

## Christ's Lesson About Satan's Kingdom.

Text: Luke 11:14-28

1) In What Satan's Kingdom Consists

Suggested Hymns:

2) How His Kingdom Is Overcome

502, 530, 384, 265, 161

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 11:14–28, <sup>14</sup> *And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled.* <sup>15</sup> *But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."* <sup>16</sup> *Others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven.*

<sup>17</sup> *But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls. <sup>18</sup> If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub. <sup>19</sup> And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.*

<sup>20</sup> *But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. <sup>21</sup> When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. <sup>22</sup> But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.*

<sup>23</sup> *He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters. <sup>24</sup> "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'* <sup>25</sup> *And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. <sup>26</sup> Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first."*

<sup>27</sup> *And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore*

***You, and the breasts which nursed You!”<sup>28</sup> But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” (NKJV)***

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

In last Sunday’s Gospel<sup>1</sup> we were informed that Jesus cast a demon out of the Syrophenician woman’s daughter, and today again we are told, ***14 And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke.***

To believe in the actual existence of demons or evil spirits is now looked upon as a remnant of old superstitions of bygone days by those who claim to be progressing with the times.

However, they themselves use such phrases as, “*In the devil’s name,*” and the like, and these phrases seem to indicate that they must be believing in the actual existence of the devil after all. But let any one say to them that he believes in the existence of a personal devil, and he is very apt to be laughed at and called a fool.

Now we must admit that in times past, and especially during the reign of the papacy in the days of Luther, the most absurd stories were circulated designed to frighten people, telling how the devil appeared with hooves and horns, and what he had done.

The most cruel punishments were inflicted upon those people who were suspected of having some secret communication with the devil. Such people were horribly tortured to extort from them a confession of their guilt. They were required to undergo tests to prove their innocence. Many an innocent person was put to death.

All of this was an abuse of the doctrine of the Scriptures concerning the devil. It was contrary to the Scriptures. But are we to cast away this doctrine, because it was, and still is being abused? Are we to deny the very existence of Satan because so much superstition clusters around his name? Certainly not!

The Scripture is the divine truth. The Scripture is just as true in what it says of the devil as it is in what it says of God. And does not the Scripture contain a

complete history of the devil, of his origin, his works, his intentions, and his final doom?

This Sunday's Gospel<sup>2</sup> also treats of the works of Satan. After the Lord Jesus had cast out a demon from the man who was mute, we are told that *the multitudes marveled.* <sup>15</sup> *But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."* <sup>16</sup> *Others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven.*

From this Christ takes the opportunity to talk about the kingdom of Satan. Let us therefore consider with the Help of God's Holy Spirit, *Christ's Lesson about Satan's Kingdom.* May the Lord bless our meditation.

### 1. In What Satan's Kingdom Consists

Christ says, *Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls.* <sup>18</sup> *If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub.* <sup>19</sup> *And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.*

<sup>20</sup> *But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.* <sup>21</sup> *When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.* <sup>22</sup> *But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.*

From these words of our Saviour we clearly see that there is such a thing as the kingdom of Satan, that there are palaces which he inhabits, and that there is an armour in which he trusts.

And what is Satan's kingdom? His kingdom is this world. His palace is the human heart. His armour are all those things which Satan makes use of to establish or keep his supremacy in the human heart.

The whole world is Satan's kingdom. He is, therefore, called the prince or ruler of this world, the god of this world. He did not create the world, neither does he preserve and govern the world; but it was Satan who brought about the present deplorable state of the world.

He corrupted the world. He seduced man to sin and thereby introduced sin, and woe, and misery, and death; and he established a kingdom of his own in God's beautiful creation. All people are born sinners and, therefore, born subjects of Satan in his kingdom.

Had God not had compassion on the fallen human race, not a soul would be saved, but all people would have to remain in Satan's kingdom and share with him his terrible doom of eternal damnation.

But God did have mercy on us. He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to live and suffer and die for us, and thereby destroy the works of the devil.

Whoever is baptised in Jesus' name is no more a subject in Satan's kingdom, even though he is still in the world, which is Satan's kingdom. God is his Father, Jesus is his King, and Satan has no claim upon him.

Alas! many people who were baptised do not remain in their baptismal grace. They lose the faith, lead a godless life, and let Satan rule over them again. Hence Satan's throne is established even in Christian lands.

The heathen lands with their people, and the remnants of the Jewish people who are scattered over the whole world, are the strongholds of Satan, which he holds by ignorance and superstition, so that rarely a soul escapes.

But even in the midst of Christendom there are millions of palaces, millions of human hearts that are occupied by the ruler of this world. Not only does Satan hold in his clutches those who are outspoken unbelievers and enemies of the divine truth, but even many of those who claim to be Christians are his loyal subjects.

For what does Christ say in our Gospel? He says, "<sup>23</sup>*He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.*" What does that mean?

In the context in which it is said, it means this. Not only those people who claim to be neutral, and neither to hold to Jesus, nor to Satan, are against Jesus and, therefore, are Satan's servants, but also those people who do not gather with Jesus, such as those who do not work with Him, and are not in a true union with Him, even though they claim to be Christians, are Satan's subjects.

Oh, Satan is a cunning spirit. He does not demand of his subjects to worship him openly. He permits them to go by the name of God's servants, and is perfectly satisfied, if they will only do his works.

Whoever indulges in some sin and nourishes and cherishes that sin and cannot make up his mind to rid himself of that sin with the power of God, his heart is Satan's residence and palace, even if he appears to be a good Christian outwardly before the world.

