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A BRIEF ENCOUNTER WITH THE ENEMY

For over three and one-half years I have played the piano in nursing homes, including a weekly program in the **Health Care** unit of a large Retirement Center in Dallas. Many of the residents there have dementia or Alzheimer's, are largely immobile and mentally impaired in varying degrees. In preparation for my piano routine, they are rolled into the activity room in wheelchairs. At 3:00 P.M. on March 5, 1997, I arrived at the Health Care unit for my weekly program. Upon entering the activity room, I noticed that a new resident was present. This man appeared to be incoherent and was uttering a rather loud, guttural hissing sound on a regular basis. The repetitive sound was enough to disturb me but it didn't seem to bother either the other residents or the staff members in the room. After I had been playing for several minutes, the man rolled his wheel chair up to the right side of my piano. He was so close, I could have reached out and touched him. Having lived in the reality of the spirit world for over thirty-two years,¹ remembering one experience of Jesus in casting out an unclean spirit became useful. Under the sound of my piano, I rebuked the hissing spirit and commanded it to come out of the man, in Jesus' name, **never to return, and the man stopped hissing during the rest of my piano program.** I was looking forward to seeing him again, but the following week he was gone and I have not seen him since. Even as I am now writing about this incident, *I feel the presence of the Holy Spirit*, which makes me wonder again what happened to the man and why I only saw him for about one hour. Here is something for the

¹The reality of the spirit world began with me when I was baptized with the Holy Spirit on November 29, 1965. Until then, I had no concept of the spirit world and the spiritual warfare that has been in progress since Adam's sin. In these end-times, this warfare has begun to intensify and will continue to do so. The evil of darkness will become more intense and apparent, but simultaneously, the light of God's anointed will become brighter, and we will be protected. *I am engaged in the battle as I have been directed by the Holy Spirit.* In a later letter I will write about what He has assigned me to do as a warrior.

benefit of those of you who understand this principle of spiritual warfare. I am aware of Jesus' teaching on deliverance where an unclean spirit goes out of a man looking for rest and finds none, then returns and takes with him seven spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter the man again so that his condition is worse.² But when I rebuked the hissing spirit, I commanded it **not to return, as Jesus did** with the deaf and dumb spirit.³ I was once criticized for casting out an evil spirit from this mentally impaired man who would be defenseless against a returning spirit or spirits. However, I must stand on (1) what Jesus did (referenced in footnote #3) as the example to follow in this case and (2) His authority given to believers to cast out demons in His name as one of the signs which He said would follow believers.⁴ Please understand that I am not an expert in deliverance, but I do have limited experience, beginning at least thirty years ago. Until I was baptized with the Holy Spirit (after being a Christian for many years), I had no understanding of the basic reason why Jesus came to earth.⁵ Neither did I realize that Jesus commissioned believers to actively enroll in the war, as volunteers, to help secure the final

²This teaching by Jesus is recorded in Matthew, chapter 12:43 - 45, with a more detailed account written by Luke in Chapter 11:20 - 26. Bible references are from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

³This incident involves a man's son, who, from childhood, was possessed of an evil spirit which caused him to wallow on the ground and foam at the mouth and which often threw him into the fire and into the water to kill him. The disciples of Jesus were unable to cast out the spirit. But Jesus arrived on the scene and said to the spirit, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and **enter him no more!**" (bold print added). The spirit then cried out, convulsed him greatly and came out and the son became as dead. Jesus then took him by the hand and he arose. See Mark 9:14 - 29 for this account. Jesus said to his disciples that "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting." This is the only record I know of in the scripture where Jesus told an evil spirit not to return to the body it had possessed.

⁴"And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will **cast out demons**; they will speak with new tongues." (Mark 16:17, bold print added).

⁵"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8 (b), RSV).

victory, let alone how to do so. Seldom does a day go by now without some practical use of this authority in my personal life and in my daily prayers, some of which I will share in a future letter. There are servants of God who have been called to a specific deliverance ministry and I have several books in my library written on the subject. The best one I know of from an experiential point of view is entitled, **Pigs in the Parlor**, written by Frank and Ida Mae Hammond and published by Impact Christian Books, Inc., Kirkwood, Missouri.

WHAT ABOUT MY FAMILY?

On April 15, 1997, the Lord revealed something to me that was very special and very personal, both to me *and to Him*. The revelation also showed me a side of the Lord Jesus that I had completely overlooked in view of His present position as possessor of ‘all authority in heaven and on earth.’⁶ The story begins this way.

