# The Answer for Oppression



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## Acknowledgment

The book *Sermons from Luke* by Dr. C. M.

Ward influenced me in the preparation of this message.

*Sermons from Luke* may be ordered from Harrison House, P.O. Box 35035, Tulsa, OK

## Chapter 1

## How to Deal With Oppression

*And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.*

*And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.*

*And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.*

*And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the*

*sabbath day.*

*The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?*

*And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?*

—Luke 13:11-16

You can preach or teach about many things from this passage of Scripture. Brother Hagin teaches from it, and I have taught from it.

One author said that this woman had an *inside* problem and an *outside* problem. The Bible says she had "a spirit of infirmity." She was bowed over, which indicates that a paralytic condition was involved. "Infirmity" means feebleness. It can carry a connotation of something that's been shaken up—something that is faltering.

Many people are like this: They are walking around with a problem on the inside. They are faltering. Their soul has been shaken.

They say, "I can't. I've failed so miserably.

There's no use. I might as well quit. I might as well give up. I can't afford to face anybody. I can't face anything else because of the miserable mess I've made of things."

That gives the enemy a chance not only to afflict them on the *inside*— in their mind and emotions—but also to afflict them on the *outside*—to afflict the outward person.

We know that the Word of God teaches we are *spirit, soul,* and *body.* We also know that when the soul (or mind and emotions) is depressed, it shows up in the body.

When a person is down spiritually and mentally—when he is down in the soulish realm, thinking he is a miserable failure—it shows up in his outward countenance and in the way he functions and does his job. It usually tends to

lead him from one failure to another.

The devil, you see, is always trying to condemn us. But he can't condemn those of us who are Christians, because he has no authority to, according to Romans 8:1.

**ROMANS 8:1**

**1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. . . .**

The devil can and does accuse. He goes around whispering innuendoes and scandalous little remarks that, if we listen to them, become fearsome in themselves. But who listens to a donkey braying? Who listens to the wind blowing?

Who listens to outlandish statements? Nobody.

Well, what are you listening to the devil for?

He is a nobody! Let him make all the accusations he wants—what can he do? Nothing.

If we're not careful, when the devil begins to point his finger, we'll allow what he says to affect us. We'll begin to feel depressed, and then we will become a target for him to come in and harass us.

I'm going to show you how it works in the natural. Maybe the devil tells you you're a failure.

"Why, you're never going to make it. You're never going to amount to anything. You're nothing but a miserable failure," the devil tells you.

Those words cut like a knife, and the next thing you know, you're down. You're out. And you're not ever going to be a success.

Or the devil comes against you by attacking you with a disease. Then he'll come in and say,

"What makes you think that God's going to heal you? Why, you're such a

miserable failure! You're such a wreck! What makes you think that you could even go ask God to do anything for you?"

When children of God start listening to that junk, they do not receive what they need from God.

The woman with the spirit of infirmity had been bound for 18 years. The devil had been telling her, "Well, you're a child of Abraham, all right, and you belong to the special group—but *you* can't get healed. *You* can't get anything." Jesus defied Satan even on the Sabbath Day by healing her.

You see, the devil can come to us, but he can't *possess* us. He can *oppress* us—that's what I'm discussing here—but he can't cross the bloodline.

The way he oppresses us is by putting symptoms on us. He may get on our shoulder and begin to talk in our ear, but *we have the answer for oppression:* Acts 10:38.

**ACTS 10:38**

**38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing ALL that were OPPRESSED of the devil....**

If you're being oppressed mentally or physically, you are bound and you need to be loosed. The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is full of bound people who are being oppressed by the enemy to the point where they're not the success God wants them to be.

The enemy will go to any length to keep you from getting into a position where you can receive from God. He'll say, "You're a Christian now—yes, yes, you're a Christian, BUT...."

*Lying Symptoms*

I was reading an article recently about a minister who began to have symptoms of heart trouble. The enemy told him if he did not quit preaching, he was going to have a heart attack. He quit preaching. He had other people fill his pulpit.

His friends and family finally got him to go for a checkup. The doctors told him,

"There's nothing wrong with you. You have a strong heart."

