

## Why Is Evil 'Live' Spelled Backwards?

*“Evil is opposition to life. It is that which opposes the life force. It has in short to do with killing, killing that is not required for biological survival . . . Evil is also that which kills the spirit.” (M. Scott Peck)*

Maybe you found yourself with a sick feeling on April 20 when the news broke about the massacre of students that took place in Colorado. Our prayers and hearts go out to the families who have been devastated by this tragedy. It causes us all to pause and re-think what life is all about.

The first question raised by the reporters was “Why?” Thousands of theories are presented ranging from the children deserved to be killed because they teased the outcasts to it must have been the parents’ fault. As of my knowledge none of the newscasts has invited a clergyman to see what he would say.

I re-visited the Harvard-trained psychiatrist M. Scott Peck’s book, *People of the Lie*. It is a revealing look at the destructive presence of demons and is consistent with Orthodox patristic literature. (Bishop Chrysostomos)

Dr. Peck writes about his witnessing of two exorcisms. During these episodes, Dr. Peck discovered things about Satan that the Church has always known.  
*Possessions do not happen by accident.*

Dr. Peck writes, “Possession seems to be a gradual process in which the person repeatedly sells out for one reason or another. The primary reason both these patients sold out seemed to be loneliness. Each was terribly lonely, and each, early in the process, adopted the demonic as a kind of imaginary companion.”

*Why do demonic spirits have such an attachment to bodies?*

Satan has no power except in a human body. Although the demons threaten to kill, they can do nothing unless they have a body through which they can exert influence. When a body believes in the lie, the Devil gains entrance.

The only power that Satan has is through human belief in its lies. Both patients became possessed because they bought its false seductive promise of “friendship.” . . . And the possession was ended when both chose to believe its lies no longer but to transcend their fear by trust in the resurrected Christ and to pray to the God of Truth for deliverance. (Scott Peck)

The best definition of Satan is that he is the father of lies. In his interview of the demons, Dr. Peck lists the lies that repeatedly came from the possessed persons.

- Humans must defend themselves in order to survive and cannot rely on anything other than themselves in their defense.
- Everything is explainable in terms of positive and negative energy.
- There is no mystery in the world.
- Love is a thought and has no objective reality.
- Science is whatever one chooses to call science.
- Death is the absolute end to life – there is no more.
- All humans are motivated primarily by money, and if this appears not to be the case, it is only because they are hypocrites.
- To compete for money is the only intelligent way to live.

Once a person sells out to these thoughts, horrendous acts of irrational evil become possible. When the lies become one's reality, they are given power to destroy life.

*You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)*

The Church has just celebrated the resurrection of Christ and His victory over Satan. How are we to understand the victory of Christ in light of evil's continued presence in the world?

*Abba Dorotheos once sent his disciple to take water from the well. Just as the disciple bent down to take up the water, he saw within the well a huge poisonous snake.*

*Excitedly, he dropped his pail and ran to the elder.*

*"Abba, we are done for! Our water is poisoned. I found a viper in the well!"*

*"And if the devil decides to throw vipers in all the wells, will you then die of thirst?" the elder asked, shaking his head at the cowardice of his disciple.*

*Afterwards, the elder went to the well and pulled up a bucket of water for himself. He made the sign of the cross and drank first, afterwards giving some to his disciple.*

*"Where the Cross is," he said, "the evil of the enemy cannot reside." (Bishop Chrysostomos, Demonology and the Church)*

We know from the writings of the Fathers that anyone who pursues a life of virtue will be entering into spiritual warfare with the devil. (Eph 6:12) Dr. Peck remarks that the two possessed persons each had a quality of piety about them. Indeed, those who struggle to climb from one stage of glory to the next become objects of the Devil's hatred.

*"If you cultivate prayer, be ready for the attacks of the demons and endure them resolutely; for they will come to you like wild beasts and maltreat your whole body . . ."*  
(Evagrius the Solitary)

And from St. Theognostos:

*“Be watchful at all times because of the ungodly demons that surround us, always plotting to disgrace us . . .the enemy attacks us when he perceives that our soul aspires to scale the great heights of virtue. . . The hater of mankind tries us with such malice that we despair even of our life.”*

May the children’s memories be eternal.

+ Fr. Andrew