

# ***PARTICIPATING IN CHRIST'S MINISTRY***



## ***Luke 11:14-26***

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- A. Jesus has authority over the evil one (Luke 11:17-19)  
Spiritual Principle #1 "A House Divided Falls"
- B. Jesus is stronger than the enemy (Luke 11:20-22)  
Spiritual Principle #2 "The Stronger Wins"
- C. We must side with Jesus (Luke 11:23-26)  
Spiritual Principle #3 "Choose Sides"

Most of us don't understand the authority of Christ Jesus very well. We have decaying cities, growing crime and hurt people - and we just stay on the side lines trying to have an easy life. Something is wrong. How can we who have the light not shine!? If Jesus responded like we do, then He would never have gone to Jerusalem except as a tourist. I'm sure He could have kept His father's carpentry business going without any trouble. Family, friends.... A place to live. What more could he have wanted? But we all know that instead of taking the easy route, Jesus chose to contest the enemy. He chose to fight instead of rest. We see money or entertainment when we see the city. When Jesus saw the city, He wept (Lu 19:41).

What is it that makes us, His disciples, so uninvolved? Why do we consume most of our time and wealth on caring for our earthly needs and desires? I think the reason is very clear. We have been fooled by the evil one to believe that we can't do anything about the world's situation. We feel that our best plan is to become friends with the world. If they like what they see, then they will ask us about Jesus. Jesus did not use this method. Can we as His disciples? We have lost His daring lifestyle because we have lost His vision. Well, what is this lie? It goes something like this: Jesus is a great Savior; He has helped me out (true so far). But Jesus doesn't really work in this world today, at least not like before. He rules in heaven not on the earth. This is a glaring lie that disarms many of God's soldiers. As a result of this lie, many Christian soldiers have gone to early retirement. They don't fight anymore.

So where do we find Jesus in these verses? Luke 11:14 says He was casting out a demon. Because it was dumb, when it left the man, the man formerly dumb could now speak. A man who was formerly unable to talk was all of a sudden able to talk. The people were just astounded. This was no trick. Somehow the demon's presence affected the control of this man's voice box. We don't know how the demon was able to do this except that he did. When the demon was cast out, the man could and did speak.

### **We find three responses to which Jesus later addresses with an illustration.**

- 1) Many people believed what they saw and heard. They were convinced. But there were some that did not believe. They separate into two groups. No one denied the miracle happening but instead undermined Jesus by questioning how Jesus did it.
- 2) They suggested Jesus casted out this demon out by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons. This is the same one as Satan or the evil one as seen in verse 18.
- 3) Thirdly others demanded of Him a sign from heaven. What I find most interesting is the word 'demanding.' They insisted upon it. Perhaps they did it by saying, "If you really are sent from God, then show a sign in the heavens, then we will believe." The scriptures used the word "test" to describe what these people were doing. They were testing Jesus so to find cause of accusation.

I don't know how you would respond, but I would guess that if you had such powers that you would, like me, be tempted to show them off and teach them a lesson. Jesus didn't do this. I think the reason was that Jesus really understood their hearts. A miracle, even a great heavenly miracle, cannot convince the unbelieving heart. They cannot accept the truth for it reveals their sinful heart (John 3:20-21). The unbeliever without the work of God's Spirit in his heart is desperate to find a lie to back up his reason for unbelief. Jesus refused to show them a sign but instead taught them the truth for the truth can set a person free.

Luke 11:14-26 challenges us to gain a fresh view of Jesus' authority. With this new understanding of who Jesus is, perhaps we can gain a greater willingness to stop thinking the gospel is irrelevant to the world's problems for His authority has not changed. And by God's grace, we might be more ready to do God's good will. Let's now look at the first illustration

## **A. Jesus' Authority Over The Evil One (Luke 11:17-19)**

### *Spiritual Principle #1 "A House Divided Falls"*

Jesus firstly addresses the group which questioned His authority. Jesus knew what they were thinking (11:17) and so exposed their lies with an illustration. The illustration is actually a true principle operating in the seen and unseen worlds. Listen to Jesus' words, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house [divided] against itself falls. 18 And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebub."