A heart given to immorality is Satan's domain. The drunkard's heart is Satan's possession. Hearts that are continually possessed with pride, arrogance, conceitedness, hatred, enmity, or any such sinful emotions, are the devil's palaces. For these are the weapons and the armour, by which he keeps his own.

In short, where sin is not being resisted, where sin is permitted to prevail and to hold its sway in the heart, there Satan's kingdom is established. Drunkards will sometimes make an effort to keep sober, and even swear never to touch another drop of strong drink, but their appetite is so strong that they cannot keep themselves under control.

Sensualists will sometimes make a desperate effort to lead a chaste and decent life, but the next temptation gets the best of them.

People given to lies and falsehoods will sometimes make up their minds to be truthful and sincere, but before they are aware another falsehood crosses their lips. Where is this irresistible power of sin? It is because the power which holds them in bonds and fetters is more than human. It is diabolic. Satan has possession of such hearts.

And not only those people who Satan has bound with his chains and fetters live in open sin and shame, but also many of those who lead an honest and upright life before men. Sometimes his fetters are so hidden and concealed as to make it impossible for man to detect them.

When we hear some person cursing, and swearing, and using filthy language, or when we see some one performing an extremely wicked deed, we may justly form an opinion that the hearts of such people must be palaces of Satan.

But the evil spirit does not dwell exclusively in the hearts of the grossly immoral and profane and in the slums of sin and vice. Sometimes he has even a

stronger hold upon the self-righteous and upon those who are highly educated and appear to be beyond reproach.

Satan has his dominion not only in the hearts of the illiterate and ignorant, sometimes his kingdom is even more firmly established in the hearts of the educated who disseminate errors and do this, perhaps, even in the name of divine truth.

## **2. How His Kingdom Is Overcome.**

And now, in the second place, having heard wherein Satan's kingdom consists, let us consider how his kingdom is overcome. Christ says, <sup>21</sup> *When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.* <sup>22</sup> *But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.*

Here Christ tells us that, when Satan dwells in man's heart, he is there as a strong man armed, and he will remain and keep his own, except one stronger than he come upon him and overcome the evil spirit. But who is stronger than Satan? No mortal man. No mortal man can by his own natural power break Satan's fetters and rid himself of Satan's dominion. Satan is too strong for him.

Sometimes it seems as if by his own will power a person could overcome Satan and his destructive work. Drunkards, and immoral people will sometimes abandon those evil practices in which previously they had indulged. But, at the same time, they are fettered by other sins, as, by self-righteousness or covetousness, and their hearts remain virtually unchanged.

Is Satan really overcome if one sin is dispensed with and another remains, or is substituted in its place, if, for instance, the drunkard drinks no more, but prides himself in self-righteousness before God and man? No; in such cases Satan is not overcome at all. He only puts on a different guise. His power remains undisturbed.

The only possible way for man to be saved from Satan's power is through Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God. He is the stronger One who comes upon and overcomes the strong man armed, who takes from him all his armour and divides the spoils.

The only possible way to overcome Satan's kingdom, to rend asunder his fetters, to rid yourself from, the bondage of sin, to become a truly free person, who is not the slave of some pet sin, and to become truly converted from the power of Satan to God, is through Jesus Christ. You must not attempt to overcome Satan's kingdom by your own power, or you will invariably fail. Christ alone can free the sinner from Satan's power.

And how will Jesus do this? He will, first of all, lead the sinner to perceive the damnableness of his sin, to feel true remorse, not so much because of the evil consequences of sin, a name tainted before the world, or health impaired or ruined, but most of all because by sin he transgressed God's divine Law, and stood in league with God's enemy, the devil, permitting him to occupy his heart as a palace, while it should have been the temple of God.

But Jesus will do more for the sinner than that. He will not only let his heart be filled with remorse by the Law. He will also take possession of his heart by the Gospel; and Satan will have to depart.

Christ will replenish that heart with true faith, with the assurance that all sins have been blotted out by His suffering and death on the cross. Thus He will rid the heart from the love of sin and evil ways and lead the soul to hate and despise all works of darkness and with strength from on high to resist all temptations.

Behold, Satan's kingdom is overcome in man's heart through Jesus Christ.

But so strong and so cunning, at the same time, is Satan, even when driven out of man's heart and completely put to flight, he will watch his chances to return and to recapture the palace which he was forced to abandon.

And if not properly guarded against, Satan may regain his dominion and re-establish his kingdom. Christ says, <sup>24</sup> ***“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’”*** <sup>25</sup> ***And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order.*** <sup>26</sup> ***Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”***

In other words, if a Christian is not on his guard, Satan will again get him under control and triumph over him. If a Christian ceases to watch and to pray, to use diligently the means of grace, to battle against sin in his own heart; if he

begins to grow indifferent as to his soul's salvation and to desire after the world's evil lusts, then his heart is swept and garnished and duly prepared for the reception of an evil spirit.

And woe to him if he yields to the desires of his own flesh! Not only will his own pet sin return, but other sins will follow in its wake, and the last state will be worse than the first.

It is always a more difficult thing for a backslider to be reconverted than for a sinner who has not yet tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come, to come to repentance.

O let us all be mindful of the apostle's warning in 1 Corinthians 10:12, <sup>12</sup> *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.* Let us diligently make use of God's holy Word and wield the Sword of the Holy Spirit against the devil who *walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*<sup>3</sup>

Then ours shall be the promise of our Saviour given in our text, *Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!* Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Matt 15:21-28

<sup>2</sup> Luke 11:14-28

<sup>3</sup> 1 Peter 5:8