

Author's Preface

In 1832, a French scientist named Michel Eugène Chevreul discovered a curious compound in muscle tissue. He called it *creatine*.

Years later, creatine became one of the most researched and widely praised supplements in the world of fitness—proven to support muscle growth, enhance strength, and boost short bursts of energy.

But as with many good things, clarity gave way to confusion. Soon, everyone had an opinion:

- “It’ll ruin your kidneys!”
- “It turns to jelly if you stop taking it!”
- “You have to drink it with grape juice!”
- “It’s basically steroids in a scoop!”

Helpful science gave way to hype. Facts were buried under fear. And before long, misinformation spread like wildfire. Many people either misused the supplement—or avoided it entirely—simply because they were confused.

Well guess what? The same thing is now happening in the Church when it comes to demons and deliverance.

What was once a biblical category has become a buzzword. Real spiritual warfare has been crowded out by social media sensationalism. Every odd moment becomes “demonic.” Every struggle gets spiritualized. Every mood swing becomes a ministry opportunity for exorcism. The result? A Church not emboldened—but terrified.

That’s why I’m writing this book.

Because just like creatine needed a return to science, deliverance needs a return to Scripture. We need less hype—and more Bible. Less fear—and more faith. Less speculation—and more sound doctrine.

So we’re going back to the Word of God—not to deny the reality of demons, but to rediscover the power of the gospel.

And maybe, just maybe, we'll find that Jesus didn't just come to *forgive* us. He came to *free* us too.

Introduction: *A Generation in Need of Gospel-Centered Freedom*

In early 2023, a documentary was released called *Come Out in Jesus Name!* Its arrival stirred up a groundswell of emotion across many corners of the charismatic and Spirit-filled world. For many viewers, it was nothing short of electrifying—a cinematic call to arms, painting a vivid picture of modern-day deliverance from demons within the Church. The buzz was immediate. Testimonies flooded social media. Ministries sprang to life. And for many sincere believers, it sparked a new hunger for freedom.

But beneath the surface of that excitement, I found myself wrestling.

I believe in deliverance ministry. I believe in miracles. I believe in healing, power, authority, and the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit. In fact, I've participated firsthand in the kind of deliverance that bears lasting fruit. I've watched the bound set free, and the tormented find peace. I've seen tears dry and minds clear through the power of Jesus' name. These moments matter. But something about the message embedded in the film—and in the larger movement it represents—didn't sit quite right.

It wasn't the sincerity of those involved that troubled me. I don't doubt that many of them are genuinely trying to help people find freedom. Nor do I assume superiority in my own experience or theology. The issue wasn't *tone*, or even *style*. It was substance. It was the implication beneath the message that gave me pause.

Namely, this:

That Christians—born again, Spirit-filled believers—are just as vulnerable to demonization as unbelievers. That the Holy Spirit dwelling in a person is somehow not enough to keep them free. That demons enter the body of a believer as casually as a tick attaches itself to a dog. That a Christian must undergo deliverance again and again and again, sometimes weekly, often from the same “spirit,” as if the cross of Christ were powerless to seal and secure what it purchased.

That's not just a theological quirk. That's a dangerous drift.

This book is written in response to that troubling trend. Not as a polemic or hit piece. Not to tear down ministries or mock the move of God. But as a loving, pastoral appeal to come back to the center of our faith: the gospel of Jesus Christ.

My hope is to reframe the entire conversation around deliverance through the lens of biblical truth, New Testament identity, and the simplicity of gospel-centered discipleship. I want to show, from Scripture and sound reasoning, that deliverance is not a never-ending cycle of casting out, but a joyful entry into the finished work of Jesus.

So let me say what must be said, right here at the outset:

- Yes, someone who has been a Christian can become embattled.
- Yes, disciples can become entangled with demons.
- Yes, even sincere believers can become bound to sin and need deliverance.

In fact, at Riverview Church, we've walked people through real freedom. We've prayed. We've contended. We've laid on hands. And we've seen results—not manufactured emotion, but genuine transformation. And yet...

