

The Gentiles did have faith and were healed. I should have said that there is also the distinct possibility, and frankly the one that I think is more likely, that we're not dealing so much here with a lack of faith on the part of Israel for those two people to be healed, but rather a sovereign choice on the part of God to heal those two people when so many others—and there were other lepers, and there were many needy widows—were not helped and were not healed because it was the sovereign choice of God.

I also would say that this matter of believing, I repeat myself: to need signs and wonders and to always be hearing stories of great healings to increase your faith is, in fact, a sign of very weak faith. The Lord was making very, very clear throughout His sojourn on this earth that the thing He was looking for so desperately was that those who, without signs, without wonders, and without a great deal of needing to be convinced, would simply believe in Him for what He was and who He was. And that, to Him, was more important than anything else. And the signs and wonders were an effort to bridge the gap of hearts that could not quickly believe. The better thing is to believe in your Lord, and that belief not be affected by the presence or the absence of signs or wonders or grace or deserts or rain or revival or persecution or prosperity — that you simply believe in Him.

As we take up the story again, we come to the first real call of the Lord to disciples, and brothers, I think this is one of the most high points of all the Word of God: this moment when He walks by Galilee, and He sees some men in a boat, and He addresses them, and they say, “Goodbye, Dad, goodbye employees,” and they get out of their boats and follow the Lord. He has been ministering for about a year now, and at the end of that year, He begins to choose disciples. I conjecture that He has watched a lot of people watch Him, who comes back the most frequently, who is the most interested. He has met them, and very possibly He has traveled through time and space, and He may have traveled back into eternity past and remembered His eternal choice, and now He's making it real in time and in space. The idea of a disciple is one of the highest ideals of mankind. It is an Eastern thing; it's not Western.

In the West, you had a teacher you sat under who taught you knowledge, and after you finished school, you left him and taught what he believed and what you believed. For instance, in Greece, there were different places where the teacher sat under the shade trees and taught, but the teacher was one who took out of a book and gave to the student. Now, that's a Western concept from which we have gained our colleges, our universities, our Bible schools, and our seminaries. They have no biblical basis; no scriptural reason for existing; no place in the reality of a Christian concept.

The Eastern idea of the disciple also is not like... we have this capacity to see a truth and then pervert it...the Western Christian, and in your generation, there has been this discipleship movement, and you know you stand on the verge of something great, then

you end up with something gross. What it turned out to be was a chain of command: people being told to do something, and they had to do it. That was discipleship: you obey, and it was always, or could be...the whole concept of it was massive, and it was legalism, just another form of legalism, and it has damaged Christians by the thousands. This week, just this week, one more time, I had to sit down and listen to a saint tell me some of the most unbelievable stories done in the name of discipleship. Things that one human should never do to another. It has nothing to do with the spirit of what we're reading here this evening.

If it has any flaw, that shows it's not the first-century concept...the first-century concept of a disciple wasn't something that permeated the church; it isn't even something so closely associated with the church. If I may, it's more closely associated with the worker and the young worker. And that's one. The second one - in the case of Jesus Christ - is that the Lord was preparing for the church to come to earth, and there is one thing about it that is unique, and that is: it is always a small number.

The concept in the East and in the Hebrew faith was a man, generally a rabbi, who would have a small group of people. They would live with him. They would go where he went. They walked with him. They emulated not only his teachings, but his life, and this could go on for years and years and years. It was a moving schoolroom, and in Jesus' case - in the case of the Son of God - it was elevated to a high thing. They went with Him wherever He was. They watched the Son of God live the Christian life as the Son of Man on this earth.

Then Paul did this again with eight men who lived with him. He had won them to himself; they had been in his churches, he had known them for years, and then, for a full year, they gathered around him and watched and lived with him. It was a mobile thing. It wasn't note-taking like the followers of Socrates...the Socratic concept. It wasn't Plato and Aristotle.