But he kept saying, "Yes, there is. I'm going to have a heart attack if I get up and exert myself. I'm going to have a heart attack."

It reached the point where this pastor would hardly leave his easy chair. He had a thriving ministry; yet the enemy was oppressing him so much that he would say, "Well, I guess I'm going to have to leave the ministry and just sit here in a chair for the rest of my life, doing nothing, because I want to live as long as I can. I'm going to have a heart attack otherwise."

His doctors kept telling him, "There is nothing wrong with you. We don't care what the symptoms are. Your heart is perfect. It's been checked every way it can be checked. We've run every test we can run on you, and you're fine."

"No, I'm not," he would say. "I'm sick."

The enemy had him so depressed and so bound that he couldn't get loose in his spirit to get away from this situation.

You see, your adversary the devil is going about as a roaring lion, *"seeking whom he MAY devour"* (1 Peter 5:8). And if we'll allow him, he'll devour us. He'll chew us up, spit us out, and leave us wounded. Then he'll look up at God and laugh, saying, "See there? There they are! There are those people who are Your children!"

Remember, Satan is a liar and a deceiver. In a weak moment, he will come to you in all his cunning craftiness. He can persuade you of almost anything *if* you'll listen to him.

Many people are hurting. Many are bound.

Psychiatrists realize it. Psychologists realize it.

They know these people need to be loosed. The Church recognizes it, too. The Church knows that some of her people need to be set free, but she uses every kind of tactic possible to snap them out of it: indignation, scolding, harassment. Thus, the Church gets into legalism. In recent years there was the "holier-than-thou" attitude that said, "Well, bless God, if you had faith, you wouldn't be in this problem! Look at me!"

None of these "solutions" is going to work.

Why? Because *you need the anointing of the power of God to break the spirit of infirmity that has gotten hold of that individual.* Then the person can be released.

*The Power of Friendship*

I know what I'm talking about. Several years ago my wife and I went through a tremendous trial when our son Craig was diagnosed as having a brain tumor that required immediate surgery.

Even though you've preached faith and you know it in your heart, it is still a blow when you face adversities. The devil will take that low moment to confuse you and get you looking down every road except the one you should.

But when you have friends who know how to minister to you, it's a great help.

I will never forget the day Craig had been in the operating room for 12 hours. Afterwards he went into intensive care. We were allowed to spend the night in another room.

The next morning, Lynette arose and went in to be with Craig. After I had shaved and had gone in with Craig, Lynette went to get us some coffee.

I was sitting there with Craig in that intensive care unit reading a book *The Name of Jesus* by a fellow named Hagin when Lynette came back, tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Come here."

I walked outside, and there stood a minister friend and his wife.

I knew this man had two services to preach the next morning, which was Sunday. I knew he had a Sunday night service to preach, and I knew that after his Sunday night service he had a telecast.

Yet there he was. After we talked awhile, I said, "Well, are you just passing through?" (I thought maybe they were returning from a trip or were in Tulsa on business and had heard about Craig and decided to drop by.)

He said, "No, we just came to be with you. We wanted to come yesterday, but I had ministry engagements and couldn't be here."

They stayed from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. when they had to catch a flight home. Their being there ministered to my spirit more than anything else that had happened until that point. It began to lift me up. I began to see that my peers were interested in me. As he left, this brother prayed a prayer that ministered to me.

We can be down and out, hurting and oppressed by the enemy, until we wonder if anybody cares.

I was reading in a book the other day about a Pentecostal pastor whose wife was going through an operation. He was walking toward a waiting room near the operating room when he felt an arm around his shoulders. It was a Catholic priest. He said, "Reverend So-and-so, what can my parish and I do to help you?" They knew who he was in that city.

While sitting there waiting, this pastor got a telephone call from the rabbi of the local synagogue. He said, "I just wanted you to know, Reverend So-and-so, that at noon 10 of my men and I are meeting for a special prayer for your wife."

As he put that phone down, that pastor thought, *Where are my peers? These are people from the outside. Where are the people and pastors of the churches from my denomination?*

*Where are they in the hour of my need?* God took two people from another source to minister to him in his hour of need.

