

Satan's Diabolical Plan to Divide the Body of Christ

Demons and deliverance have become a very hot topic in the church today, especially on the heels of the release of Pastor Greg Locke's movie *Come Out in Jesus' Name*. It opened Monday night in nearly 2,000 theaters and was followed by Pastor Locke coming on live in these theaters via livestream and conducting a mass deliverance service.

In Pastor Locke's own words, "This is a historic church moment. This has never happened! It's almost like God says, 'OK, you want to run my spirit out of church? Well, I'm going to take you into a movie theater.'"

What are we to make of this?

Before the movie aired (so I could neither endorse it or criticize it), Pastor Locke asked if he could join me on my show to talk about the movie. You can listen to our discussion here (starting at the 27-minute mark), where you will hear Pastor Locke lay out his theological views.

Can a Christian have a demon? Have we even defined what this means? Should we use the term demon possession? Should we speak instead of demonization? And where does the ministry of deliverance fit in the lives of Christians? Is this just something we practice on non-believers who want to be set free? Do Christians ever need deliverance?

Be assured that each of these questions is packed with lots of emotion, and the moment you raise the topic of deliverance, things will get heated pretty quickly.

In the last 24 hours alone I have received passionate appeals from godly leaders on both sides of the issue. Some have urged me to speak out against the new deliverance fad while others

have urged me to repent of the error of allegedly differing with this new wave of deliverance.

And all this happened without me making a clear public statement “for” or “against.” I wanted to hear the different teachings for myself as well as see the movie. How can I comment on something I haven’t seen?

That being said, the reaction to my Facebook post on Tuesday night, March 14, was quite intense, from all sides.

I wrote: “Do I believe that genuine believers can come under demonic power and need to be delivered and set free? Absolutely yes. Do I believe that genuine believers can be indwelt by demons and need exorcism? Absolutely not.

“Over the decades, I had some seasons where I came under severe demonic attack and needed prayer and fasting and spiritual agreement with colleagues in order to break free (and I’m sure, in some cases, my flesh opened the door to the attack). But I have never needed to have demons cast out of me. If the Spirit dwells inside you, demons cannot dwell there with Him.”

In my mind, this was a fairly generic post, not intended “to take sides” on the issue but rather to state my own views, having delved into the topic of demons and deliverance in the 1980s and 1990s. And in my mind, it wasn’t very different than what Pastor Locke said on my show. (He might differ with that assessment.)

But, to repeat, the controversy has been intense, with the heat rising on both sides of the debate.

That’s why I posted this on Wednesday night, March 15: “A word of wisdom here for everyone. Christian leaders WILL have some differences about the subject of demons and deliverance. That’s fine! There’s no reason to take sides or get into camps or attack one another. In fact, that’s exactly what Satan

wants us to do! Let's step higher, since we are fully aware of the evil one's devices. And where we have differences, let's listen to each other, learn from each other, and agree to disagree if it comes to that in the end, determined to stand UNITED against the devil."

You see, this is the one thing we know for sure: Satan wants to divide us. He fully understands that, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand" (Matt. 12:25). And so, whatever he can do to sow discord and dissension, he will do it.

He will try to divide us into factions (as in, "I'm in his camp" or "I'm in her camp"), and he will try to get us to separate over secondary matters (as in, "I'm pro-deliverance but you're anti-deliverance").

How about we determine to step higher and give no place to the evil one? (For the principle, see Ephesians 4:25-27.)

How about we find out accurately what key leaders actually teach and practice when it comes to deliverance, coming to our own conclusions after prayer and study rather than making this the topic we divide over.

If we agree on the fundamentals of the faith—I mean, the eternal, non-negotiables—and we agree that Satan is our enemy whom we overcome in Jesus' name, then we are more in harmony than not.

 We will certainly have our differences in beliefs and practices, and we should be clear about what we believe and where we stand. Let the differences be articulated and let them be known.

But let us do so as brothers and sisters in the faith, all of us subject to the lordship of Jesus. Let us not give the devil an inch of ground, in particular in a dispute about

deliverance from demons.

That would be as tragic as it is ironic. {eoa}

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