

## **BLESSINGS ALWAYS**

June 15, 2022

Association Minister Message

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*DELIVERANCE.* “As Jesus stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him.” (Luke 8:27). The news today could certainly cause us to be pessimistic. Even in places that we consider safe places, violence has erupted in our homes, churches, schools and neighborhoods. Our most vulnerable in our midst are being abused by family. We are in prisons of doubt, loneliness and bullying that make us less than what God would intend us to be. We have more people in judicial confinement than at any other time in our national history. Our “internet age” has caused us to become sideline observers rather than developing personal relationships of care and concern. The pandemic and internet has restricted personal contacts. Our narcissistic society becomes concern for the I, me, and myself. Our families and communities are not relational as they should be. We have become so busy with tasks that we don’t take the time, as the saying goes, to “smell the roses” or know who our neighbors are. We are hurting and we need comfort, realizing that we cannot be alone and that we need to be connected to God and a family. We desire to be part of the faith community where forgiveness and love affirms that each person is created in the image of God and are children of God.

Is the devil real or a figment of our imaginations? We face many devils/demons in our lives, especially those that make us ashamed or unworthy to be known as God’s beloved children. Luke, the detailed gospel writer, comments how powerful demons are. Ask anyone today who has a drug addiction or gambling problem or has fears of inadequacies, or have habitual habits that make them not wanted in society. There are demons of hatreds, injustice, bullying, abuse, putdowns, and not caring. We face many legions of demons that control us, confusing our minds, bodies and spirits.

The Gospel story is more than about demons: it is a story of *DELIVERANCE*. The change is from insignificance to affirmation, from exclusion to recognition, from limitations to hospitality. The story is about love, forgiveness, compassion and acceptance. It is about being given the power of second chances, and in the gospel the man is welcomed back into the community and his family. God’s *DELIVERANCE* changes all things and makes them new. You are precious, you know, for God said so through Jesus Christ. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS*.