

Luke 11C

- Having completed our miniseries on prayer during the first two weeks in Luke, we're now ready to move on to one of the most pivotal moments in Luke's gospel
 - I've been alluding to the significance of this chapter for sometime, and now that we've arrived here, we need to develop a number of issues from Luke's gospel and from elsewhere scripture
 - In fact, let's begin with a simple recap of where Jesus is and where he's going
 - Jesus is moving steadily toward Jerusalem, having spoken of his coming death and ascension in Jerusalem in Chapter 9
 - And yet in Chapter 10 He sent his disciples out proclaiming the Kingdom of God and calling the nation of Israel to repent and receive their Messiah
 - So it seems clear that while Jesus anticipated His rejection and His death, He was not hesitating to give the nation opportunity to receive their Messiah and the promise of the Kingdom
- And of course along the way to the cross, Jesus is still preparing His disciples for the work that lays before them
 - Which is why we have lessons like those that began this chapter, where Jesus takes time to answer questions on prayer or teaching them about true righteousness or to heal

[Luke 11:14](#) ¶ And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute; when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed.

[Luke 11:15](#) But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."

[Luke 11:16](#) Others, to test *Him*, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven.

[Luke 11:17](#) But He knew their thoughts and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house *divided* against itself falls.

[Luke 11:18](#) "If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.

[Luke 11:19](#) "And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges.

[Luke 11:20](#) "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

- As we study this important exchange between Jesus and the Pharisees, we must spend time studying this same account in Matthew as well
 - Because Matthew accounts offers some important additional detail, and Matthew's account places the event in a more likely sequence with the other events of Jesus ministry
- Before we look at Matt, let's consider what we see presented here
 - Jesus comes upon a man indwelt by a mute demon
 - Demons inhabit the body and use the vocal chords of the person
 - This demon had chosen to remain mute, meaning either the man himself could not speak or the demon merely refused to speak
 - In Israel, casting out demons was not unheard of
 - God had long given men the ability at times to cast out demons
 - You see evidence of that fact in these verse, where in verse 19 Jesus refers to the sons of the Pharisees casting out demons
 - You also see a reference to Jewish exorcists in Acts 19
- But removing a demon had a very specific process according to how God had made it possible
 - But a demon could be removed, the person performing the exorcism must first learn the name of the demon
 - Then once he knew the name, he could cast out the demon by name
 - You see examples of Jesus following this pattern in many cases where He cast out demons
 - Remember when Jesus met the demon-possessed man in the tombs and learns the name of the demon is Legion
 - But what if the man was mute or the demon refused to speak?
 - This created a dilemma for the exorcist, because without the name of the demon, no one could remove him
 - Example:

[Mark 9:17](#) And one of the crowd answered Him, “Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute;

[Mark 9:18](#) and whenever it seizes him, it slams him *to the ground* and he foams *at the mouth*, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not *do it*.”

- Being mute, the boy’s demon could not be removed by the disciples’ power
- Then Jesus cures the boy and the disciples ask Jesus how He did it

[Mark 9:25](#) When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.”

[Mark 9:26](#) After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and *the boy* became so much like a corpse that most *of them* said, “He is dead!”

[Mark 9:27](#) But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up.

[Mark 9:28](#) When He came into *the house*, His disciples *began* questioning Him privately, “Why could we not drive it out?”

[Mark 9:29](#) And He said to them, “This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.”

- Based on what we already studied concerning prayer, then you should know why it is that prayer alone can heal this boy
 - Because only God Himself has the power to remove a mute demon, since this is a power that God has reserved for Himself
 - He granted men the power to remove demons under certain circumstances, but He withheld it under these circumstances
 - And the reason God withheld it directly relates to the coming of the Messiah, as we are studying in Luke today
- Returning to Luke, we now have enough background to begin to make sense of the importance of this exchange
 - As we have learned, the ability to cast out a mute demon was something that the Jewish culture had long associated with God Himself
 - So Jewish tradition concerning the Messiah had taught that one of the signs of the Messiah was that He would have the power to cast out a mute demon, since it would be a miracle only God could do
 - Now look at the exchange in Luke

- In verse 14, Jesus cast out a mute demon and the crowds are amazed
 - Their amazement stems from the fact that this is one of those Messiah miracles
 - But as the crowds stands amazed at Jesus, some in the crowd scoff and declare that this just proves Jesus is the devil himself
- We can see this exchange a little more clearly by paging over to Matt 12

[Matt. 12:22](#) ¶ Then a demon-possessed man *who was* blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.

[Matt. 12:23](#) All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, “This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?”

[Matt. 12:24](#) But when the Pharisees heard *this*, they said, “This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.”