We also recognize that not every spiritual manifestation confirms the truth.

Just as *near-death experiences* can be vivid but misleading, so too can *deliverance experiences* be vividly powerful, yet shallow and misleading. A demon screaming on the floor doesn't prove a doctrine. A manifestation in Jesus' name does not automatically validate a method. Truth must be tested. Experiences must be filtered. And that's where many sincere believers are being led astray—not by evil intentions, but by unchecked assumptions.

Therefore, what I'm offering in the pages that follow is an invitation—not an argument. A pastoral conversation—not a fight. You may find some of these chapters challenging, especially if you've grown up in, or recently entered, a deliverance-heavy spiritual stream. But I urge you—don't turn away in offense. Don't shut the book out of fear. Instead, open your Bible. Open your heart. And open your mind to the possibility that the gospel really is more powerful than the strongest devil.

You see, when we place our faith in the finished work of Christ, we are stepping into something far greater than a technique or a conference experience. We are stepping into the protection of divine sonship. We are becoming a dwelling place for God's Spirit—a house that is not just swept clean, but permanently occupied.

In the end, this book was not written to minimize deliverance. It was written to *magnify the cross*. And that should be a good thing.

So grab your Bible. Set aside what you've seen and heard. Let Scripture—not just sensation—guide you. And let's go on a journey together to find a better answer to the question: Do Christians get demons the way dogs get ticks?

Because if not, we've got some serious rethinking to do.

Chapter One: *Does Jesus Protect Us?*

Let's start with the image that sparked the title of this book: the dog and the tick.

It's a pretty grotesque picture, isn't it? A dog runs through the woods, enjoying its freedom. Tongue out, tail wagging, no cares in the world. But before long—tiny parasites latch on. The dog doesn't feel it. The tick doesn't ask permission. It just finds a soft spot and burrows in. It works silently, patiently. And soon enough, that dog is infected. Diseased. Bound.

Now—here's the question:

Is that how demons work in the life of a believer? Not an unbeliever mind you. A Christian. Do demons latch onto Christians like ticks latch onto dogs—silent, sneaky, unavoidable? Because if that's true, it paints a very bleak picture. It suggests that no matter how sincere your faith, how real your baptism, how vibrant your worship—you're still one wrong thought, one emotional wound, one impulsive moment away from demonic infestation.

That's not just spiritually discouraging. It's a crisis of confidence in the gospel itself. And most troubling of all—it's *not what Scripture teaches*.

That kind of picture implies a gospel that can rescue us—but not secure us. That Jesus can forgive us—but not protect us. That salvation is a revolving door, and spiritual bondage is lurking around every corner of the Christian life. It's no wonder so many believers live in constant fear. They've been told they're walking through the woods of life, defenseless—waiting for the next spiritual parasite to burrow in.

But that is not the freedom Jesus died to give you.

Starting from Scratch

But before we say too much, let's rewind. Let's put all the TikToks, testimonies, conferences, podcasts, and personal experiences on pause. Let's rather pretend we're starting from scratch. What if we had never seen a deliverance before? What if we didn't even know what the word *deliverance* meant? What if our only source of truth was the Bible itself? What would we do to find clarity?

In answer: we would open the Bible. Not our assumptions. Not our instincts. Not our experiences. We'd open the Word of God—and we'd let Jesus be our teacher.

And so that's what we're going to do.

A House Left Empty

One of the biggest challenges in this conversation is that many people base their entire understanding of demons on what they've seen, not on what the Bible says. So when they come to Matthew 12, they read it through the lens of experience, not exegesis. They assume Jesus is describing the normal Christian life: a person gets free, but demons just keep coming back—over and over again—like spiritual pests that can't take a hint.

But is that really what Jesus is saying?

Or is something deeper going on?

Let's slow down and look carefully.

This passage is one of the most quoted scriptures in deliverance circles, but it's also one of the most misunderstood. Here's what Jesus actually says:

“When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.” Matthew 12:43–45 (NIV)

Now pause and notice what the text *doesn't* say:

- It doesn't say the demon had a right to return.
- It doesn't say the person was doing anything wrong.
- And it certainly doesn't say this person was filled with the Spirit of God.

