Repossessed

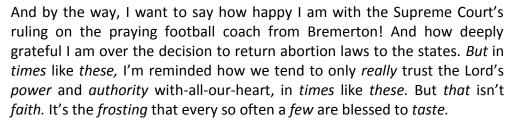
Possessing Single-Minded Trust
July 3, 2022

Today we're talking about what to do when you hit a brick wall in life.

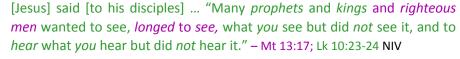
But first: **Do you trust Jesus' power and authority?** *Do you?* Be honest *with yourself,* we're *family.*













If you know the Lord, you know His ways are often not our ways. You know how we say it's my way or the highway? Turns out, His way is the high way! And the way I think He should act is so often so beneath Him.



"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways ... for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." — Isaiah 55:8-9 NKJ



To trust His power and authority, *His* thoughts must become *our* thoughts — which is why we've been given "the mind of Christ". (1 Cor 2:16) Remember when Jesus first taught in Capernaum?



They were astonished at His teaching, for <u>He taught them as one having authority</u>, for <u>His Word was with authority</u>. Now ... there was a man who had a <u>spirit</u> of an <u>unclean demon</u>. ... But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" And ... it came out of him and ... they were all amazed ... saying, "What <u>new doctrine</u> is this?" "What a Word this is! For with <u>authority</u> and <u>power He commands</u> even the unclean spirits, and <u>they obey Him</u>, and [baby-o-baby] they come out." – Mk 1:22-27; Lk 4:32-36 NKJ



[Cuz] Even the demons believe ["that God is One" (2:18)]—and shudder! – James 2:19 ESV

Know why? **Demons** *ain't atheists!* They know His power and authority. Know how? **They know His** *Word!* Satan *tested* Jesus by ever-so-slyly distorting God's *Word.* Remember how:

[The Gadarene] cried out and <u>fell on his knees at His feet</u> in front of Him, shouting ... "What do you want with me, <u>Jesus, Son of the Most High God</u>? I *beg* You, don't torture me!" For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out – Mk 5:6-8; Lk 8:28-29 NIV



It might surprise you to learn those demons are quite the theologians!

The Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to <u>deceiving spirits</u> and <u>doctrines of demons</u>, speaking lies in <u>hypocrisy</u>, – 1 Timothy 4:1-2 NKJ

[Paul warns the Corinthians about this double-minded demonic spirit] I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a <u>sincere</u> and <u>pure</u> devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and <u>proclaims another Jesus</u> than the one we proclaimed, [from the Old Testament] or <u>if you receive a different</u> [unholy] <u>spirit</u> from the [Holy] One you received, or <u>if you accept [even]</u> a [little] different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it <u>readily enough</u>. [Readily enough? For what? For "your thoughts to be led astray from a <u>sincere</u> and <u>pure</u> devotion"] – 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 ESV

[Cuz] We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way – Isaiah 53:6 CSB

Therefore *submit* to *God*. *Resist* the *devil* and *he* will *flee* from *you*. [Like Legion into pigs!] Draw near to God and ... <u>purify your *hearts*</u>, you <u>double-minded</u>. – James 4:7-10 NKJ

[Because] Self-seeking [wisdom] in your hearts ... [is] demonic. – James 3:13-15 NKJ

[Whereas] [If] you seek the *Lord* your *God*, you will find *Him* [that is] <u>if you look for *Him*</u> with <u>all your heart</u> and with <u>all your soul</u>. – Deuteronomy 4:29 NIV

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." – John 10:27-28 NKJ



And that's how you know when you're *His.* Because **following means seeking to learn to discern His voice** among a raging sea of competing voices in this world. However, it's not about *achieving answers*, but *digging* for treasure! Cuz He *created* an adventure to *share with* us.



Which is why He compares His *kingdom* to hidden treasure, (Mt 13:44) and acquiring *wisdom* as *searching* for hidden treasure. (Prov 1:23; 2:1-4) And **finding** *treasure* **readily** *fuels* **more** *seeking*. *Literally*. He *wired* our *brains* to release *dopamine!* So what *riles* Him, is the *hypocrisy* of praying for answers without lifting a finger to find 'em.



See this brick wall? See that little rock in the center? *It's not a rock*. Once you see it, you can't *un-see* it. You have eyes to see, but they don't perceive. Figure it out yet? Yes? Well, you sin a cigar! Cuz it's the ash end of a cigar. Know what this *world* and God's *Word* have in common? **Brick walls** ... that *aren't* what they *seem*. Cuz each one contains the most incredible surprises for those who seek to see through walls.



Wouldn't it be awful if, five minutes into a great action movie, the *feds* show up and *arrest* the bad guys without *violence?* What a *rip off! Why?* Cuz we pay *good money* for a taste of the *rapture* that *comes* from *persevering* the *testing*. Same way we'll feel about *life* down *here* ... up there. Cuz we're called to be over-comers not under-getters.

