

Why Are So Many Believers Living in a Haunted House?

Nestled in the tall pine trees on a narrow road that winds its way through the mountains is an aged log cabin. A steep cliff overshadows this old miner's bungalow, causing it rarely to see the light of day.

An eerie sensation comes over you as you approach the well-worn front porch, straddle the rotten beams and reach for the rusted iron door handle. The door creaks with resistance as you force it into submission, finally revealing a gloomy room. A rotten, musty odor assails your senses, but you brave the threshold and make your way inside.

Peering straight ahead, you sight a primitive river rock fireplace covered in black soot from years of use. To the right is an ancient handmade rocking chair, built from a tree harvested off that very mountain. The locals say that about a hundred years ago, the old miner who lived here was murdered in that very rocker.

Ghost Story

I hope this sounds like the beginning of a ghost story, because it is—one I happened to experience for myself. That old cabin is up in the Trinity Alps, and a couple of my friends, desperate for a cheap place to live, once rented it—only to discover that it was haunted! I am not kidding you. The townsfolk warned them about the haunting, but they did not believe it.

Then one dark, moonless night, the old miner appeared in their room, waking them from a dead sleep and scaring the daylights out of them. These visitations went on for months, until finally they decided to come and talk to me about it.

We drove to the cabin, and I forged my way through the door with my two friends in tow. Fear as thick and tangible as a heavy fog settled over my mind as I pressed forward into the dark room. All of a sudden, he appeared!

“Yikes!” I shuddered. The hair on the back of my head stood straight up. But what happened next forever changed my perspective on the spirit realm. I was immediately overcome by the thought, “This is not the old miner who has come back from the dead to terrify my friends, but a demon masquerading as the deceased!”

That revelation released a new sense of authority in me. I boldly commanded the wicked demon to leave the building and never return. My friends looked on in complete horror as two kingdoms wrestled for dominance in that tiny room. But within a few minutes, the demon was gone and the old cabin was clean.

There Has Been a Drowning

My ghost story affirms a powerful reality, the truth Paul taught the Ephesians: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12).

Yet I have found that hordes of believers have fallen prey to the same demonic charade my friends experienced. They were told at baptism that their old selves had drowned in the sea of crucifixion. They can quote Galatians 2:20 and say they have been “crucified with Christ.” They have all read the book of Romans, which tells them over 30 times that they are dead, they died, their old self was crucified, consider yourselves dead ... dead, dead, dead, dead, dead, dead! (As I like to say, we are the original Grateful Dead.) And yet, they find that they keep being “haunted” by what appears to be their old man.

Kicking a Corpse

Some of these folks end up spending their entire lives kicking a corpse, wrestling a carcass and otherwise wasting their energy on an enemy that has already died, while the real foe laughs sarcastically through the prison bars of their lives. These Christians live on house arrest.

Like spiritual archaeologists, they spend most of their time digging in the graveyard of their old lives, looking to unearth some hidden treasure of hope. But all they ever discover are the dry bones of discouragement, condemnation and fear.

How is it that so many believers are living in haunted houses? Simply put, they have not really learned how to live in the reality of the verses they can quote about having been crucified with Christ. They have not really understood the difference between who they used to be and who they have become!

For more on this subject, check out my book Spirit Wars. {eo}

Kris Vallotton is the senior associate leader of Bethel Church in Redding, California, and co-founder of Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry (BSSM). Kris travels internationally training and equipping people to successfully fulfill their divine purpose. He's a best-selling author, having written more than a dozen books and training manuals to help prepare believers for life in the kingdom. He has a diverse background in business, counseling, consulting, pastoring and teaching, which gives him unique leadership insights and perspectives. Kris has a passion to use his experience and his prophetic gift to assist world leaders in achieving their goals and accomplishing their mission.

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