## Chapter 2

### Ministering in Love

We need to realize that just because somebody is in a prominent position, it doesn't mean that he can handle the job by himself when he's struck with the spirit of infirmity, or he is down and the enemy is playing havoc with his mind and body.

That's when he needs people to minister to him.

He doesn't need people to tell him what the Bible says—he already knows that! He needs somebody who can minister to him not by the letter of the Word, but by the love of the Word!

The thing I think we have missed in part of this charismatic Word revival is the love of God.

We have been so hard with the Word of God that we've left out the love of God. But I want to remind you that the Word and faith do not work unless we have the love (or compassion, if you want to use that word). For more on this subject, see my minibook entitled *Faith Worketh by Love.*

You need to realize that just because people sitting around you in a service are singing and maybe even praising God, you don't know what the enemy is feeding their mind. You don't know their situation. That person sitting next to you may be hurting and nobody knows about it. Your tapping him on the shoulder and saying, "We love you in Jesus" may minister to that individual more than you ever realize.

We need to minister with love, not just with the letter of the law. We don't need to preach,

"This is what the Word says. Get hold of the Word and you won't have all these problems." If you grasp this, you will receive great rewards as you minister to people with love.

*Reaching Out in Love*

Love has won more people to God and has ministered to more people than all preaching combined. Yes, you can talk about faith. You can quote Scriptures until you're blue in the face, but when you reach in your pocket, pull out some money, and give it to the man who is down and out, that ministers to him more than any word you could give him.

I'm not talking about going to the extreme and establishing a welfare program in every church; I'm talking about ministering with a heart of love!

I'm talking about reaching out with the hand of love to those who are in need.

**GALATIANS 6:10**

**10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.**

(That means those who are born again.) Many times as I'm walking around the campus and other places, I see a need. If I hear about a student who is in financial need, I don't turn in a prayer request; I go take up an offering, or I reach in my own pocket and pull out some money, shake their hand, and walk off. And then I don't go around telling everybody about it. That's the way you minister in love.

I don't go up to them, put my arm around them and say, "Hey, you've been in a faith class and you know it says God will supply your needs and, brother, we're believing and praying with you."

Let's get down where we live. Let's get down where the rubber meets the road, and let's put it together where it is. There are too many "faith walk" people (I prefer the term "Bible-believing Christians") going around telling everybody what they can have if they'll believe God—and they're believing God and heaping everything on themselves in a selfish way, leaving everybody on the outside, and it's not ministering to anybody.

*Setting Priorities*

I don't care how much you can believe God for. I don't care how many houses, lands, cars, and everything else you've got. That doesn't make any difference. Have you been ministering love?

I want to tell you, if you find yourself with a battery of doctors and the head radiologist looks at you and tells you your son has a brain tumor, you'll find out that houses and lands and money and cars and everything else don't mean anything! I would have given everything I owned at that moment to have Craig rid of that tumor. (It turned out the tumor was benign, probably a congenital thing that had been there for a number of years.) Things mean nothing. We "Word" people have gotten too involved with things, believing God for this, that, and something else.

*Thank God, that's part of the package—and I'm not going to turn my back on part of the package—but I think we need to get our priorities straight!*

My Dad has told me for years, "Son, get your priorities right. If you get your priorities right, then God will bless you." He said the number one priority in preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ—the number one priority in every Christian's life—is getting people born into the kingdom of God.

He said, "That's above everything." He said,

"People can go to heaven with sickness in their bodies, but they sure can't go to heaven if they've never been born again."

It's once you get people born again that you start telling them about the rest of the "package deal." You see, it's a package deal, but you've got to get the package unwrapped (get born again) before you can get to the goodies that are on the inside.

## Chapter 3

## Setting the Captives Free

There is a world full of hurting people, and they're not all outside of the Church; they're right in the Church. They need help. They need to be set free, and the power of God is available to set them free.

Some of you who are a little older may remember a man by the name of Stan Musial.

"Stan the Man" Musial was one of the great St. Louis Cardinals baseball stars. His statue stands in front of the Cardinal stadium in downtown St. Louis.

The year he was having his greatest season, Musial was leading the National League in just about every category you care to name: fielding percentage, batting—everything.