You know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. [So] Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete ... [And] If any of you lacks wisdom, [in the midst of the test] you should ask God, who gives [wisdom] generously to all without finding fault, [cuz you're being tested and stretched and strengthened, so He gets if you're distressed or depressed or on edge] and it [wisdom] will be given to you. [Usually from the test] But [only if you trust; so] when you ask, you must believe [you'll receive if you persevere. Hebrews 11:6 says you must believe He rewards those who diligently seek Him"] and not doubt, [the power and authority and superiority of His wisdom] because the one who doubts [especially during the test] is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. [Cuz] Such a person is double-minded – James 1:3-8 NIV



Our struggles drive our faith to depths possible no other way ... *if* we trust the **invincible power**, and **unrivaled authority**, and **eternal perspective**, and **infinite love**, in a pure, sincere, non-wishy-washy, single-minded sort of way. *His* way. The *high* way. James also tells us that:

[The tongue] is a fire, [in fact] a world of evil ... and is itself set on fire by hell. [Which explains the "evil" "fire" "world"] ... It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings ... made in God's likeness. – James 3:6-9 NIV

James (3:15; 4:8) calls this "double-minded" "demonic" "wisdom". So why do we do it? Or, a better question is: When? Cuz we do it when we refuse to trust Jesus' power and authority. But, how does hell set our tongue on fire? By hiding in the unpurified, insincere, dark parts of our hearts.

"For out of the abundance of the *heart* the mouth *speaks*. ... For out of the *heart* proceed <u>evil thoughts</u>, <u>murders</u>, <u>adulteries</u>, <u>fornications</u>, <u>thefts</u>, <u>false witness</u>, <u>blasphemies</u>: [and] these are [just seven of] the things which defile" – Matthew 12:34; 15:19-20 NKJ

I wonder if these are the "seven demons" He cast out of "Mary Magdalene". (Mk 16:9)

[Cuz, you see] [An] idol is [ultimately] a worthless doctrine. – Jeremiah 10:8 NKJ

[And] [Everyone] who sets up his idols [his "worthless doctrines"] in his heart ... are all estranged from Me by their idols — Ezekiel 14:4-5 NKJ

[Because] Their idols ["worthless doctrines"] are [just] empty wind! – Isaiah 41:29 NAB

[But] [He who has] a <u>pure heart</u>, who has not lifted up his soul to <u>an</u> [empty, windy, untrustworthy] <u>idol</u> ... shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness <u>from the God of his salvation</u> ... [all] those who <u>seek Him</u>, who seek <u>Your face</u>. – Psalm 24:4-6 NKJ

[For God] made *His* light shine in *our* hearts [through *His* Word] to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. – 2 Corinthians 4:6 NIV

[So] We should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every ["empty"] wind of ["worthless"] doctrine ["like a wave ... driven and tossed" (Jas 1:6)] ... but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into [Christ] – Ephesians 4:14-15 NKJ

Here's another brick wall, to test just how much you actually trust Jesus' power and authority.



[The Gadarene] fell on his knees ... [shouting] "What do you want with me ... I beg You, don't torture me!" ... For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out ... Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!" Many times it had seized him ... [and] many demons had gone into him. And [Legion] begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go out of the area into the Abyss. – Mk 5:6-10; Lk 8:28-31 NIV

Do you see it? It's hiding in the flashback. If "Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out", how's it hanging around? Doesn't Jesus have enough power and authority?

And "What do you want with me"?! "Um, to go out, like I kind'a commanded." And why's it begging Him "not to order them to go out"? This "cigar" is obvious if we just actually trust His power and authority. By which I mean, when "Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out" baby-o-baby, it came out! This is told as a flashback — so the proper question is: How far back? How many days? How "many times had it seized him"? Cuz this isn't Jesus' first rodeo with this double-minded demonic Gadarene! Earlier that very same day, Jesus had set the stage, saying:

"When an evil spirit comes out of a man, [being cast out by God's Spirit] it ... says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house <u>unoccupied</u>, <u>swept clean</u> and <u>put in order</u>. [We know who cleaned and tidied up; but why's the guy <u>unoccupied?</u> Seems his "devotion" wasn't "sincere and pure" (2 Cor 11:3)] Then it goes and takes with it <u>seven other spirits</u> more wicked than itself, [seven, eh?] and they go in and live there. And the *final* condition of that man is worse than the *first*." [Cuz it only takes three more times before there's a legion of 4,000+ in there] – Matthew 12:43-45 NIV



And that very night Jesus calms the waves being driven and tossed by the wind. And then He tracks down the man being driven and tossed like a wave, with double-minded relapsing and backsliding, till he was finally, utterly, conquered by the devil; but certainly not abandoned by the Lord. Hence the title: Repossessed.

[O Lord] I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant – Psalm 119:176 NKJ

[Ever feel that way?] "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" — Mark 9:24 NKJ

[Well He will! But you must] Trust in the Lord with all your heart – Proverbs 3:5 NIV

[And, as He says] Lay hold of My Words with all your heart – Proverbs 4:4 NIV

For with *authority* and *power* He *commands* even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him, and [baby-o-baby] they come out." – Mk 1:27; Lk 4:36 NKJ

So what do you do when you hit one of life's brick walls?

Look to win a cigar!

Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.