The spiritual principle is very simple. If a kingdom or authority of any kind becomes divided against itself, then it will fall. A power is strong because it controls what is under its power. But when the forces that are under His control begin to oppose him, then we see a great collapse of the house. "A house divided by itself falls."

Let's just think what this means on different levels. Medically we see it all over for the anti-immune system at times begins to counter the bodily system it was designed to protect. Politically this is so. Just think of what happens when a civil war strikes. It can only hurt. To win you must kill your own people. Every country fears the traitor for they represent a force within the ranks that counters the country.

This is true for the home too. God's principle between husband and wife is that the two become one. This is not popular in America where everyone gets a vote and since there are two parents it is often a tie and the situation gets very hot. Who wins? The one who shouts the loudest and longest wins. But the cost of the victory is severe. Hearts are torn. Relationships are broken. They might work along each other but not "with." The Lord's plan is that the 2 are 1 and therefore with one heart and mind the couple works. Where the wife disagrees, she must give in to the head. This is her glory to give in to her will for the support of her husband. She doesn't always agree with her husband's ways, but always find it her duty to support him.

This is true with the church too. If we begin to allow division in our ranks, then we are in the process of being destroyed. If the evil one desires to restrain our expansion, don't you think he will use this very principle to try to destroy us. He will raise up some in our own midst who are thinking more of themselves than the purpose the Lord has for the church. You wonder how he does this? There are many examples in the Bible. Let's quickly look at a few:

*I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is [really] not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1: 6).*

In summary, let me list the 3 kinds of troubles churches face from the book of I John.

- Those who say they are of the truth but do not believe the Word of God but teach falsehoods.
- Those who say they belong to God, but do not live holy lives as God desires His people to live.
- Those who say they are the true people of God, but do not love the people of God.

Jesus proves by principle that he has not gained his authority to cast out the demon by the evil one named Beelzebub. For if Beelzebub works against himself, then he has fallen. But if not by him, who else has this power and authority? This is Jesus powerful conclusion in verse 20. He is logically proving to them that it is God who has given Him this authority to cast out demons and in this case heal a dumb man. "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Luke 11:20).

Instead of being some other force or power, they are forced to come to the conclusion which Jesus draws, that Jesus' work is proof that the kingdom of God is in their midst. God is doing something wonderful.

### **Application**

We need to remember that Jesus' does indeed have power over the evil one. We might give up certain areas of the city or areas of our lives but still He is Lord. Jesus is claiming to have authority against our chief enemy. He has authority against the one who skillfully builds up his empire of depression and darkness. Is it right, is it moral, for Christians to think this authority does not apply to our world today? I think not. We need to confess how we have not believed His authority. We have believed a lie about Jesus ministry being antiquated to the days of old. It is time for His people to act.

## **B. Jesus is stronger than the enemy (Luke 11:20-22)**

### *Spiritual Principle #2 "The Stronger Wins"*

Jesus has already pointed out and shown us His true identity and authority. Before Jesus goes on and personally challenges us, He shows us another spiritual principle showing that He is stronger than the enemy forces. Some people treat Jesus as a person who doesn't understand the real world. This passage should dispel this thought. Actually, Jesus is teaching us how the real world works. The real world, by the way, includes the visible world and the invisible world which we call the spiritual world.

Here he addresses the third group who demanded a sign from heaven. Jesus is clearly trying to convince us that He is stronger than our worst enemies and greater than all our fears. Luke 11:21-22 says:

*"When a strong [man,] fully armed, guards his own homestead, his possessions are undisturbed; but when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied, and distributes his plunder."*

The strong is strong as long as he protects his home and possessions. He perhaps has hired some guards. He jealously protects what he considers his. As long as no one touches what he claims as his, he is considered strong.

But what happens if someone comes by and overpowers this same man. He was considered strong before but not anymore because he has been overcome by one with more power. And what happens when the stronger comes?