That same year, a fellow by the name of Del Rice, a catcher for the St. Louis Cardinals, was having his most miserable, most embarrassing season.

While honors were being bestowed upon Musial and crowds were packing stadiums everywhere to see this great ball player, Del Rice was another story. The hometown fans could hardly stand him.

They couldn't understand why he was wallowing in all these slumps. They couldn't understand why he wasn't throwing anybody out anymore. Only a few people knew of his private sorrow that summer. His wife lay dying of cancer.

He had become so frustrated that as he stood behind the plate, looking out through the catcher's mask, he couldn't see second base; all he could see was his sick, dying wife. He couldn't concentrate on the batter and tell the pitcher what pitch to throw. His mind was filled with the fact that his darling wife was dying.

His frustration grew. All of his life, he had been able to take charge of any situation. Now death was advancing, and he couldn't throw it out.

His salary wasn't large. Medical expenses were taking it all.

He and his wife had had to move to an inexpensive row house. One terrible night after he had given his wife an injection for pain and she had dropped off to sleep, Rice pushed the front door open and collapsed on the steps of that rented row house. He put his head in his hands. There was no hope. It was all over. His life was a mess, and his career was going downhill because of what was happening in his private life.

Bent over, with his head in his hands, quietly sobbing, he felt an arm around his shoulders.

He thought, *Who could that be? Is it the policeman on the beat?*

He looked up, and to his utter amazement, there was Stan Musial sitting beside him. He exclaimed, "Musial—what are you doing here?"

Musial looked at him and said, "I just thought you needed a friend."

He said, "Musial, what are you doing down on this side of town? Everywhere you go, there's fanfare. You've got money. You've got everything going for you. What are you doing sitting here with a fellow like me?"

Musial replied, "You need a friend."

*Your All-Knowing Friend*

I want to tell you, there's another Star who has come. He's come to sit down beside you, and He's putting His arms around you right now.

He didn't come to patronize you or sympathize with you. *He came to deliver you and set you free!*

You see, Jesus knows all about your troubles.

There's not a friend like this Jesus. No, not one.

No, not one.

Jesus knows where you've been. He knows how the enemy has lied to you. He knows how you've been pressed down and kicked. He knows how the enemy has crushed your body with disease.

He knows all of your mistakes. He knows all of the criticism that has come your way. Jesus knows that you have been bound by depression and disease and sin and sickness. He knows that the adversary has taken advantage of you.

He's calling to you right now, just as He called the woman with the spirit of infirmity to Him in the synagogue. He's saying, "Come here. Come to Me."

And for every enemy to hear, for every imp of hell, for every demon of the deep, for the devil himself, that great adversary, Jesus is shouting,

"Ought not this man, ought not this woman, ought not this child, ought not this young person be loosed from their bonds and their infirmities?"

And the answer is shouted back from heaven,

*"YES, they should be loosed, because God has anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, and everywhere He goes, He is healing all who are oppressed of the devil!"*

Jesus took that same power He was given when He ascended on High and sent it back down here to the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in the form of the Holy Spirit.

That same cry is ringing out right now, "Ought not *you* be set free from whatever binds you?" And the answer comes ringing back, "Yes! Yes!"

Just as Jesus said to the crippled woman, *"Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity,* "

He's saying to you right now—whoever you are— *"Be thou set free! YOU ARE*

*LOOSED FROM YOUR INFIRMITY BECAUSE I H A V E DELIVERED YOU!"*

**A Sinner's Prayer to Receive Jesus as Savior**

Dear Heavenly Father,

I come to You in the Name of Jesus.

Your Word says, *"... him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"* (John 6:37). So I know You won't cast me out, but You take me in. And I thank You for it.

You said in Your Word, *"... if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, THOU SHALT BE SAVED.... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"*

(Rom. 10:9,13). I believe in my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I believe He was raised from the dead for my justification.

I am calling upon His Name—the Name of Jesus—so I know, Father, that You save me now.

Your Word says, *"... with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"* (Rom. 10:10). I do believe with my heart, and I confess Jesus now as my Lord.

Therefore I am saved!

Thank You, Father!

Signed _____

Date _____

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