Instead, the key detail is this: The house was unoccupied.

It was swept. It was clean. It was put in order. But it was empty And that's the difference between religious reformation and true spiritual regeneration.

Jesus is painting a spiritual picture using the metaphor of a house. And His warning is sobering. A person can undergo a kind of surface-level deliverance—their life looks better, their behavior improves, their emotions settle. But unless something greater has moved in, the condition may end up worse than it was before. Why? Because freedom without filling is fragile. Deliverance isn't just about getting the bad stuff out. It's about inviting the right Person in.

Indwelt, Not Just Delivered

That's why the presence of Jesus in the life of a believer changes everything. When a Christian is filled with the Holy Spirit, the house is no longer unoccupied. It has an Owner. It has a Protector. It has a King. And the security of that house is not just emotional—it's spiritual and legal. Jesus does not cohabitate with evil spirits.

Paul makes this point unmistakably in Romans 8:11:

"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." Romans 8:11 (ESV)

That's not poetry. That's a promise. That's the result of Christian living.

And this indwelling Spirit is not passive. He's not leasing the space month-to-month. You are not a duplex for two residents to live. Instead, Jesus has taken up permanent residence in you, Christian. That's what it means to be sealed with the Spirit:

"When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit." Ephesians 1:13 (NIV)

You see? Your "house" is not only swept—it's secured. The blood on the doorposts has spoken. The Deliverer now dwells inside.

That also explains why Jesus can say so emphatically:

"If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." John 8:36 (NIV)

That word “indeed” is no throwaway word. In the Greek, it carries the force of certainty and authenticity. Jesus is not offering a halfway freedom. He’s not saying “you’re free for now, but be careful—ticks are everywhere.”

He’s saying: You’re free for real. You’re free for good.

A Gospel of Freedom, Not Fear

And yet—it’s astonishing how many believers today live in fear. They’ve been saved. Baptized. Spirit-filled. They love Jesus. They read the Word. And still, they live in quiet, daily terror:

- “What if I picked up a demon last weekend?”
- “What if that nightmare was a sign?”
- “What if my sin opened a door I didn’t realize?”

To be clear: Yes, sin has consequences. Yes, there is a battle for our minds. Yes, the enemy prowls. We are not immune to temptation or deception.

But living in constant fear of demonization reveals a gospel gap. Somewhere along the way, we’ve stopped believing the words of Galatians 5:1:

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” Galatians 5:1 (NIV)

The gospel is not about managing demonic infestation. It’s about declaring emancipation. So if you’re still overwhelmed with demons, something needs to stop. Why?

Because deliverance is not just an event—it’s a byproduct of conversion. When the Son sets you free, the new occupant of the house is the Holy Spirit. And where He lives, the squatter has no claim.

That doesn’t mean Christians never need prayer, or help, or healing. It doesn’t mean we shouldn’t confess, repent, and resist the devil. But it does mean that we live from a place of secured freedom, not anxious warfare.

So What's the Takeaway?

Let's answer our opening question directly:

- “Do Christians get demons the way dogs get ticks?”

Not if Jesus lives in the house. Not if the Spirit of God has taken residence. Not if the cross truly did what it says it did. Because the gospel is not a halfway solution. It is full deliverance, full forgiveness, and full protection.

As we'll explore in the chapters ahead, the New Testament teaches a framework of freedom that honors both the seriousness of spiritual warfare and the sufficiency of Christ's victory.

But for now, let this truth wash over your soul:

- You do not need to fear.
- You need only believe.

Reflection and Application

1. What does “freedom in Christ” practically mean to you?
2. Have you ever lived in fear that a demon might enter you? Where did that fear come from?
3. What does Matthew 12 teach you about the importance of being “occupied” by Christ?
4. Take a moment to thank God for His Spirit living in you.
5. Ask Him to renew your confidence in His protection.