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AUTHORITY OF JESUS

"Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain. The demons implored Him, saying, 'Send us into the swine so that we may enter them.' Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea," (Mark 5:11-13). Of the many fascinating glimpses into the nature of Christ we see in this account, we are also given an astonishing glimpse into the nature of the demons as well. I find it amazing that even the demons acknowledge the complete authority of Jesus when they seek His permission to enter the swine. It truly fascinates me that they requested the permission of Christ for this wish to be granted rather than acting on

their own authority. The word Mark uses to describe Jesus' consent to their request, *epitrepo*, means "to permit, allow, give leave." Note its use in these other passages as it provides the concept of requiring permission.

"Epitrepo" *"And He said to another, 'Follow Me.' But he said, 'Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father,'" Lk. 9:59. "'Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way,'" Mt. 19:8. "Agrippa said to Paul, 'You are permitted to speak for yourself,' Then Paul stretched out his hand and proceeded to make his defense," Acts 26:1. It is a bit strange to imagine Satan and his demonic cronies behaving in a way that first seeks the authority or permission of Christ before*

acting, but that is the only way they were able to enter the herd of swine on the mountain, by first requesting permission and having their permission granted. This is precisely how Satan was able to tempt Peter to sin by denying he ever knew who Jesus was. He gained permission or authority to do so.

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat,” (Lk. 22:31).

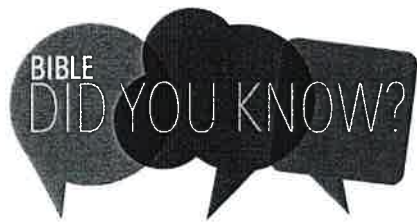
The word Luke provides to convey the action of Satan in regards to his temptation of Peter is the word *exaiteomai*, which simply means to gain permission by asking. “To ask or beg for one’s self, to ask that one be given up to one from the power of another.” This is consistent with the behavior of Satan as revealed in the first few chapters of Job, when permission was both asked and granted in regards to Satan’s wish to sift Job like wheat and prove no real faith in God was present. What is additionally fascinating about the account in Job is we see Satan not only operating in respect to permission being granted by God, but even respecting and obeying the limitations and boundaries God placed within the authorized realm in which Satan was permitted to act.

“Put forth Your hand now and

touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.’ Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.’ ... ‘Put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face.’ So the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.’ Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head,” (Job 1:11-12, 5-7). I’m always somewhat taken back when observing the character of Satan you actually discover certain behavior that is worth imitating. One such trait is his industrious nature of taking full advantage of the time he has to have the greatest amount of influence on others. *“Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time,” (Rev. 12:12).* Satan is not a procrastinator when it comes to using his time profitably in influencing others. While you let that sink in as you measure yourself next to the devil, you can also look at his attitude towards the authority of God in regards to permissible and limited action as we continue to study and examine

our own measure of respect and willingness to submit to His authority ourselves. *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth,"* (Mt. 28:18). – Daniel Ruegg David often struggled with an overwhelming sense of shame after his sin of adultery and murder. "My sin is ever before me," (Ps. 51:3). Paul also never seemed to be able to shake off his memories of his life as a persecutor of the Church, believing himself to be unfit to be called an Apostle (1 Cor. 15:9). Perhaps you also struggle at times with the memories of past sin in your life and carry a burden of shame you can't seem to rid yourself of. There is the story of two brothers who were caught stealing sheep that might help. As part of their punishment they were branded with large capital letters S. S. on their foreheads. One brother had an awful time living with the permanently attached stigma he could never get rid of. He constantly lived on the run, from town to town, as everyone always wanted to know what the initials stood for, he could never bear the shame the memories brought him and was constantly trying to escape his past, only to have it brought up again and again wherever he went. The other brother stayed

in the same town where the very crime was committed and was determined to dedicate his life to helping and serving those around him. Years later the scars on his forehead began to diminish to where they were almost unrecognizable. One day a stranger moved to the area and asked a neighbor about the "S.S." on the old man's face. The neighbor responded, "We're not really all that sure, but we think it means he's the Savior's Servant." "Forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus," (Philip. 3:13-14). – Daniel Ruegg



"I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul will make its boast in the Lord; the humble will hear it and rejoice."
Ps. 34:1-2



MONTHLY CHALLENGE

DIRECTIONS: Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

1) Inviting Others Challenge

John 1:43-45 *"The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, 'Follow Me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'" Sometimes all it takes to bring someone to Jesus and see remarkable changes take place in their life is to simply offer them an invitation. Invite them over to your home for coffee or a meal. Invite them to come join you to bible study or worship. Invite them to come along on an outing with other Christians. Whatever the situation, it truly is amazing what is possible all from a simple invitation to come and check things out for themselves. This is how Jesus was able to encourage others to become fully devoted disciples. "And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, 'What do you seek?' They said to Him, 'Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?' He said to them, 'Come, and you will see.'" Jn. 1:38-39. Let's commit ourselves this month to inviting others to come learn about Jesus.*

2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

Isaiah 6:1-8

"In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.' And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. Then I said, 'Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.' Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, 'Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven.' Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and whom will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"