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Weekly Encourager – 8 August 2010

(from James Stacey: scriptural advice and insight on how to be set free from schizophrenia)

OVERCOMING FEAR ABOUT SCHIZOPHRENIA IN THE CHURCH

THIS WEEK'S SELECTED BIBLE READING IS JOHN'S GOSPEL CHAPTER 9: Key verses 30-41: Spiritual Blindness: The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out. Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshipped him. Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."

It seems that not everyone who is filled with the Holy Spirit discerns the depths of mental illness or believes he can!! Why it is that revelation and insight about the spiritual world of darkness seems inaccessible to a Christian who has clear understanding into other matters in the realm of the Spirit, has to be accepted as a kind-of phenomena of modern-day Christianity. Or, said another way, a Christian who boasts in one breath that God can do anything and nothing is beyond his power, can lack the spiritual revelation to believe that mental spiritual bondage, of which schizophrenia is the most entrenched, can yield to the power of Jesus Christ.

Such fear exists in the church among Christians about the presence of the demonic and how to deal with it. As a result, you who are mentally ill are delayed being delivered and helped. If a family member is suffering with schizophrenia, a similar fear can prevent freedom being imparted and enjoyed simply because it is not accepted that healing can be established through deliverance. Some Christians are offended when you mention that behind the illness there is a spiritual dimension. So, their loved one never gets to the point of receiving healing just because those in his life object to help from others who may have come through the illness themselves, or have understanding concerning the powers of darkness at work.

How do you as a Christian schizophrenic face such a predicament? You have enough on your "mental plate" already without the addition of an obvious failure in the Christian church. You may well reach the point facing such a maze of confusion that you begin to trust and lean harder on the Lord Jesus Christ alone. You are thrown on him, because the human help you expect is not there!! What could be worse than to be mentally isolated, bereft and denied help from the one quarter where God wants you to turn for healing and deliverance. Would to God that inside our churches regularly attended by Christian schizophrenics there were believers with a heart of compassion and believing prayer who are moved to ask God: "Why is it that our dear brother (or sister) remains in mental bondage year after year without being set free?" I met one pastor who asked himself the same question concerning someone in his congregation. His prayers of concern opened him up to a new ministry in counselling, healing and deliverance because he was challenged by what he saw, or rather did not see, happening in that person.

So I want to encourage you to take heart when the expected help from Christ's church is not forthcoming. You have got to recognise the fear inside the church which is preventing you being helped into freedom!! That's the long and short of it. But God can enable you to battle through this pathetic situation. The Holy Spirit needs to be allowed to strive in believers who rub shoulders with born-again schizophrenics inside church week by week to cause a stirring in their spirits to lay hold on God for you, and believe that they hold the answer to your freedom!!

I remember the disappointing reaction among Christians to my healing, deliverance and freedom after 26 years of bondage with schizophrenia. Friends and fellow believers at our Pentecostal church could see from the joy on my face that something had happened. I looked different, sounded different, and behaved in a different way. Jesus had broken the prison bars I had been behind for so long. But here was the mystery, something that left me spiritually flat. No-one came near and said they were thrilled that Jesus had at long last set me free. Or to be more precise, no-one asked the question I was waiting to answer: "Come on Jim, and tell me what Jesus did for you that we failed to do."

There is uncertainty in the Church regarding schizophrenia being a condition that invites the intervention of God through a Christian minister, prayer warrior or counsellor. So far, it's been the exclusive domain of the psychiatrist ALONE. While the church is quite comfortable in offering teaching from the Bible about how to possess the mind of Christ and encourage prayers of protection so that your mind is not assaulted by the Devil, that's about as far as it goes. Understand that agreement is lacking, and is not too readily present, when talking about setting the captive free whose mind, like yours, is held tight in a demonic bondage.

How does a born-again Christian interpret what really happened in the incident of the Gadarene demoniac in Mark 5. The facts speak for themselves. It's not a problem to understand the details. Even a non-Christian is able to take the story at face value. The man, known as Legion, was delivered and healed by the power of Jesus Christ from full-scale demonic possession. A born-again Christian like yourself does not have the same, full panoply of demonic power within him, but you yourself know that the disturbing voices you hear are demonic voices in origin and need to be exorcised. Because you agree with the discernment that you "are demonised" (which is altogether different to being demon-possessed), you just long to see the same power displayed in your life as in the gospel incident. Keep faith in God for such faith draws down the power of the Holy Spirit!!

The church is so slow to acknowledge the presence of the demoniac at work in Christians. Even to suggest such a fact puts you a class of someone failing to believe the finished work of Jesus on the cross. It's a kind of belief that suggests when Jesus died he dealt with all the powers of darkness. Though he certainly defeated death, little emphasis is made about appropriating the victory of Jesus in our lives by driving out the presence of the Devil and demonic powers which are still around us today. The fear that cripples the Church and the lack of spiritual power holding it back from coming to the rescue of mental captives, because of dark spiritual forces, has got to go.

