that set-apart role as you reveal the power He's given to His Son, Jesus, and subsequently to all in whom His Spirit dwells. Paul summarizes this glorious goal and purpose for all who live for Jesus and press on earnestly to be welcomed by Him at the resurrection:

“I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me” (Philippians 3:10-12).