I can't get into it. I can only stop here and say that as we go along, we will from time to time look at this enormous, incredible thing of discipleship; oh, I hate almost to use that word; it's been used so much with a different connotation. Imagine a man and imagine a little group who goes with him, very mobile. It isn't to put together a church. Actually, in the form of the church in Rome with a pope and the cardinals and bishops, archbishops and bishops, and then peasants, but a mobile thing where men can learn to become workers. This is essentially what discipleship was. Try to find the word "discipleship" in respect to the church, and you will find it limited, if you find it at all.

Now, I want you to know that He actually calls these men, it seems, twice, as we'll find out. The first time He calls them is here. You get the impression, and we might as well be honest in our dealings with Scripture. This is not a passage of Scripture you will turn to to

prove that men left everything and followed the Lord. This is a very temporal leaving. They left Him. They left Daddy; John and James left Daddy, and Peter and Andrew left their nets — only perhaps for a day or a few days. Those men went back to the business of fishing just a few days later; it may be the next day. And just for the record, they went back after the crucifixion and the resurrection again, too, and took up their nets. Though on this occasion, He walks by and He says to them, “Come, follow me,” and they come and follow Him that day.

I wonder how many men — godly men, holy men — have ever come to a point that they could walk by someone and turn and look at him and say, “Come follow me.” And then I wonder, if he did, how many dropped whatever they were doing and came and followed him. I don’t know if it’s on the responsibility of the one who is the... what should you call him? I don’t know what you’d call him—the teacher; maybe we should use the term “teacher.” But there ought to be more young men who are looking for someone to train them. I am appalled at the amount of wonderful young men — potentially young men — who, when you talk to them, say, “Well, I’m going to come visit y’all on my way to Bible school.” Boy, you meet that kid three years later, and you wouldn’t touch him with a stick. My point is that there’s a great deal about discipleship here that isn’t part of the Christian tradition today. It desperately needs restoration, and the New Testament doesn’t even record a mentality toward Jesus-type discipleship or Pauline-type discipleship.

I’m going to ask you brothers, in all of your reading — and I would suggest this to those of you listening, even if you’ve read it. Pick up *The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Coleman and go back through it again sometime soon. If nothing else, just kind of review it so that as we penetrate the life of the Lord, we can remember that something is going on here besides His teaching, besides His healing, even besides His position as Savior and Lord. Everything that is happening, at least 24 eyes are watching it, actually, probably around 40 eyes. Probably around 20 people eventually became His very close inner circle. Frankly, I doubt if there were many people outside that circle other than the masses. Some people talk about the 20 and then the larger group, but it was basically the Lord and 20 people.

Okay, now we come to the passage that falls next: Mark 1:21 and 23–28 and Luke 4:31. We have the introduction of healing, and we have suddenly here at Capernaum been introduced to demons...or a demon. This is the first time Scripture brings up the subject, and it makes no introduction. Mark obviously thought everybody understood what demons were, and he just says “demons,” and he has left us, of course, with 2,000 years’ worth of conjecture. And now, brothers, I’m going to conjecture about demons. What are they? The answer is: neither I nor anybody else in the universe knows, not on this planet at least, what a demon is. (Author on demons) did us a great disservice when he conjectured that demons were left over from the earth’s former creation. That was

speculation, but so was his idea of a former Earth. He had the idea that the earth had been created, it had fallen, and it had been created again, and that demons were citizens of the first fall of the first civilization, and then had gone through some fall, the recreation of it, then Adam and Eve were created, and so on. A lot of people teach that as though it were in the Scripture. That was pure, unadulterated conjecture. There is not only not a verse to back that up; there is not even a thought to back that up.

I think the question that I want to ask is: to what realm do they belong? Do they belong to this realm or to the other realm? Every passage of Scripture in the New Testament that I find shows the other realm to be the Kingdom of God and under His rule - totally a Kingdom that is His. I know Job records Lucifer coming into God's presence, but I still don't find that realm inhabited by dark beings. In contrast, we get the very distinct impression that the outer atmosphere of the earth is where the forces of darkness live.

