

Lovingly Possessed

17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

- Ephesians 3:17-19 (NKJV)

There have been several horror movies to flash across the big screen, specifically designed to make one's skin crawl; displaying the tormented life or lives of humans, who have become infected or possessed by something against their will. My personal favorite movie in this category is World War Z, which is a 2013, intelligently told, action, horror story of a zombie apocalypse, and humanity's desperate efforts to survive in the midst of a fast-moving global pandemic . . . of the undead. (spoiler alert) Within 12 seconds of being bitten by a zombie, the body of a once caring father for example, would contort itself in gruesome fashion, eyes glossing over, before setting sights on, and aggressively attacking their own family or anyone nearby, furthering the spread of zombies, and overrunning entire cities in a matter of minutes! Whether infected or possessed, the idea of one's mind and body not being within one's control, does not sound like a desirable experience to seek after. However, if we stop and truly read the words of Galatians 2:20, Paul clearly states that having been crucified in Christ, he no longer lives, but rather Christ lives in him! So at the time of Paul's writing, he declared that he is no longer living, but clearly . . . since he was *writing*, was not dead either.

Did Paul just describe himself as being one of the undead?

Now before you dismiss this as an analogy taken too far, consider Paul's writing in Romans 8:9-11, where he describes this paradoxical life as his body being dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. He explains the condition of being dead to this world of sin, but being alive, *only* under one condition! The Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells within, and therefore gives life to our mortal bodies. Putting 2+2 together, being POSSESSED by the Spirit of Christ, we become the undead in Christ! Sounds like that gift of everlasting life spoken about in John 3:16!

Horror movies have done much to taint this idea of being POSSESSED; but let's be clear, even the Bible describes many horrific accounts of persons being POSSESSED by demonic spirits. Most notoriously, the man from the land of Gadarenes, living naked among the tombs, bound with chains and shackles, being POSSESSED by legions of demons. (Luke 8:26) If we as children of God are called to be POSSESSED, the issue is not possession, but rather, what or who is possessing us. To be POSSESSED by demons, zombies, or anything of this world would be quite concerning. In contrast, to be POSSESSED by the Spirit of Christ is a

loving possession as described in Ephesians 3:17-19. Christ dwelling in our hearts through faith, allows us to be rooted and grounded in love! To be filled with all the fullness of God and to know the love of Christ goes beyond all knowledge and understanding; but Paul bowed his knees in prayer to God that we would, among many things, be able to comprehend the width and length and depth and height of God's love! Our Heavenly Father's love for us is so expansive and endless; how could we not share this love with others.

In Acts 17:1-7, Paul, Silas, and a great multitude in their efforts to share the Gospel of Christ with others, in verse 6 are described as "these who have turned the world upside down". The POSSESSED zombies of World War Z turned the world upside down through their ferocious, bite-spreading attacks. We too have been called to be POSSESSED and turn the world upside down through our love-spreading life in Christ. Rooted and grounded in love, anyone who tastes the fruit from our tree, also has an opportunity to be infected and POSSESSED by God's love.

Have you been LOVINGLY POSSESSED by the Spirit of Christ? Are others being affected or infected by your POSSESSED life? This is not a horror movie. This is life in Christ!