

**TEXT: Jesus left that place and withdrew into the region of Tyre and Sidon. There a Canaanite woman from the territory came and kept crying out, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! A demon is severely tormenting my daughter!” (EHV)**

Dear Friends in Christ,

Jesus sought rest and solitude across the border in Syrophenicia. While he was there, a bitterly-troubled Canaanite woman found him and threw herself at his feet, crying for help. Her daughter had become a deeply disturbed child, having come under the control of a demon sent by the devil. That the Canaanite woman had to see her own daughter transformed into a person of irrational, brutish behavior was indeed a tragedy. Examples of demon-possession recorded in the Scripture reveal the terrible spite which Satan feels toward mankind, as well as his hatred toward God. They also indicate Satan’s awesome power.

(Some other examples of demon activity in the ministry of Jesus: Matthew 4:1-11; Matthew 8:28-34; Matthew 12:22-29; Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 1:21-28; Mark 3:20-30.)

The deeply disturbed woman told her troubles to Jesus, God’s eternal Son, who came into this world to save us all from our sins. In his dealings with people Jesus performed miracles of healing—among them, the casting out of demons. His miracles clearly revealed the divine power, as well as the love, the compassion, and the mercy of God. As we shall see in a latter sermon, deliverance came to the troubled woman when the Lord with divine authority and compassion in his voice—after he first tested out her faith—announced: “Your request is granted.” This was God speaking! Though Satan, the old prince of darkness, was at the root of the unfortunate woman’s trouble and the cause of her heartache, nevertheless, Jesus—full of compassion and power—healed her daughter. Yes, **“from that very hour”** (Matthew 15:28).

Nowhere in the Scripture does God promise his children of faith a trouble-free, suffering-free life. In fact, **“We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God”** (Acts 14:22). There are many examples in the Scripture of God’s suffering saints, believers upon whom the burden of affliction came to rest. Recall the terrible suffering which Job endured at the hand of Satan when the devil, with God’s permission set about to test Job’s allegiance to God. Then there was the Apostle Paul who was given a thorn in his flesh, called **“a messenger of Satan”** to torment him in order to keep him humble. Well, trouble, suffering and sorrow are very much a part of our lives, too, as believers. Many of us may be experiencing trouble right now at this troubling time when we are dealing with the corona virus.

We can be certain that Satan, finally, is at the root of all our troubles. It was he who brought sin into the world through Adam, thus defiling the whole human race. All troubles, suffering, sorrow—let’s not forget to include sickness and death—is caused by sin, which ultimately can be traced to Satan.. And once Satan brought sin into the world, thus bankrupting it spiritually, he stood as mankind’s accuser. But God overcame Satan, sin, and death through Jesus Christ. Our Savior shed his blood on the cross in perfect payment for all the sins so that everyone who believes in him has full forgiveness and eternal life. What this means is that we who believe in Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior have the victory over sin and Satan. Since we have forgiveness from God, we cannot any longer be accused of sin, not even by Satan, the original instigator of sin. And while we are careful to resist the devil, we do not fear him. God is greater than the devil and all demons, and is equal to solving all troubles that befall us. Whereas Satan is filled with blind hatred and spite, God is filled with love and compassion—the same love that sent Jesus to the cross to die in our place, and to rise again. God, for Jesus’

sake, listens to our pleas for help and is moved by compassion to deliver us from trouble, to alleviate our suffering, to remove our sorrows and to heal our hurts.

God assures us of this in the Scriptures. We have his invitation to tell him our troubles, and we also have his promise of help. **“Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you and you will honor me”** (Psalm 50:15). And there are many other wonderful words of assurance from our Lord, powerful words that reach right out to us and take hold of our hearts. Among them is this favorite of many: **“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand”** (Isaiah 41:10). If we take to heart such assuring words of invitation and promise, how can we fail to have an upbeat faith to offset the downbeat days of trouble and suffering?

How are things going in your life at the present time? Are there matters that trouble you? Are you perhaps emotionally depressed, physically exhausted, or suffering any form of pain? Are you ill or facing surgery? Are you in need of healing from some injury or hurt? Does it seem like the whole world has turned upside down on you and that you have no future? You can go with boldness and confidence in the name of Jesus to the throne of grace in heaven and say to God: **“LORD, THERE IS TROUBLE IN MY LIFE.”** You can pour out your heart to him, telling him your troubles, describing to him your hurts, expressing to him your fears. And with the optimism and hope that an upbeat faith generates, patiently and cheerfully await God’s answer. Also confess your sins to Him, confident that the blood of Jesus Christ purifies you from all of them. Rejoice that your name, as a believer in Christ, is written in God’s Book of Life in heaven. Yes, God heals both body and soul in answer to faith-filled prayers addressed to him in the name of Jesus our Savior.

Amen.

**PRAYER:** O, my God there is trouble in my/our life/lives. There is sickness and discomfort. At times I/we feel lonely and depressed. Anxious thoughts about my/our health cause me/us much grief. Still, I/we will not allow the things that trouble my/our spirit to overwhelm me/us. You are my/our harbor in the storms of life. You are the rock that supports me/us above the threatening waves. It is in your power to take away that misery I/we feel and change the bad times to good. Oh, please, with tender love take notice of my/our need and reach out your hand to deliver me/us from everything that hurts and afflicts. Never allow my/our troubles to rob me/us of my/our courage, to overwhelm my/our faith or to cast a shadow on my/our soul(s). Instead, strengthen and encourage me/us, save and deliver me/us and cleanse me/us from my/our sins. I/We ask this in the name of Jesus who loves me/us and gave himself for me/us. Amen.

**Hymn:** CW #443 “Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad and Sing”

Rejoice, my heart, be glad and sing,  
A cheerful trust maintain;  
For God, the Source of everything,  
Your Treasure shall remain.

He is my Treasure, He thy Joy  
Thy Life and Light and Lord,  
Thy Counselor when doubts annoy,  
Thy Shield and great Reward.

Why spend the day in blank despair

In restless thought the night?  
On your creator cast your care;  
He makes your burdens light.

Did not his love and truth and power  
Watch o'er thy childhood day?  
Has he not oft in threatening hour  
Turned dreaded ills away?

He knows how oft a Christian weeps  
And why his tears now fall;  
And in his book his mercy keeps  
These things are noted all.  
-Paul Gerhardt, 1653

### **Search the Scriptures** (Bible Study)

*Psalm 46:1, 2 10a, 1:*

*James 5:13-15:*

*(Note: Anointing with oil was a way of treating illness in Bible times, and now too, However, it is the prayer of faith, not the oil, that heals the sick.)*

*John 14:27:*

*Psalm 121:1, 2:*

*Psalm 102:1, 2:*

*Psalm 69:16-18, 29:*

*Psalm 91 especially vv. 1-4, 14-16:*

*In what way does today's sermon and the Bible passages in the Search the Scripture section apply to our present life in this coronavirus pandemic time?*

Serving the Savior and you,  
Pastor Glen Hieb  
March 22, 2020

*Credit: The above devotion was written by the sainted, Rev. Arthur J. Clement, a brother who served with me in the ministry in the early 80s in Southwest Michigan. He rests in peace with his Lord in heaven today.*