

Week of March 18-24

A SPIRIT OF INFIRMITY

Scripture Reading: Read Luke chapter 13

One of the realities with which Scripture confronts us is the presence of the demonic realm. Again and again in Jesus' ministry, we see him confronting demonic powers and rescuing human beings from the havoc they inflict.

Now, there are some folks today that scoff at the idea of demonic beings. They relegate such nonsense to a superstitious and unscientific mindset of an era gone by. Others, on the other hand, seem obsessed with the reality of demonic beings and frantically claim to find them under every rock. Author C.S. Lewis, in his book, The Screwtape Letters, warns against both approaches, for he believed they played into the hand of our adversary, the devil.

What does the Scripture teach? There is a devil and there are demonic beings and we are engaged in a battle with them. It's a battle that requires spiritual weapons (II Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-17) but it's also a battle whose outcome has already been determined when Jesus defeated these principalities and powers at the cross (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14-15; I John 3:8). At the end of the age, the devil will be thrown into the lake of fire and his works of darkness will be eliminated forever.

In the short-term, however, people still face demonic attacks. Such is the case with the crippled woman in our chapter reading today. As a doctor, Luke is in an excellent position to make a distinction between purely physical illness and demonically induced conditions. Luke is very clear that this crippled woman did not have simply a physical curvature of the spine. Rather, she had a spirit of infirmity that kept her bent over and unable to straighten up for eighteen years. She was not demon possessed but demonically oppressed. Jesus, in keeping with his mission outlined in Luke 4 of proclaiming freedom for prisoners and providing release of the oppressed, declares, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." When the religious leaders complained that Jesus healed once again on the Sabbath day, he rebuked them and noted that the woman, a daughter of Abraham, had been kept bound by Satan for eighteen long years and it was her time to be set free.

When Jesus sent out the 12, he gave them "power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases." Just as in Jesus' day, there are still folks today suffering from demonic bondages and/or physical illnesses. Maybe you are one of them. There is good news for you! Jesus came to bring hope, healing and wholeness for the physical illnesses and emotional brokenness you may be experiencing. He also came to bring deliverance of demonic spirits and the infirmities and bondages they bring with them.

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Have you been struggling with any illnesses in your life that haven't responded to physical cures? It's possible that you may be suffering from a spirit of infirmity instead. Lay hold of God's promise of deliverance today through prayer.

Take-away: *A spirit of infirmity is no match for the liberty of the Spirit!*