

“Afraid” by Robert H. Bennett

A look at demonic activity and exorcism through the only One who can defeat all demons.

1. The devil is the father of \_\_\_\_\_ . What would you say his kingdom is built upon?

John 8:44

Gen. 3:13

2 Cor. 11:14

Matt. 10:28

2. What is the only way to know God and His motivation toward us?

We derive our understanding from what God says.

[His love. His plans. His solution of justification]

“Outside the truth of Jesus’ sacrificial life and death for fallen humanity, only fear can exist.... God remains a hidden God, who seems to be unjust and unloving. He seems to be a God who acts inconsistently throughout history. Throughout time, such an understanding of God has resulted in a spirituality called animism” (p.10).

Without God’s revelation of himself, man will seek or fashion a “creator-god” that does not have a direct connection with the daily events of creation. “The animistic worldview finds a spiritual reality or essence, in many aspects of the world – seen and unseen – around them, whether plants, animals, objects or ‘phenomena’” (p.10).

The author suggests that America is moving away from a scientific approach and returning to the realm of spirituality. Popular topics or interests that are eventually considered a spiritual entity: ghosts, spirits, aliens from other planets, Bigfoot, or other strange creatures.

3. The book “Afraid” presents case studies that show the power of Jesus’ name attached to the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments.
  - 1) “Most spiritual and demonic problems can be alleviated through the simple act of individual Confession and Absolution” (p.12).
  - 2) Holy Baptism provides a great blessing. However, it results in becoming a target for the devil. Despite this paradox, we rely upon divine protection. The danger always exists (1 Peter 5:8-9), but we are not afraid because we bear the mark of our God and live with the promise of protection and the life He provides. Matt. 10:28; Luke 12:4-5.

- 3) Jesus is always spiritually present, but Holy Communion provides the concrete presence of Jesus through the body and blood that are truly present. This is where sacramental theology provides great comfort.

Satan cannot bear to remain where Jesus and His three gifts are. "God chooses how and when to apply the promises of His holy things. This is important to understand so that when you struggle with the devil, yet fail to receive instant relief, you don't fall into greater despair" (p.13-14). See 2 Cor.12:1-10 for a strong example of our need to trust and rely upon God's good and gracious will. All of us need to be reminded of the lifelong benefits of Baptism and the promise of forgiveness of sins, especially in the Lord's Supper. Jesus has promised to be in these things personally. This is reassuring, since Jesus is the only exorcist.

4. One story, but not isolated (p.19-23, 23-24 top, 25 para.1 – 26 para.1)

"The Lutheran Rite of Confession and Absolution empties the devil's arsenal of tricks by taking all of the requirements of Absolution away from the person hearing the Words of Absolution and placing them into the hands of the Savior. 'You are forgiven; go in peace.' This is the absolution that Jill needed to hear..." (p.26-27)

1 John 3:8

1 Peter 5:18

Ephesians 6:12

There is a danger of making prayer into an idol. See page 29 para. 1-2.

"After all the years of trying to face these spirits on her own, Jill finally recognized that she was powerless on her own. But she wasn't on her own: now she knew that God was with her" (p.31).

Matt. 12:29

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Jesus finally became the focus of her prayers as she spoke to Him and trusted His protection. "It all makes sense now. Jesus is with me, so I don't have to be afraid."

1 John 4:16-18

(Study questions are also included at the end of each chapter.)