

Di121 Effective Communication

Lesson Di121-25 Demonstration: Power over Satan

Most people enjoy sports, either participating themselves or cheering on their favorite team. Your favorite team might be in your home town or far away. What you want for your team is victory, but sometimes that doesn't happen. The thing every winning team needs is a champion player. That person, with the support of his team, can overcome all opposition and win the game.

Life can be compared to a sporting event. As believers, however, our battle is not against other people, but against the power of our enemy Satan. He often works through people who have been deceived by his lies or proofs of his power. As believers we know that the power and authority of Jesus is greater than that of Satan. Jesus won the victory over Satan through his death and resurrection. This lesson considers two stories that reveal the power of the name of Jesus over Satan.

One day when the Apostle Paul and his team were on their way to the place of prayer, they met a slave girl. She had a demonic spirit by which she claimed to predict the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. She followed Paul shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." She kept this up for many days.

Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her. (Acts 16:16-18).

Paul and his missionary team were in the city of Philippi. People were being delivered from sickness and the control of Satan. We don't know how this woman came under the control of this evil spirit. The spirit used the woman's voice to tell the future. People paid money to hear predictions about their future—right or wrong. For many days the demon proclaimed through her the truth about the believers. Finally, Paul put an end to her behavior by addressing the spirit directly. With the power and authority of the name of Jesus, he commanded the spirit to leave her. Though her words were correct, Paul knew that the message needed to come from those who had experienced salvation. He also knew she needed deliverance from demonic power.

Later, in Ephesus God used Paul to do extraordinary miracles. People were being healed of their sicknesses and evil spirits left them. Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

Paul and his company were seeing people delivered from demon power. These Jewish men thought there was a magical power in the name of Jesus. Money again motivated these brothers to try and use the power in Jesus' name. Ancient belief was that if one used a god's name, one could control his powers. The demon again spoke using the voice of a person. The demon knew who Jesus was and feared his power. The demon knew about Paul, too, and that God's Spirit was protecting him. These sons of the priest belonged to Satan and the evil spirit knew that too. The result was one man wounding seven others who tried to misuse the name of Jesus. God's power can be used only by his people. To use the name of Jesus to drive out demons, you must first have a relationship of faith. You must really know the Jesus behind the name and be full of the Holy Spirit.

When this beating became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power (Acts 19:13-20).

The effect of these events on the city was amazing. Unbelievers were fearful and yet they respected highly the name of Jesus. The effect on some new believers was also amazing. Some of them were living double lives. They trusted in Jesus to save them, but they had not fully left their old lives. They had kept scrolls about sorcery and magic, just in case they needed to use the dark powers again some time. They were not sure the power of Jesus could really defeat evil forces. Now they understood that they could not serve both God and the powers of Satan. They confessed their sin, and burned their old scrolls, which represented their old lives and ways. The value of the scrolls represented a year's wages for well over 100 men. Now the power of the Lord's name spread to even more people.

In our gospel proclamation, we must make known God's power over Satan and the witchcraft done in his name. Satan has no power against the name and power of Jesus. The Bible makes clear that as believers, God "has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:13). We have not proclaimed the full gospel until we speak about leaving the old and becoming a part of the new kingdom of Jesus.

These stories are **important** because they teach that there is power in the name of Jesus to set free those who are controlled by the powers of darkness.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that only people who have experience God's power in their lives are able to set free those controlled by Satan's power.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. What did Paul say to the spirit controlling the woman who foretold the future? [Pause]
 - A. If you answered that he said "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!" you are correct.

2. What did the demon spirit say to the seven sons of Sceva who tried to deliver a man using the name of Jesus? [Pause]

A. If you said the spirit answered, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” you are correct.

3. What do the stories of the slave girl and the sons of the priest teach about the power of the name of Jesus over demons? [Pause]

A. If you said these stories teach that only the power of Jesus can set people free from demon power, you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to memorize the story of the seven sons of Sceva and tell it to someone who has not heard it before. Then ask this question, “What was the demon really saying to these men who wanted to use the name of Jesus to drive out demons? Answer: To use the name of Jesus to drive out demons, you must first have a relationship of faith and really know the Jesus behind the name.

Begin to pray for any in your community who may be struggling with evil spirits.