- Here, we learn two important additional details
 - First, the crowd makes an important exclamation in response to watching Jesus perform this miracle
 - They exclaim “This can’t be the Son of David, can it?”
 - The term Son of David is a Messianic reference, a term for Christ common in Jewish teaching concerning the Messiah

[Is. 9:6](#) For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

[Is. 9:7](#) There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace,
On the throne of David and over his kingdom,
To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness
From then on and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

[Matt. 9:27](#) ¶ As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”

- The crowd is asking out loud, is this itinerant preacher from Nazareth truly the Christ? The Son of David?

- And they are asking because Jesus doesn't fit their expectation for what the Messiah should be and how He will arrive
 - They wanted a conquering, military leader like David
 - They wanted a powerful, delivering prophet like Moses
 - They wanted rich and powerful world ruler like Solomon
 - They didn't see Jesus as fitting any model they assumed God would use to bring salvation and deliverance
- Perhaps more importantly, they hadn't been expecting God's salvation to take the form of a spiritual salvation
 - Rather they were looking for a material, earthly rescue
 - From the oppression of the Romans
 - From the oppression of their illnesses and their poverty
 - From the lowly circumstances of the Nation of Israel when compared to all the other nations of the earth
- So when Jesus came declaring the coming of His kingdom, He did so with an expectation that men would first repent and receive on the basis of faith
 - And then having come to Him in faith, then He would usher in His kingdom and with it all the material blessing they expected
 - But the people of Jesus day had reverse this formula
 - They wanted to see proof of Jesus' power
 - They wanted signs and evidence of his deity and strength to fulfill scripture
 - In verse 16 of Luke we're told that others in the crowd were asking Him for a sign – they were testing Him looking for Him to satisfy their demands for proof
 - And until He was willing to demonstrate His power, they would withhold their approval and allegiance
 - And people today are still following that same pattern
 - For too many, the promises offered in the gospel aren't believable

- They demand proof before faith – but that requirement nullifies faith
 - By definition, faith is a conviction of things unseen
 - Being certain about the unprovable, about something that's yet to be revealed
 - That's why faith must be something of the heart, not the mind –
 - We don't weigh the facts, study the arguments, sift through the proof, and then come to an intellectual decision that the gospel is true
 - We may study scripture and recognize how it supports our faith
 - We might see how history, science and archeology and other support or enhance our understanding of our faith
 - But in all cases, faith comes first or it isn't faith at all
 - That's why the crowd said what they did upon seeing the miracle
 - They didn't say Behold, the Son of Man
 - They didn't say, this must be the Son of Man
 - They didn't even say, "This could be the Son of Man."
 - No, they said, this can't be the Son of Man, can it?
 - The sad thing here is they knew what to look for
 - They sign had done it's work, they had received what they were looking for
 - But when it came, they denied it
- The second thing we see in Matthew's account is the reaction of the Pharisees
 - Remember, these were the religious leaders of the day determined to undermine Jesus' credibility

- They were desperate to diminish Jesus in the minds of the people and to explain away anything Jesus did that seemed to support His claims
- So when Jesus performs a miracle unique to the Messiah, they are forced to explain it away some how
 - This is not new for them...earlier in Matt we see a similar experience

[Matt. 9:32](#) ¶ As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him.

[Matt. 9:33](#) After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, *and were* saying, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.”

[Matt. 9:34](#) But the Pharisees were saying, “He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.”

- Just as here in Chap 12 of Matt and Chap 11 of Luke, Jesus proves Himself through this unique miracle,
 - The crowd exclaims that this is unprecedented
 - No one in Israel has ever cast out mute demons before
 - But apparently, the Pharisees had taken to accusing Jesus of simply being demon-possessed Himself
 - Their argument was that since no mere man could cast out a mute demon...that only left the conclusion that Jesus was God
 - Not being willing to admit that conclusion, the Pharisees concoct this unique explanation
 - Jesus is Satan and therefore Satan can command his own army to do his bidding
 - Therefore, Jesus was able to cast out a demon because the demons obey their leader, Satan
- It’s important to understand what’s happening here
 - Scripture is teaching us a fundamental truth about our response to the deity of Christ
 - As the Pharisees come face to face with the recognition that Jesus was God Himself, they react by denying that revelation