While I was getting dressed for work the morning of November 29, 1965, the Lord showed me a vision in bright white light and spoke to me in the still small voice that Elijah heard in a cave one day.⁷ Thus, I was awakened from my spiritual lethargy. In that awakening, the exclusive, legalistic doctrine I had embraced for years was left in shambles and I didn’t care! For the first time in my life,⁸ I knew from the witness of the Holy Spirit within me that I was saved in spite of my sins! And I was introduced by the Holy Spirit to a *personal relationship with the Lord Jesus!*⁹ I further realized that *He also knew me*, and had answered my prayer in such an unexpected, but spectacular way, that my life was changed forever. The

⁶“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” (Matthew 28:18).

⁷For this story about the Elijah, read 1 Kings 19:1 - 18.

⁸I was forty-five years of age at that time and had been a Christian for many years.

⁹Jesus alluded to this personal relationship with believers a number of times, particularly as recorded by the Apostle John. For example, He is depicted as the shepherd of the sheep, who *hear His voice*, in John 10:2, 3. In John 17:3, in His prayer shortly before the crucifixion, Jesus said, “And this is eternal life, that they [believers] may *know You*, the only true God, *and Jesus Christ* whom You have sent.” The Holy Spirit will also “bear witness to Jesus,” or introduce one to Jesus, as recorded in John 15:26.

love, grace and humility which then flowed into my life was both humbling and exalting in a way that words cannot express. For months, the only way I could share this blessing with someone else, was with tears of joy¹⁰

Under these circumstances, my prayer life was established for the first time. Prayer became an opportunity to talk with Someone I knew personally, Who loved me so that He willingly went to His death on a cross, so I could have His life. And I realized for the first time that if no one had ever lived on the face of the earth since Adam, except me, my sins would have put Him on the cross, and He would gladly have gone there, just for me or just for you. What He had done for me was so wonderful, I began asking the Lord to let me give it away, because it was too precious to keep. I also began to pray for individuals, that they might come to know the Lord personally. As time went by, my prayer list grew so, that I began to pray for families, instead of individual family members, to save prayer time. Then my prayer list of families began to grow as it continues to do today. As I was praying one morning about twenty-five years ago and asking God’s blessings on my list of families, the Lord spoke to me and said, “*What about my family?*” I had never even thought to pray for His family. But since that day, in my daily prayers for families, His family has been first on the list. As soon as I began to pray for His family, I started to wonder for whom I was praying. He knew, of course, but I didn’t. For example, was I praying for mankind since He created us all? Or, was I praying for all Christians? I soon discarded these questions, but continued to pray for His family in my daily prayers, as He instructed me to do.

On April 15, 1997, the Lord revealed to me that “His family” meant *Israel*, His own flesh and blood relatives. Then I realized for the first time, that I had been praying for Israel for twenty-five years and didn’t know it! This reveals something about the heart of Jesus I had never considered. For the first time I was shown His humanity, and it blessed me. His love for His own family today, is as it was when He was on the cross and instructed the Apostle John to take care of His mother.¹¹ Jesus’ love for His flesh and blood relatives

¹⁰In His presence is fulness of joy, see Psalm 16:11.

¹¹“When Jesus [on the cross] therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’ And from that hour that disciple took her to his own

today is something that I had completely overlooked. But it fits the story of the gospel, which is for the Jew first and then the Greek [Gentiles].¹² In spite of His position of authority, and His desire to see all come to the saving knowledge of His gospel, in His personal ministry He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.¹³ It was only after thousands of Jews were added to the new fledgling Church, that the Apostle Peter, and later the Apostle Paul, both Jews, were instructed to go to the Gentiles. We Gentiles, as a wild olive branch, were grafted into a cultivated olive tree¹⁴ and we owe a lot to the Jewish nation.¹⁵ And we owe our *life* to a Jewish Messiah, who bought it with His own blood.

But thanks be to God today, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”¹⁶

The unconditional love and forgiveness He has given to me, He wants to give to everyone who will turn to Him in simple trusting faith. Only as we *know Him* will we be able to *see ourselves* as we really are. Only then can He begin to change us into His likeness, from one degree of glory to another.¹⁷ It is not complicated to come to Jesus. It is man who has made it so, and for years I was part of the problem.

home.” (John 19:26, 27, brackets added).

¹²“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” (Romans 1:16).

¹³“But He answered and said, ‘I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’” (Matthew 15:24).

¹⁴“For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?” (Romans 11:24).

¹⁵Through the seed of Abraham, the Jewish bloodline was established (1) to receive and preserve the oracles of God, (2) to bring forth the Messiah and (3) to have a nucleus of that bloodline to proclaim and receive the gospel on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus.

¹⁶Galatians 3:28, 29.