A passage of Scripture speaks about demons going into waterless places, and the monks of the 3rd century believed demons lived in deserts, so they moved out into the desert to battle them. What you ended up with was a bunch of crazy single brothers out there seeing all sorts of stuff that didn't exist. Very young, dumb, and old, dumb single brothers covering the entire Sinai desert, living in caves. It was a mixed-up world out there, to say the least.

Waterless places. I have this sense: a demon is a spirit, but a spirit that does not have light and is not light. The Spirit of God is light. The spirit within you is and has light. There is light in that spirit. Imagine a spirit in which there is the opposite of light; there is darkness—literally, a darkness-kind-of light. You understand what I'm saying? It emits darkness. My own judgment is that whatever a demonic spirit is, it belongs to this realm; it is a spirit that is darkness.

Sometimes science helps us understand things better than we could ever understand them ourselves, and it sometimes finds the inexplicable, especially in astrophysics. They come up with interesting things, and as they delve into the particles of the universe, they are finding that gravity is almost a universe within itself, that there are three elements to our universe, and two of them, by their very nature, have light in them. But gravity is void of light. And gravity is either made up of something that is non-matter or so small in matter that it defies comprehension.

Scientists speak of a shadow universe around us. To explain it, they would conjecture: if there were people in the shadow universe, the universe that belongs only to gravity, the element of gravity, there would be no light in that universe, and the only way they could communicate with us would be through gravitation. We would never pick them up on our radio scopes. If they had some dirt and dropped it in your hand, it would go right through your hand, because its elements are outside of the electron and the proton and those

things that make it up. It is a realm in which there is no light. And it does exist. They have been able to find it, though they know little about it. They call it the shadow universe.

Well, think in terms of spiritual things. Spirits without light, but rather who live in and abide in a realm in which darkness is in itself an energy and a force. I don't know a whole lot about demons, but I can tell you two or three things about them. One is that they could see the unseen because they knew Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and it was obvious they wanted him known as the Son of God. He did not want them to declare him the Son of God, and it's possible he was even trying to keep that fact secret because being the Son of God belongs so much to the spiritual realm. He was coming as the Son of Man, who lived in the physical material realm and was doing what he did as a man for the sake of man to redeem the tragedy of Adam. And the demons seem to have been trying to shift the attention. They were trying to shift the scenery on the stage to his godship, whereas he was coming as man to man to rectify the fall as man.

Well, anyway, that's one thing. The other one is, and I'm just going to have to give my own personal testimony. I made a decision when I was a new Christian to not worry about devils and demons, demonic spirits, and I never have. And interestingly enough, I have never had any great encounters with them. Now, I have brothers who live right next door to me who see them and encounter them all the time, and they're on their bedpost, and they're under their house. They're up in the sky, and they're running life, and they're messing up the world and politics, and half the people around them who got one, and I made the decision that I was not going to concentrate on them. I have never been afraid of one, I've never encountered one, and I don't worry about them. I tell you that I live a far healthier life as a Christian. I know I do more than a person who concentrates on them. In fact, I would almost conjecture that the powers of Satan are only strong when they are allowed to be by concentrating on them.

I think we do a great disservice to the Christian faith by giving a great deal of attention to them. If we have to do anything, if we are ever put into a position where we have to do anything, we have to simply recognize that they were crucified. The powers of darkness were crucified on the cross of Christ, and the Lord Jesus Christ had a very healthy attitude toward demons. They were something to be brushed aside as quickly as possible and go on with work. He stood at the cross and beyond the cross in his dealings with them. He saw himself as the total conqueror of them, which he was upon the cross.

Now, we live beyond the fact of the cross; in time and in space, we are beyond the cross. That's very helpful to us. We don't have to imagine by faith that we're beyond it—we are beyond it, and we look back to it and see his victory and our victory. I really would beg you, if we are to have the mind of our Lord and if we are ever to get back to a moderated

and sensible practice of the Christian faith, well, some of us who have a natural predilection to being obsessed with dark spirits are simply going to have to lay it down.

