

Deliver Us: The Victory of Jesus

1 John 3:8 – October 1, 2023

DELIVER US
life in the victory of jesus

Begin with Prayer

In silence, invite the Holy Spirit to guide you. Then pray: *Empowering God, we pray that you will send your Holy Spirit to move us to understanding; to help us to believe the gospel; to give us strength and wisdom to live by it. Amen.* (Worship Sourcebook Q.3.5.8)

Reconnecting and Debriefing

Take a moment to check in with one another (2 minutes each).

1. *What is your favorite season and why?*
2. *What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “spiritual warfare?”*

Introduction

Whether we gather in person or online, our goal remains the same: to be a people apprenticed to the life of Jesus. His life and teaching is our example and our source of truth. Remember the commitments we make to each other to foster safety and freedom as we pursue spiritual growth together:

- Whenever possible, please listen to the sermon prior to gathering (Sunday or online).
- While we are meeting (even online), commit to focussing rather than multitasking. Be all here.
- Give every person an equal opportunity to share, even if it takes time to form or finish their thoughts.
- Be respectful and non-judgmental.
- Honour sharing boundaries z Honour sharing boundaries (only what you have permission to share, no gossip) and guard confidentiality (what we share here stays here).
- Don't try to fix, problem-solve or rescue; keep pointing one another to the truths of the gospel for our lives.

Listening to God's Word

This week we begin our series *Deliver Us*, addressing the idea of supernatural realities. The Old Testament sees God proving himself greater than the gods of other nations, and the Gospels document Jesus continually exercising authority over demonic forces; and yet, for many contemporary Christians, this is not a topic we focus on, or even believe. If this was such a large part of Jesus' ministry, is it something that still has relevance in the life of his apprentices today? How much – if any – of our common experiences and struggles can be rightly attributed to evil spiritual forces?

Small Group Discussion

- C.S. Lewis once said, “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe and to feel an excessive unhealthy interest in them.” *What are your thoughts on this quote? Which of the two categories would you resonate with more?*

Read 1 John 3:8 & John 10:10. Then discuss together:

- ***What is your first thought when you read through these passages?***
- *How is the work of the enemy described in these passages? Where do we see this in our lives and world?*
- When we consider the reason that Jesus came to earth, we often think of forgiveness, teaching, showing love, etc. *How do these reasons, or others that come to mind, resonate with these passages?*
- *Where have you seen Jesus “destroy the devil’s work” and bring “life... to the full” in your own life? In the life of someone you know?*
- When something bad happens in our life or the world, we might find that we blame God. *Why do you think we often blame God for our suffering rather than evil forces? How can we know the difference?*

Read Luke 4:31-37

- ***What is your first thought when you read through this passage?***
- The demon calls Jesus by name and acknowledges him as “the Holy One of God.” The demon had good theology and he recognized Jesus! However, good theology or Bible knowledge is not the same as relationship with Jesus. *What does this tell us about what it means to be a true apprentice of Jesus?*
- *As disciples, how can we move from simply knowing about Jesus to actually following him?*
- Slavery to spiritual evil can happen directly (opening yourself to the overtly supernatural) and indirectly (giving authority to something other than Jesus in your life). *In what ways have you seen this slavery happen in your life or the life of someone you know? What does the freedom offered by Jesus look like?*
- Whether it happens directly or indirectly, spiritual slavery blinds us to the fact that we are enslaved. *How can you overcome that blindness to ‘see’ the ways the enemy might want to work in our lives?*

Read Luke 11:24-26.

The filling of God’s presence is an Old Testament theme, as God’s presence filled the Tabernacle and Temple (Exodus 40:34-38; 1 Kings 8:10-11). In the New Testament, our physical bodies and church communities are redefined as the new Temple, which the presence of God’s Spirit now fills as his followers (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

- In this week’s sermon, it was said that “freedom from demons is not the point – this is about freedom to Jesus. We are set free to be filled with the very Presence of God.” *What does it look like to be filled with God’s presence? How can you cultivate that this week?*
- ***How do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to respond to or act on what we have read and discussed?***

This Week’s Practice

Confession & Prayer: James counsels us to “confess our sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed” (James 5:16). Whether it is through sin or some other means, the work of the enemy thrives on secrecy, and through confession to God and others, that work begins to be undone.

Take a moment of silence, asking God to reveal any areas of sin or secrecy that he might want to bring into the light. Then share with the group, with the group offering listening and unjudgmental ears. If you are new to the group or don’t feel comfortable sharing in this setting, you could either break into groups of 2-3, or reach out to a Christian friend or mentor that you trust. After you have shared, let them pray for you, asking for God’s healing and announcing his forgiveness and grace over you.

How do you feel afterwards compared to before when it was held in secrecy?

Caring for One Another

- *Suggest a prayer request that is related to the topic we’ve discussed.*
- ***Do you or your family have a need that the Life Group can help meet?***

Using **the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)** as a guide, based on what you’ve shared together, spend time listening to God and praying for one another.