

Germs / Spirits

Carol: Good morning Tammy! It's so warm today, isn't it?

Tammy: Hi Carol. It certainly is. That's why I brought us some yogurt... to help make us feel cool.

Carol: Oh wow. I could do with some. It looks lovely. Have you put some fruit in it?

Tammy: Yes ...I had some apples and bananas at home so I chopped them up to put in. The yogurt is homemade by the way.

Carol: Oh really? I know that we can buy yogurt or curd as some people call it – plain or with fruit in it. But how did you make yours? Mm...this is delicious.

Welcome to *Women of Hope*. I wish we could share this lovely yoghurt that Tammy made with you. But as we can't, let's ask her how she made it...

Tammy: It's quite simple actually. I boil the milk (whatever amount I want to make into yoghurt) and let it cool until it's lukewarm. Then I add a teaspoon of curd from the last lot (this is the starter) and mix it. I leave it overnight. In the morning I have a container of nice firm yoghurt. I love it and so does my family - we eat it often.

Carol: What if you're just starting out and you don't have any from the last lot?

Tammy: You'll have to buy a small container of plain yoghurt – not one with any flavor or fruit added.

Carol: The fruits add to the flavor don't they! Does it always take about 8 hours to make?

Tammy: The time that milk takes to curdle varies. In hot weather, it would take less than six hours while in cold weather it could take up to 16 hours.

Carol: What actually happens to turn the milk into yoghurt - or curd?

Tammy: Well, curd contains tiny germs called *lactic acid bacteria*. When it's added to milk, the bacteria react with the protein and curdle the milk.

Carol: The bacteria are good germs I presume?

Tammy: Of course. Curd or yogurt contains plenty of good germs and is one of the healthiest and simplest of foods. Lots of people make their own curd in some countries...like India. It's been an important food in Asia, the Middle East and South Eastern Europe since the ancient times. And the best part is that those who eat yogurt every day are likely to be healthy and live a long life.

Carol: So it's a kind of *super* food...

Tammy: Yes it is. And do you know that it can be used as a medicine too... It can help to cure stomach disorders and problems with the intestines – the ‘gut’. It can be used like an ointment to help with vaginal itching or soreness and can help reduce high blood pressure. And it contains calcium to help strengthen bones.

And so, if we can make it at home, there’s nothing like it. Perhaps you already make curd at home? When we come back, we’ll talk about good *and bad* germs...

Carol: This is *Women of Hope* and we’ve been talking about germs...the good germs that turn milk into curd or yoghurt.

Tammy: If there are good germs, then there have to be bad germs too. But first, what exactly are germs?

Carol: Germs are tiny organisms or living things. They can only be seen through a microscope. They live everywhere and they are so tiny they can creep into your body without being noticed. When they get into our bodies we might begin to feel symptoms that say we’ve been attacked. While the good germs help us, the bad germs make us sick and cause disease.

Tammy: Are there many types of germs?

Carol: Well, there are four major types of germs and they can invade plants, animals and people. The first, called bacteria, get their nutrients from the plant, animal or person they live on. Some of the infections they can cause are sore throats, ear infections, cavities in the teeth and pneumonia.

Tammy: Oh my... But some bacteria are good aren’t they, like the one that makes our yogurt?

Carol: Yes... Some bacteria are good for our bodies. They help keep things in balance. Good bacteria live in our intestines and help us use the nutrients in the food we eat and make waste from what’s left over. We couldn’t make the most of a healthy meal without these important helper germs. Some live in our mouth and skin and help protect us.

Tammy: What is the second type of germ?

Carol: The second, called viruses, live inside living creatures. They need this environment to survive or grow. When they get inside a person, they spread and cause diseases such as chicken pox, measles, flu and so on.

Tammy: Scary isn’t it... But I understand that some of these are used by scientists to make vaccines too aren’t they?

Carol: Yes they are.

Tammy: So they can also protect us from getting these diseases.

Carol: That's right... And the third major type of germ is the fungi. These are tiny plant organisms. These germs cannot make their own food. They live on living things and get their nutrients off them. So... fungi love damp and warm places. The itchiness that people get between their toes is caused by fungi.

Tammy: That is quite common isn't it?

Carol: Yes... that's right. But there is one kind of good fungi that many of us use to make bread and wine.

Tammy: I know what that is - yeast. If you make bread with yeast you would know that it needs to be in a warm moist place for the yeast to grow and make the bread dough rise. And yeast also helps ferment alcoholic drinks. What's the fourth one Carol?

Carol: The fourth major type of germ has a long name...protozoa. These germs also love moisture. They spread disease through water.

Tammy: Aha...so they are the ones we have to be careful about in our water!

Carol: Yes... Some protozoa cause infections in the intestine that lead to diarrhea, nausea and belly pain. That's why we have to make sure the water we drink is clean.