- The home becomes his; the possessions become his.
- The stronger takes possessions of the one who was considered strong.
- Even his protection, his armor and missiles and tanks (if modernized) would be taken.

Now let's look at the situation. Before you had a strong man. Now he is considered weak. He has lost what was his and now it has been added onto the one who is stronger. No way can that stronger one be overcome now. The point is clear. The kingdom of God is here. Jesus is greater than the stronger one. It is evident that His power is stronger because He has taken the possessions of the other. The man became free to talk. He doesn't need to do any more miracles. His miracles already prove that He is greater than the strong man. We should recognize the facts that the Lord is stronger. And if Jesus has already proved Himself stronger by casting out a demon, then He doesn't have to do a miraculous sign from heaven to prove His power. He has already done the miracle. Why haven't we believed it?

### **Applications**

We must realize that the Lord is more powerful. He is not just more ideally more authoritative, but has already shown His power to be sufficient to hinder the works of the evil one. We must learn that Jesus is alive and rules now through His church. We think that the world has to be this way until the end. This is the wrong way to think about the world. Is not love stronger than hate? Does not His peace surpass the world's worst circumstances.

The question is not whether Jesus Christ still is stronger than the enemy. Jesus clearly has all authority and power. The question is why the church is hedging about and not willing to believe that He is stronger than the evil about us. Clearly we must affirm Jesus is Lord of heaven and the earth as the scriptures attest (Mat 28:18). Clearly we must stop asking if but what next. Jesus has conquered the evil one's possessions. The evil one is very limited. He has shown us how to do it in Acts. Now we must finish up with the job.

## **C. We must side with Jesus (Luke 11:23–26)**

### *Spiritual Principle #3 “Choose Sides”*

Jesus uses one more illustration to teach us an important life principle. Jesus focuses on the group that did believe. Discipleship allows no neutral stance. Vacillation is deceptive. If we are not with Jesus, then we are against Him. If we do not affirm and do His will, then we are working against His ways. If we are not gathering with Jesus, then we are scattering. Think of a harvest. If you are not bringing things in to use and store up, then one is wasting and making it useless.

In the illustration we find that Jesus is talking about an unclean spirit or a demon. He might be chased away by some higher authority, just like this dumb man that the evil spirit left. The evil spirit left. But you know how hard it is to leave home and settle down elsewhere. Well, this unclean spirit was just the same. He wondered about finding a place as good as his last and thought that he would see if just by chance that one who cast him forth was gone. If he finds an empty nest, then it is only more open to occupy and seize. And so taking some other evil spirits with him, they enter the man and he is much worse off than before.

### **Application**

Jesus was warning people about the importance of following Jesus and not just get things from Him. It is inadequate just to discover the things He has to give you and not become fully committed to His cause. You might get healing. You might be protected in a certain situation, but if you do not give your self up and follow Jesus, then it will be worse for you. Some people want to see miracles and healings. They want to be fed by the bread that Jesus multiplied. But they don't want to submit to Jesus Christ. They want to have the things that Jesus offers such as His love and provisions. They like to have the friends that he has. They like to share in the joyous attitude that Jesus brings to His people. But they don't want to fully identify with Him. I warn you. Jesus has shown that He has powers greater than the evil one. We need to devote ourselves not to what we can get but to His full cause.

## **Conclusion**

We do not need any more signs to establish Jesus' authority. If He could do these things before His resurrection, why do we doubt He can do them now as needed?! But even for those who believe, many of you still resist to go to prayer meeting. You don't want to get active in God's work. Why is it that you refuse to gather with Jesus. Are you so busy with your own life, that you cannot put a little time aside for the kingdom of God? Is it possible that instead of gathering with Jesus that you have been scattering? Now is the time for our church to arise and take hold of the purpose God has called us. Two things Jesus asks from His disciples: 1) Side with Him and 2) gather with Him.

The Lord wants to work through you to further bring His grace and favor to your neighbor and friends.