¹⁷“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:18, RSV).

On occasion, the Lord will awaken me in the middle of the night. In most cases, the reason is for prayer or because He wants to teach me something. One of those occasions was in the early morning of April 19, 1997. At 2:30 A.M. I was awakened, lay in bed a few minutes -- was wide awake -- and couldn’t go back to sleep. I got up, put on my robe, picked up my bible, a yellow legal pad and pen and went into the living room. My recollection is, as soon as I sat down on the couch, the Lord began to bring to my attention scriptures on civil governments. Here are several that I considered that night and a few others I added to the list.

God destroyed the unbelievers (Jude 5) among the Israelites whom Moses led out of Egypt. They murmured and complained against God, and against Moses, whom *God had put in authority*, and died in the forty years’ wilderness experience. Forty years could have been shortened to a few weeks without unbelief *in God’s authority and the man He chose as leader*. Jude 6 records that *angels* who left their original abode to commit wickedness on the earth¹⁸ are “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.” Jude 7 refers to Sodom, Gomorrah and surrounding cities, given over to sexual immorality, who went after strange flesh, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. In Jude 8, the *angels*, and Sodomites who paid such a high price for their rebellion against God, are called “dreamers [who] defile the flesh, *reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries*.” Contrasted with such rebellion, Jude 9 records that Michael, the archangel, had such respect for God’s authority that he refused to bring a reviling accusation against the devil. I believe this was because of his original position, created and appointed by God as an anointed cherub, the most beautiful of His creation.¹⁹

The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Church in Rome wrote, “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed

¹⁸Read Genesis 6:1 - 6, for this account of angels rebelling against God’s authority.

¹⁹Read Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 for the account of Satan’s creation and fall.

by God.”²⁰

In Paul’s letter to Titus, He wrote, “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, *to speak evil of no one*, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.”²¹

The Apostle Peter writes of “those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness *and despise authority*. They are presumptuous, self-willed. *They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries.*”²²

Daniel wrote, “And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings.” “In order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever he will, and sets over it the lowest of men.”²³

Jesus said the power and authority of rulers comes from God.²⁴

In reading and thinking about these scriptures this time, I was *profoundly impressed by the Holy Spirit* that God has ordained order in the affairs of men, through the authority of civil governments and their representatives. Further, when man rebels against God in any area, most of the time (if not every time) there is also a disrespect for civil/governmental rule and authority. The citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah rejected authority and *spoke evil of dignitaries*, whereas the archangel Michael dared not revile Satan. The true danger in railing judgments against government and governing authorities is that it is *criticism of God*.

After I had read and considered some of these scriptures, I was *convicted by the Holy Spirit* that I had criticized President Clinton and said some things about him that I should not have said. I immediately got on my knees, repented, confessed my wrongs and asked for forgiveness. Then I began to pray for civil governments worldwide, for those who rule or reign as Monarchs, or as elective or appointive officials, and for all government employees, at every level, that law and order, peace, justice and tranquility might prevail *that the gospel might flow freely*. My prayer was specific

and detailed and covered all branches of government at the city, county, state and national level, on a worldwide basis.²⁵ After I had begun to pray that morning, naming the specific governmental agencies from the lowest to the highest level, it was as though the Holy Spirit stood in front of me as a cheerleader and shouted, “*Yes! Yes! That’s what I want you to do!*” You can imagine what effect that had on me. It gave me great faith in what I was led to do. My lesson and assignment was finished that morning about 5:00 A.M.

Concerning the politics of President Clinton and other politicians, here is what the Lord has shown me to do. *Pray for that person and do not criticize him!*

Jesus said, “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”²⁶ But thanks be to God, through His grace, repentance and confession will wipe the slate clean for believers.

People, families, neighborhoods, churches, cities, counties, states and nations are not brought closer to God by programs, but by prayer. To one who knows the Lord, the world should be our laboratory: When we see something that concerns us, prayer, instead of criticism, should be the answer. That is how we become salt and light.

It takes more faith
to wait and trust
than it does to ‘go and do.’
But waiting, Lord is difficult
and trust depends on You.
But waiting brings you back to Me
where faith can be renewed.
And trust is when I’m freed to work
My miracles in you.

²⁰Romans 13:1.

²¹Titus 3:1, 2 (italics added).

²²2 Peter 2:10 (italics added).

²³Daniel 2:21 (a); 4:17 (b).

²⁴John 19:11.

²⁵This was the Lord’s way of leading me into an international intercessory prayer ministry in my daily prayers. There are two other elements in my intercessory prayers which I will write about in a later letter.

²⁶Matthew 12:36, 37.