Tammy: Let me see if I understand this correctly. Germs...the bad ones... invade our bodies and snuggle in for a long stay. Then they gobble up our nutrients and energy and produce toxins which are like poison. This poison causes infections such as fever, rashes, coughing, vomiting and diarrhea. Is that right?

Carol: Yes...you've put that well.

Tammy: Now we've just been talking about germs invading our bodies... But how do doctors figure out which germs are causing the problem?

Carol: Well they take a closer look. They look at samples of blood and other fluids and look at them under a microscope. With that they can tell which germs are living in your body and how they are making you sick. That's how they know which medicine to prescribe.

Tammy: That's great – but how can we protect ourselves from germs so that we don't get sick?

Carol: Many germs are spread through the air in sneezes and coughs. Germs can also spread in sweat, saliva and blood too. Some pass from person to person by touch...like shaking hands with someone who has a cold and then touching your own nose.

Tammy: So the best way to protect yourself from germs is to try to stay away from anyone who is coughing and sneezing, and try not to touch things that they have been touching.

Carol: Yes and we should cover our own nose and mouth when we sneeze and cough to keep from spreading germs to others. Use a tissue if you can, then throw it in the bin.

Tammy: Some germs can live for a while on things like door handles can't they?

Carol: That's right...so when we clean the house we should always wipe the door handles and the bench tops. And no matter what kind of germs they are, making sure we wash our hands often will always help to protect us against diseases.

Tammy: There are two things germs fear...soap and water. So washing your hands well and often is the best way to beat these tiny warriors.

Carol: Oh yes...before we eat or prepare meals...after we use the toilet...and after we touch animals and pets. Children need to be told to wash hands after they play outside. And...we need to wash our hands after we visit a sick relative or friend. As mothers we need to make sure that our families do this.... It will go a long way to protect them from disease.

We've been talking about a world of invisible creatures that are too small to see. Some do us good...some can make us really sick.

Tammy: And there is another kind of world that generally we can't see...the spiritual world. We talked a while ago about God creating the whole universe, including the earth, the plants, animals and people? Then we learned how people chose to disobey God; and there, in that story, was the evil one in the form of a snake. If you heard that story, did you wonder...‘So where did *he* come from?’

Carol: Well yes...we would wonder... Because as well as things we see and touch, there is a world of spiritual beings. They are called by different names in different cultures and people have different beliefs about them, but most people understand that there is more than what we can see.

I know many people are afraid of spirits and do all sorts of things to avoid being hurt by them. Others may call this superstition, but the fear is very real whether there is real physical danger or not.

Do you believe in spirits? Whether you do or don't, you can learn today what the Bible says about them.

Tammy: I've been studying the Bible, God's true word, to see what it says about the world of spirits. I'd like to share what I found...

First, where did these spiritual beings come from? The Bible says that the invisible God created all things by and through Jesus Christ, who is his visible image...the one who came and lived on this earth. Listen to these words: ‘For by him (that is, Jesus) all things were created: things *in heaven and*

on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created through him and for him' (Col. 1:16).

Carol: So that would include all the angels and spirits, because it says 'all things in heaven and earth', and it specially mentions the invisible world.

Tammy: Yes. In fact, all the spirits were created good and holy, made by God who is good and holy.

Carol: So are they eternal, like God?

Tammy: No. They had a beginning. Only God is eternal. (1 Tim. 6:16) But at least some of them seem to have very long lives. They were there before our earth was made, and it says that they sang for joy at the creation of the visible world (Job 38:7).

Carol: But something must have happened, because the first humans met an *evil* spirit who was God's enemy. What happened?

Tammy: The Bible doesn't say exactly. But it suggests that one beautiful, powerful angel called Satan became proud and rebelled against God (1 Tim. 3:6). He tried to overthrow God, and many other angels followed him (Matt 25:41). Ever since then Satan has been the enemy of God and the enemy of humans (Matt 13:39). The name Satan means 'enemy'. He is also called the devil, or the evil one (Rev 12:9). His followers are often called evil spirits, devils or demons.
(Translators- add names that would be understood by your people)

Carol: So some of the angels chose to fight against God. How strange!

Tammy: That's right, and so God threw them out of heaven. They can't hurt God directly, so they try to hurt humans, who God loves. They try to get us to rebel against God too. Remember how Satan lied to Eve and Adam in the Garden of Eden? The Bible calls him a cunning snake who deceived the whole world (Rev 12:9); it also says the devil is like a roaring lion going about looking for someone to kill and eat (1 Peter 5:8).

Carol: That sounds frightening. Are these evil spirits stronger than us? Are they stronger than *God*?

Tammy: To answer those questions, I think I will tell you a story from the Bible. This is a true story about Jesus, from Luke chapter 8 (and Mark ch 5).

