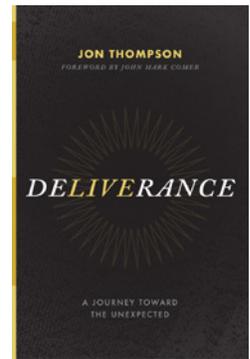


DELIVERANCE

A Journey Toward The Unexpected

by: Jon Thompson



I N T R O D U C T I O N

Within much of the church, the conversation about the influence of demons has been dismissed, ignored, and exaggerated but rarely understood. Many Christians and non-Christians experience the presence of evil but do not have the categories to evaluate the experience, let alone be set free from their presence. No longer can these situations be located only overseas or reduced to certain ethnic groups with certain religious experiences. The truth is, this has always been around us but now, because of massive paradigm shifts, these experiences can be more easily talked about and engaged with. They are seemingly found in all areas of life regardless of education, ethnicity, or geographical location.

We live in a post-Christian, de-Christian, postsocial, postmodern (yet modern), multicultural, radically globalized, fully mobile, highly personal world. One of the great paradoxes of life today is an ever-increasing level of connectedness, paralleled by increasing levels of fracturing. Social media offers the hope of bringing us all together but is often the instrument for tearing us apart. The long held assumption that an increased awareness of diversity would easily lead to understanding and unity now seems to be morphing culture into something reminiscent of the ominous situation described at the end of the book of Judges: “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit” (Judges 21:25).

I happen to live just outside of Toronto, Canada—one of the most global cities on earth. The fourth largest city in North America, it’s rated as one of the top five most multicultural cities in the world, with over 150-300 languages spoken every day. It’s an amazing place to live. Our city can be seen as a microcosm of the world and we are trying to grow the church right in the middle of it.

Here in Canada, as in much of the West, Christians find themselves more and more at the edge of society, not the center. Along with marginalization, we now experience increased hostility and intolerance toward expressions of a Christian worldview. And more, with all the nations of the world here, Toronto is deeply religious, deeply spiritual, and deeply secular all at once. The need to deal with the kingdom of darkness in all directions is now a must. As you read this, you will hear from our journey of trying to deal with evil with the good news of Jesus to many people in multiple directions.

This book will provide the background and outline of the hybrid matrix of deliverance we use at Sanctus Church, which has assisted the pastoral leadership and our people in dealing with this growing and/or rediscovered phenomenon. This process has not only helped people come to faith in Jesus Christ, but to also be set free as they journey with Christ. Simply put, this is a snapshot of where we are today in our journey. Do we have all the answers? No, but these chapters outline who we were, where we are, and where we are going. In addition, this is a systematic explanation for this type of ministry. Our current practices are outlined biblically, historically, logically, and from experience.

If you are a pastor or church leader, it's important you understand that we don't consider our experience unique and unrepeatable or the exact template of how God must work in deliverance. We are convinced the biblical principles found here will apply anywhere, but local and time factors will shape your expressions. I believe you will find much of what we have done helpful, even our mistakes will show you what not to do. But there are significant time and faithfulness factors that you can't ignore without generating problems. We've been at this now for almost two decades. If we had known everything we know today back then and expected to "plug and play" a deliverance ministry into an unsuspecting local church, things would have blown up. These things take time. Sometimes, mistakes are actually necessary tools God uses to shape us. Faithfulness is not a spiritual sprint; it's a marathon.

I would be very glad if you come to the end of this book with a clearer picture of where to start and a vision for where you want to eventually get to, rather than expecting to implement a full-blown deliverance ministry right out of the gate with followers of Jesus for whom this may well be a whole new experience. I can almost guarantee chaos.

Here's my prayer for all of us:

*Lord, deliver us from easy answers, packaged programs, and systems that minimize our desperate need for You to be involved every step of the way—even when (and especially when) we are actually doing it right!
Jesus, You have promised to build Your church Your way. Help us do whatever we must do to let You do that!
In Your name I pray, Amen!*



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