

19. The Master over all

February 7, 2016

The dictionary definition of 'master' is: "a person with the ability or power to use, control, or dispose of something." But it is rather a lame definition to describe the capabilities and position of the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that the 2nd chapter of the Book of Philippians describes it much better:

Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In other words, Jesus is above all and over all, including the spiritual beings and physical beings, from a single strip of a DNA to all the mighty spiritual angelic and demonic beings in the universe.

This morning we are going to meet a couple of demon-possessed men in Gergesenes and a couple of people with incurable diseases in Capernaum. Without Jesus, there wouldn't be any hope for these people. But when they met Jesus, they were set free from their death, sickness, and even demon possession, because Jesus is the Master over all.

A. THE MASTER OVER THE SUPERNATURAL

Matthew 8:28-34 When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. 29 And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" 30 Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. 31 So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine." 32 And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water. 33 Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. 34 And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region.

This incident was recorded in two other Gospels – Mark and Luke. Some skeptics would say that there are at least a couple of discrepancies in this incident:

1) Two different locations? – Actually, Gergesenes in Matthew and Gadarenes in Mark and Luke are the same place with two different names. It was located at the east side of the Sea of Galilee. The Gadarenes were the inhabitants of Gadara, and this is the land that was given to the tribe of Gad on the east side of the Jordan River.

2) Two demoniacs or one? – This must be because there was one demon-possessed man who was far more severe in his state of demonic possession, having many demons, than the other as well as being a spokesperson of two. The demons knew who Jesus was, even if the disciples didn't. These demons also knew of both their immediate destiny – to be cast into the Abyss, and their ultimate destiny – to suffer everlasting torment in the Lake of Fire.

There are three groups of people when it comes to how to react against the demonic forces:

1) Completely ignorant people: These people are clueless and could care less about the biblical truth against the demons. Because their lives are carnal and completely controlled by the demons without any one of them knowing.

2) Superstitious people: These are the people watched way too many horror movies. They carry garlic around their necks. They say, "This will keep any demon away from me." More than demons, other people will stay away from them, especially when they wear it all the time. Some carry silver spikes, or silver bullets, or even crucifixes. Demons are not afraid of any of those items, unlike the Hollywood movies. There is only One power that the demons are afraid of. It is the power of Jesus.

3) The people with their trust in Jesus: These are the people who know the Word of God and understand the power of God over the demons' according to 1 John 4:4.

1 John 4:4b He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Around late '80s and early '90s, a group of hyper-charismatic denomination teachers taught their congregation about demonic possessions of people, including born-again Christians. As we read in 1 John 4:4, the Holy Spirit within born-again Christians is greater than satan and his demons in the world. The apostle John did NOT say, "He who is in you is greater than he who also is in you." Were these silly teachers teaching a time share plan between the Holy Spirit and demons in believers' hearts? Nonsense. If you believe their false doctrine, I have a great ocean front property to sell to you in Green Valley.

In v32, we see two origins of the deviled ham when the demons went into the pigs, and the pickled ham when the pigs jumped into the water. If there were those liberal animal right group people at that time, can you imagine what they would say about Jesus? "You pig killer!" OK, no more porky jokes.

Listen, more than 4,000 teens, in three nationwide studies some time ago, were interviewed by the Barna Group about their exposure, through the media and otherwise, to the "supernatural world." 73% of America's youth have engaged in at least one type of psychic or witchcraft-related activity, beyond mere media exposure or horoscope usage – the most common being use of a Ouija board and reading a book about witchcraft or Wicca. More than 25% of teens have played a game featuring sorcery, dungeon and dragon, or witchcraft elements.

Many teens say that they even have had experiences that could only be described as supernatural or spiritual: such as communicating with a dead person, participating in a seance, casting a spell or mixing a magic potion, out of body experience, palm reading, and the list goes on. Young people and old people, if you dabble with any of these things, you are playing with the fire of the devil. Stop it now.

Proverbs 6:27 Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned?

Never underestimate the destructive power of satan. He is our enemy and would destroy all of us if he could. Like a roaring lion, satan and his demons seek whom they may devour. It is satan who is at work in the lives of unbelievers, making them to be children of disobedience.

