

Demonized With Pain

Luke 13:10-13

Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

I was pastoring a church of 300-400 people. It was a great church but it was filled with conflict from the first day I set foot in it. The complaining and criticizing was overwhelming. There was conflict on every side. I mean, it was so bad my wife laid in bed the second week we were there and said, "Get me out of here!" She never had said anything like that before.

We stayed five years, but we knew there was something wrong in that congregation. It was non-stop bickering, fighting and conflict. One Sunday I was ready to walk out to preach. My study was behind the sanctuary platform area. There was a hallway leading up to the platform. I walked toward the platform with my mind on the Lord and His word when a little 90 year old lady came up to me shaking her finger in my face complaining about something I did or didn't do that got her upset. It was probably some insignificant thing like the color of my tie, but she was outraged. I walked out on the platform and silently prayed, "Lord, how do I preach to a congregation like this?"

I began to teach my elders about spiritual warfare and how to battle evil through prayer. I told them that spiritual warfare is real and they needed to do something about it. I preached messages on spiritual warfare and the authority of the believer. I taught my elders that when there's conflict in the church and when there's bitterness and anger, there is something going on behind it in the spiritual realm.

In this particular church there was evil. We could feel it. It was strong. It was so strong that there was a fist fight in the foyer of the church between board members! Eventually, I set the elders as spiritual watchmen at the door. I told them, "I want you to stand at the doorway of the church. No one needs to know what you're doing, but I want you to stand against the work of the enemy. I want you to plead the blood of Jesus. I want you to bind the enemy in Jesus' name. You need to pray that no evil will come into this place and that God will stop it.

One Sunday morning a lady was walking into the church and suddenly bent over screaming. "I can't go in. I can't go in. I can't go in, take me home!"

Her family took her home. I heard about it a little while later. I asked who it was. They mentioned her name. It was one of the ladies who was causing great turmoil in the church. When the elders guarded the door against the evil one, she had trouble entering in.

I preached the series on spiritual warfare on Sunday evenings. Our messages were broadcast on the radio every Sunday night. I preached about spiritual warfare and how it affects the church. When I finished the service I went into my study. I noticed the answering machine blinking so I pushed the message button. There came a lady's voice groaning, "I'm dying. I'm dying, I'm dying! Help me, I'm dying!", then hung up. I thought somebody was joking. It sounded like the wicked witch from *The Wizard of Oz* saying, "I'm melting, melting, melting." It gave me goose bumps up and down my neck.

I didn't know who it was immediately. She didn't identify herself. I was all alone, the last person to leave the church. Just then one of my elders happened to come back in because he forgotten his Bible. I asked him to listen to the message. I played it. He said, "Oh, that sends chills up and down my spine."

I asked if he recognized who it was. He answered that he didn't. Then I said, "I think I recognize the voice." It was the voice of this woman that could not enter the church because elders were standing at the church door resisting the enemy. I told him who I thought it sounded like and he agreed. We immediately called her son to ask him to check on her. Sure enough, he found his mother bent over in pain and needing to go to the hospital. As far as I know she was never delivered and remained a thorn in our flesh.