As a believer in Jesus, struggling to get out of schizophrenia, you may mourn the lack of help at present available to you. You may find it hard to understand why the church of Jesus Christ where you expect to find a powerful and delivering helping hand to set you free is so slow and ineffective in coming to your rescue. It was much worse in the mid-60s than today when my illness of schizophrenia started BUT there is, generally speaking, still a lack of spiritual power and authority in the church TODAY to deal with mental illness. However, the lid is being taken off this hitherto "out-of-bounds" topic of schizophrenia, and there are Christians and churches where the issue is seen as basically a spiritual one, though affecting the mind. The resistance remaining from inside the church in certain quarters to acknowledge the presence of the power of evil forces even in some Christian lives where mental bondages exist is just one evidence of a clash against the truth of God getting through.

Jesus said: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No-one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14 verse 6). Your Way out of schizophrenia is through Jesus who will impart and lead you into all truth – through his indwelling Holy Spirit - about the nature of the illness/bondage and deposit his Life into your life to become FREE once and for all!!

IF YOU WISH TO INVITE JESUS CHRIST INTO YOUR LIFE, DO PRAY THE FOLLOWING PRAYER: "Lord God Almighty, I approach you in the Name of your Son, Jesus Christ. I know I have sinned in my thoughts, words and actions. There are so many good things I have not done. There are so many sinful things I have done. I am truly sorry for the sin that separates me from you and acknowledge the death of Jesus on the Cross to redeem me. Gratefully, I give my life back to you as I now ask you to come into my life. Come in as my Saviour and Lord and cleanse me. Come in as

my Lord to control me. Come with the strength of your grace and the power of your Spirit to defeat the evil spirit of schizophrenia that troubles me. Now you have set my spirit free enable me to know your power as I believe that my mind too can also be completely set free. Amen.

PROCLAMATION FOR GOD'S PROTECTION

NO WEAPON that is formed against me shall prosper and every tongue which rises against me in judgement I do condemn. This is my heritage as a servant of the Lord and my righteousness is from You, O Lord of Hosts. If there are those who have been speaking or praying against me, or seeking harm or evil to me, or who have rejected me, I forgive them. Having forgiven them, I bless them in the name of the Lord." *

NOW I DECLARE, O Lord, that You and You alone are my God, and besides You there is no other – a just God and a Saviour, the Father, the Son and the Spirit – and I worship You!

I SUBMIT myself afresh to You in unreserved obedience. Having submitted to You, Lord, I do as Your Word directs. I resist the devil: all his pressures, his attacks, his deceptions, every instrument or agent he would seek to use against me. I do not submit! I resist him, drive him from me and exclude him from me in the Name of Jesus. Specifically I reject and repel: infirmity, pain, infection, inflammation, malignancies, allergies, viruses, and every form of witchcraft.

FINALLY, LORD, I thank You that through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, I have passed out from under the curse and entered into the blessing of Abraham whom You blessed in all things:** exaltation, health, reproductiveness, prosperity, victory and God's favour. AMEN

**see Matthew 5: 43-45; Romans 12:14*

***see Galatians 3:13-14; Genesis 24:1*

We are continuing to insert at the bottom of the Weekly Encourager, some powerful Scriptures for you to learn and commit to memory and USE in your prayer battle to drive out the demon of schizophrenia. By so doing your confidence in the Lord will grow because the words will impart "spirit and life" into your spirit, and so equip you in your fight to know the deliverance and freedom of Jesus.

I will be careful to lead a blameless life – when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with a blameless heart. I will set before my eyes no vile thing. Psalm 101: 2-3

No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married. As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you. Isaiah 62: 4-5

(Jesus said): "But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it." Matthew 13: 16-17

The Weekly Encourager:

15 August: I had a Dream, by Peter Laue (USA) guest contributor

22 August: Getting to know the God of the Bible personally

You may be reading the Weekly Encourager for the first time and have stumbled across our website in a desperate search to break free of schizophrenia. Or every week you visit W.E. for encouragement and help to overcome this "monster" of mental illnesses and have been given REAL HOPE that the Lord Jesus is the only One to open the prison door to freedom in your life once and for all time. We encourage you to keep logging into the site as often as you can for scriptural advice as we continue to

point to Jesus who is well-trying and tested in the area of setting captives free from a bondage that no-one else can conquer. Our website www.schizophreniadefeated.com seeks to magnify the dear Son of God who left the courts of heaven to come to our world and die for you and me on the Cross at a place called Calvary just outside Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago. In that sacrifice, he paid the punishment and penalty of your sin and mine and on the third day rose again as "The Resurrection and the Life". He releases TODAY into your life and to anyone accepting his sacrifice, the same victorious life that brought him back from the dead, in the person of the Holy Spirit. Why not invite him into your life right now? It's a life-transforming experience that you CAN REALLY KNOW – which is well able to defeat and conquer the hell of schizophrenia you struggle with, for good!!



James Stacey
Pray Until Schizophrenia Heals

"I will proclaim your mighty acts,
O sovereign Lord" Psalm 71: 16