- And furthermore, they declare that the signs prove that Jesus is the enemy
 - They had already been maligning Jesus the man on many occasions
 - But now they had moved to a new level and were declaring that the signs Jesus was performing were the work of the enemy
- But whose work were they?
 - Who was performing these miraculous works through Jesus?
 - As we've said in the past, Jesus having taken the form of man became reliant on the Holy Spirit for all his supernatural power
 - We've already seen in Luke's Gospel that Jesus was led by the Spirit, directed by the Spirit, comforted by the Spirit, anointed by the Spirit and empowered by the Spirit
 - We've Jesus unable to perform miracles in Nazareth because the Spirit was not inclined to respond to a faithless people who demanded proof of Jesus' claims
- So when the Pharisees declare that the signs they've been given are not proof that Jesus is the Messiah,
 - But rather it is the work of Satan,
 - These religious leaders are not only maligning Jesus, they have begun to malign the Holy Spirit
 - And by association, God's revelation by the work of the Spirit
- The Gospel message is offensive by its nature
 - When someone is confronted by the clear, undeniable power of God
 - Whether through the Word of God or through the lives of His people or through our circumstances, God can use many ways to bring us face to face with the truth
 - And when someone decides to reject that revelation, to deny Christ, they aren't merely a neutral observer

- I think we sometimes think there are those who are adamantly for Jesus (Christians), those who are adamantly oppose to Jesus (atheists, Christian haters, etc.)
- And then there are those who are neutral or undecided
- Scripture doesn't support this conclusion
- We'll see that more clearly here in a minute, but look at the Pharisees for a moment
 - They saw clear evidence of who Jesus was, and they rejected it
 - But it wasn't enough to reject Him, they had to ensure that others saw things the same way
 - They were determined to oppose Jesus in everyway possible
 - They were Jesus enemy and they had become an ally of THE enemy, Satan
- So look at how Jesus begins His response to their claims
 - In Luke 11 verse 17, Jesus begins by stating that any kingdom divided against itself will fall
 - The motto of Kentucky is United we stand, divided we fall
 - It expresses a simple idea
 - That when any single entity is made from smaller parts, those parts must work together toward a common goal
 - If one part of the whole is set against another part, it will tear itself apart and will never function successfully
 - This is especially true when that entity is engaged in battle against a common enemy
 - You can never be successful against an enemy if you are too busy fighting among yourselves
 - Jesus responds to the ridiculous comment from the Pharisees by reminding them that if He were Satan, it would have been the height of foolishness to go around defeating the very demons who work for Satan

- Jesus was clearly opposing the demons through his work, so it was nonsense to claim that his power to oppose demons came from the chief demon
 - Satan would never work against himself
- Then Jesus turns the attack back on the Pharisees
 - In verse 19, He says to the Pharisees that the sons of Israel are busy casting out demons too
 - With this comment, Jesus points out the Pharisees' double standard
 - Jesus is saying that if the Pharisees are willing to claim that Satan grants men the power to chase away demonic forces, then what power did their sons use to cast out demons
 - If Jesus' power came from Satan, then perhaps their sons got power from Satan too
 - But then Jesus makes point for the crowd in verse 20
- Jesus states the obvious conclusion that if you see a man doing things that only the finger of God can do, then you have only one conclusion left to make
 - That man is the Christ and His arrival means the kingdom of God has come to earth
 - The kingdom: meaning the promised kingdom that the Jews were looking and waiting for
 - And yet in the face of that clear, unmistakable conclusion, the crowd rejects Jesus and sides with the Pharisees
- Then Jesus says this:

[Luke 11:21](#) "When a strong *man*, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed.

[Luke 11:22](#) "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.

[Luke 11:23](#) "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.

- In this parable, Jesus illustrates how wrong the Pharisees are

- In fact, the circumstances of the moment argue for exactly the opposite conclusion from the one the Pharisees proposed
 - Jesus tells the crowd that when a strong man guards his treasure, he does so with his full might
 - He is not going to easily relinquish the very things he values
- Only when someone stronger comes along and removes his armor will he be forced to give up his treasure
 - And from that simple story Jesus expects His audience to draw the obvious conclusion
 - Satan is a strong man in this world
 - He has certain power and ability
 - And his treasure are the souls of the lost
 - And when one of his demons takes possession of a lost soul and indwells a body, he will not give it up easily
 - He will only be willing to give up his treasure if forced by One who is stronger
- Jesus forced the enemy to depart a body, but that demon leaves reluctantly and only because Jesus as God has infinitely more power than the enemy
 - So Jesus' parable goes beyond merely illustrating the absurdity of the Pharisee's claims
 - It also teaches that there is a war underway, and everyone is on one side or another – there is no neutral ground
- Jesus says in verse 23 that if you are either for Jesus or against Him
 - I've often said there are only two kinds of people in the world
 - From God's perspective, there are not different nations, there are not different religions, there are not different denominations
 - There are only those who are with Jesus
 - Those who believe His claims

- Those who have faith in His word
- Those who trust in Him
- And there are those who are against Him
 - Those who call Him a liar
 - Those who deny His claims
 - Those who ignore His call to repentance
 - Those who are like their father, the devil
 - Those who are the enemy's treasure
- Next week we celebrate Easter, our 3rd Easter together in our third facility
 - And as we approach Resurrection Sunday, I can't think of a better time to ask this question...which side are you on this morning?