Years ago, a little catchy phrase went around America. You would say, "Have you seen Joe or John?" And even if it were your brother or your mother or your sister or your dad, you would say, "John who? Joe who? Mary who?" And I would say that the best thing for any of us to do is when someone brings up the devil or Satan, you could say, "Satan who?" as though you had never heard of him. I assure you, your walk with the Lord will be healthier.

I stop and talk about this because it's the first time it's been brought up. The Lord cast out the demon from the man, and I think that perhaps the most interesting thing that we need to look at in this whole passage is this verse: *He took upon Himself our infirmities and removed our diseases*. To stop and realize that on the cross of Jesus Christ, the things that He absorbed into His being... There was an incident, I believe it took place in East Texas, in which some boys came out in early springtime, as we did in East Texas frequently, and went out to the creek, to the pond, or to the river, whichever was nearest you, and this group of boys took all their clothes off. This was just an East Texas thing we did for fun: go swimming. This particular young man dove into the water, screamed, and sank, and nobody else went in. Adults were called, the boys were told not to get near the water, and they discovered the problem. They finally had to dynamite the water, and when eventually they were able to bring the boy's body out, there were something like a dozen water moccasins affixed to the boy's body. It had been infested. The water had been infested with water moccasins in early spring, perhaps hundreds of them breeding there. He died instantly of enormous injections from all those water moccasins.

Now, that's a grisly story to tell, but I tell it in the light of the cross of Christ, that there was injected into Him so much. What went on inside Him, He received the totality of the fall upon His cross. Our sin, my sin, your sin, the whole world and power of darkness, the demons, the dark spirits, the world system; the war between the Jews and the Gentiles was all cast in Him. My sickness and my infirmity, my illness, and the Lord Jesus healed in Galilee based on something that would take place a few years later in time and space. But again, I come back to this Lord outside of time and space. He journeyed outside of time and space, took His place beyond the resurrection, and healed outside of time and space. He healed by an event that had not taken place. He did it by being outside of time and space. He healed them by this enormous injection that took place inside His body on the cross. My sin, my illness, was on him on the cross. Beyond the cross, He healed before the cross. I can't explain that. I can't understand that. But I accept it.

The dark spirits seem to have known something about who He was at that moment. They did not understand perhaps from whence He drew his power, and perhaps He did not

draw His power as God in eternity past, but perhaps he drew his power over them by what He would be about three years from now when He died on the cross, took them into His being, and rose triumphantly over them. He was Lord of those spirits, and what we see here is this whole passage of His healing in Galilee and people coming to Him night and day. I see my Lord drawing His power to do these things because He is a Lord who has also conquered time and geography; time and space have ceased.

I'm going to quote Einstein now to help us understand this a little better. Einstein, and you'll forgive me for my illustrations tonight, stepped off a train and was faced with a battery of reporters who asked him, "Please, Mr. Einstein, will you explain relativity in a few simple words?" This is what he said. He said, "I want you to imagine the universe full of matter. And of course, there is dimension to it. It has time, and it has space." He said, "Now then, imagine the universe with all the matter, all the material elements of it removed. You would probably then imagine that the time and the space were still there." But he said that wouldn't be true, because time and space depend on physical matter. Energy and matter are one. Light, time, space, and the material world are tied to physical matter. And to tell you what's been happening in the last few years, scientists are butting their heads against a paradoxical wall because they can't figure out what's holding this universe together. There's a tremendous debate going on about this. Well, I know what's holding the universe together. Jesus Christ is holding this universe together by his power.

Now, if you can recognize that God is the author of matter, He created the seen universe; in doing so, He created time and space, but they are His creations. If you can imagine that your God existed before matter, then He existed before time and space; therefore, you have to recognize that He is outside of time and space. He can journey through time and space, and He is Lord of time and space, and He can make time and space do His bidding. Then you can understand this passage of scripture. He is making time, space, and matter do His bidding. He has journeyed beyond it to take his rightful place as Lord of it. And then He journeys back again as Lord and victor beyond the cross. He comes back into time and space, and is seen; nonetheless, some portion of Him is standing beyond it so that He can act within it as victor, Lord, and Master.