Jesus had been teaching and healing the people. He and his followers crossed over the lake of Galilee in a small boat to a place on the east shore called Gadara.

As soon as Jesus stepped ashore, a wild-looking naked man rushed up to him. This man lived in caves at the burial ground, and no-one could control him. Often he had been chained up, but he was so strong that he broke the chains. He would scream and cut himself with stones. This was because he had evil spirits controlling him.

Jesus started saying ‘ Evil spirit, come out of him!’ The man fell down in front of him and screamed ‘ Jesus, Son of the Most High God! What do you want with me? For God’s sake, I beg you, don’t punish me!’

So Jesus ordered him, ‘Tell me your name!’

The man answered ‘My name is *Mob* – there are many of us! We beg you, don’t send us into the pit. Let us go into those pigs over there.’ You see, there was a herd of pigs nearby, grazing on a hillside. So Jesus let them, and the spirits all rushed out of the man and into the pigs! But this drove the pigs wild, and they rushed down the hill into the lake, and were drowned.

The pig herders ran to the town and told what had happened. A crowd of curious people came to see. They were amazed by what they saw. Now the ‘wild man’ was washed, dressed and sane...sitting calmly at Jesus’ feet. He begged Jesus, ‘Let me go with you.’ But Jesus had another job for him. ‘No,’ he said, ‘go back home and tell about the great things God has done for you.’

Carol: Did you notice what the spirits called Jesus? They said ‘ Jesus, Son of the Most High God!’ They knew who he was, and they knew he had power over them. Can you imagine what a change there was in this man’s life?!

If Jesus is your Master, you have his Holy Spirit in you, and he is able to defeat any evil spirit. The Bible tells people who believe in Jesus that we are to resist the devil and he will run away from us (James 4:7) - but we can only resist him in the power of God. They will not respect us but they know that Jesus has power and authority, so we must stand up to them in Jesus’ name.

Tammy: I heard about a small boy who said to his mother, ‘When Satan comes and knocks at my door, I don’t answer it. I just ask Jesus to go to the door instead.’ He was a wise child, wasn’t he?

If you listen to Satan and turn away from God, you allow the enemy to trick you and defeat you. Instead, call on God to help you and tell Satan to go away, in the name and power of Jesus. You don’t need to fear evil spirits if you put your trust in God.

Here is an ancient poem from the Bible, Psalm 148. Can you read it, Carol?

Carol: Sure Tammy. It starts...

Praise the Lord...
Praise the Lord from heaven,
Praise him in the heights above.
Praise him, all his angels,
All his heavenly armies.
Praise him sun and moon;
Praise him, shining stars.
Praise him, highest heavens,

And the waters above the sky.
Let them all praise the name of the Lord!
God commanded, and they were created;
By his command they were fixed in their places for ever.

Tammy: When this poem was written, people thought that the sun, moon, stars and water were powerful spirits, and some people still do. But the writer says that they were made by God and must stay where he put them. All created beings were made to praise and serve God.

But we have a choice, just like the angels who rebelled. You can make a choice too... Do you want to follow Jesus? Do you want his power to work in you? If you do, you can pray to him. Ask him to set you free from the fear of spirits and from their control. Ask him to be your master, to save you and be your friend and guide through life. And then you will not need to fear the spirits if you trust in God.

Carol: Before we finish today I have a true story to tell you about a man who was very afraid of evil spirits...

This man and his family had charms and other objects in their house, above the door of the house, and at the entrance to the village, to try to satisfy the spirits or to warn them to go away. They would offer sacrifices of fruit or chickens to try to protect themselves or to make sure that they had good harvests. It cost a lot of money and their food and animals, and they were still afraid most of the time.

Some people came to live in their village. They talked with them and learned about the fears that ruled their lives. Soon, they told them the good news that Jesus was stronger than the evil spirits. Some of the people believed, and burnt or destroyed their charms and other objects.

This man was almost convinced, but not quite. For a whole year he kept a charm in his shoe, just in case Jesus was not strong enough to overcome the spirits.

Finally, one day, he was convinced so he took the charm out of his shoe and burnt it. How happy he was, now that he didn't have to worry about satisfying the spirits. He could trust Jesus with his whole life.

Our friend still had problems sometimes...and his crops didn't always produce good fruit...but he knew that Jesus was his master and friend and would always be with him. He didn't need to spend his money and give up his food and animals to satisfy the spirits. He started to tell others about his new freedom, and traveled to other villages to tell the people there as well.

Tammy: Thanks Carol – that's a really great story. He must have felt very free, after feeling so afraid before.

Carol: It's time for us to go now. If you want to contact us you can do so at TWRWomenofHope@twr.org. You can listen to the program again at TWRWomenofHope.org. You might want to ask a question, or tell us your story. Or you can visit our Facebook page. God bless you – we'll be with you again soon.

Tammy: Bye for now.

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