In my opinion, v34 is one of the saddest verses in the Scripture. These people, the pig owners were seized with great fear that they might lose more money if Jesus stuck around in their city. So they asked Him to leave. Like these people, many people today, they'd rather be owned by the gods of this world – power, fame, riches, drugs, sex, alcohol, and you name it – than being filled with the joy, peace and love that come from Jesus Christ alone. All those earthly things will perish, but eternal life will continue – either in heaven or hell. Our choice to accept or reject the truth of God will decide our ultimate destination.

Jesus is the Master over the supernatural.

B. THE MASTER OVER THE NATURAL

Mark 5:21-34 Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. 22 And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet 23 and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live." 24 So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him. 25 Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, 26 and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. 28 For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well." 29 Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. 30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" 31 But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" 32 And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. 33 But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. 34 And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

It took a great deal of humility and courage for Jairus not only to come to Jesus, but also to ask His help at his feet. He, as a synagogue official, was responsible for the administration of the synagogue of Capernaum and the ordering of public worship. He was like a senior pastor of a church in modern days. He had reached the highest post that life could give him in the respect of his fellow men in Capernaum. But nothing mattered to him at the point of his daughter's death.

It is interesting that Jairus and this woman – two opposite people – met at the feet of Jesus. Jairus was a leading Jewish man, she was an anonymous woman with no prestige or resources. He was a synagogue leader, while her sickness kept her from public worship. Jairus came pleading for his daughter, the woman came with a need of her own. The girl had been healthy for 12 years, and then about to die; the woman had been ill for 12 years and was now made whole. Jairus' need was public – everyone knew it; but the woman's need was private – only Jesus understood. Both Jairus and the woman trusted Christ, and He met their needs.

This woman had spent all her money on a bunch of quack doctors trying to find a cure for her disease. Once from somewhere she had heard an ancient Jewish myth that if you touch the hem of a prophet which was known as tassels, your sickness will be cured.

We need to remember that when this ceremonially unclean woman touched His garment, Jesus wasn't made unclean, but rather the woman was made whole. When we come to Jesus with our sin, and lay it upon Him, it doesn't make Him a sinner, but it makes us clean.

How could this woman be healed by touching the tassels of Jesus' garment? Because even though her faith had elements of error and superstition, she believed in the healing power of Jesus, and the tassels of His garment served as a point of contact for her faith. But more than anything, her faith was in Jesus, not in His tassels. The Object of faith is much more important than the quality of faith.

Jesus is the Master over the natural.

C. THE MASTER OVER DEATH

Mark 5:35-43 While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" 36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." 37 And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. 38 Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. 39 When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping." 40 And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. 41 Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." 42 Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement. 43 But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat.

Poor Jarius! The bad news sank the heart of Jairus. When Jesus told him to believe, the man was thinking, "Believe what, Jesus? My daughter is now dead." All Jairus could think was that his daughter was no longer with him. There was no more hope. Why bother with Jesus? However, he still took Jesus to his home where his dead daughter was.

The scene at the home would have discouraged anybody. The professional mourners were already there, weeping and wailing loudly. They were from "Mourners-R-Us". And a crowd of friends and neighbors had gathered. Jewish people in that day lost no time in showing and sharing their grief. The body of the deceased would be buried that same day, after being washed and anointed.

Jesus took command of the situation and told the crowd to stop weeping because the girl was not dead, but asleep. Of course, she was dead, because her spirit had left her body. But to Jesus, death was only sleeping. This image is often used in the NT to describe the death of believers.

This "Talitha, cumi" was not a magic formula, but a word of command from the Lord of life and death. Jesus simply commanded her spirit to return to her body and even death obeyed Him. She was a teenager, the first thing after coming back from death was eating.

This is a preview of the resurrection of the believers of Jesus Christ. He saves lost sinners and raises them from spiritual death. The Gospels record three such incidents with people coming back from death, though Jesus probably performed more.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the Master over death.

D. APPLICATIONS

- 1) Never underestimate the destructive power of satan and his demons, nor should we give them too much credits.
- 2) The Object of faith, our Christ, is much more important than the quality of our faith.
- 3) Jesus is the master over all – the supernatural, the natural, and death.