

Luke 11:14-28 (NIV)

14 Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed. 15 But some of them said, “By Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons.” 16 Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven. 17 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: “Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall. 18 If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebub. 19 Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. 20 But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you. 21 “When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. 22 But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils. 23 “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters. 24 “When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ 25 When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. 26 Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.” 27 As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.” 28 He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”

42-11-02-No Neutral Ground

deliverance, demons, allegiance, spiritual warfare, opposition

Luke 11:14-28

There’s no neutral zone between darkness and the Kingdom of light.

INTRODUCTION:

–In games, it doesn’t really matter who wins. But in the spiritual realm, it’s not a game; *it’s war!* In human history, the gains and losses of most wars are short-lived. But spiritual warfare has eternal consequences.

–Much of Scripture describes humans “*choosing sides*”—they either *stand with God* or *sell out to Satan*, because... **HOM.idea.**

I. Jesus Took a Definitive Stand

- A. He drew the line of *no neutral ground*— **v.14**, *Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed. (This was confrontational—declaration of hostility between demonic darkness and God’s Kingdom of light!)*
1. Jesus is still in the business of “*driving out*” demons.... (Why?)
 2. Because He loves “mute” people and wants their lips *free*...
 - a. to *praise the Lord* (not to return to a lifestyle of silence); *free*...
 - b. to *speak the Word* (the reason Satan wants to keep us “mute”).
 3. Although “*the crowd was amazed*” by Christ’s action, some doubted God’s concern about the *really tough areas of life*....
- B. So, some of them denied the line Jesus was drawing, saying (**v.15**), “*By Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons.*”
1. Skeptics today cry, “*There’s no good or evil, just evils!*”
 2. But skeptics are blinded by seeing the *problem of evil* only outside themselves. (They usually try *excusing* rather than confessing their own moral failures and short-comings.)
- C. Others distrust the Line-Maker’s authority to draw the line— **v.16**, *Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven.*
1. “*asking for a sign*” is often a cover up for unwillingness to make a decision about the sign already staring them in the face!)
 2. Such distrust can be dangerous (Questioning authority may lead to *the truth*, but endless questioning leads to demonic unbelief.)

TRANS: Jesus met *resistance*, when He drew the line between the Kingdom of light and the dominion of darkness. There *is no neutral*

ground. This amazed some. Others became *skeptical* and *distrustful*. But Jesus refused to leave them in ignorance about the line.

II. Jesus Clearly Described the Battleground— (saying in v.17-18a), “Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall. If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand?”

A. Jesus had logic for the line He drew: Satan rules a kingdom of self-seeking, an egocentric hierarchy. (But in the Kingdom of the Almighty I AM, the power flows outward in self-giving love— healing people, like the one Jesus had just healed— v.20-22, “But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils.”)

B. Satan is the “strong man” of this “house,” and His dark household longs to control others [Screwtape Letters: “Their... motive is a kind of hunger. I feign that devils can, in a spiritual sense, eat one another; and us. Even in human life we have seen the passion to dominate, almost to digest, one’s fellow; to make his whole intellectual and emotional life merely an extension of one’s own—to hate one’s hatreds and resent one’s grievances and indulge one’s egoism through him as well as through oneself.... On Earth this desire is often called “love.” In Hell I feign that they recognize it as hunger. But there the hunger is more ravenous, and a fuller satisfaction is possible.”]

C. Satan and his cohorts foolishly pervert self-love by placing it at the center, when everyone’s center should be *the self-giving God*.

TRANS: Some do acknowledge the line— v.19, *Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But even those resisting Satan are on the wrong side of the line, unless they join the Line-Maker— v.23*, “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters.” [Message: “This is war, and there is no neutral ground. If you’re not on my side, you’re the enemy; if you’re not helping, you’re making things worse.”]. Satan isn’t worried about enemies, if he gets their souls in the end. So, Jesus carefully explained the line, because...

III. He Wants All of Us on the Winning Side

A. Winning a fight with Satan doesn’t mean true victory:

1. Jesus warns us that self-righteously cleaning up our act doesn’t deliver us from demons who are experts in self-righteousness— v. 24-26, “When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places

seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.”

2. God’s grace may cast out demons, but only by making Christ the Lord of our lives can we ultimately defeat them.

B. At this point in the story, something was said that showed how peripheral issues can be distracting from the central issue— v.27 (ESV), *As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!” (Emotional praise can be empty of personal commitment.)*

1. Rather than on Mary’s womb, Jesus focused on spiritual “birth” by our response to God’s Word in the Gospel— v.28, *He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”*
2. Rather than on Mary’s breasts, Jesus focused on being spiritually “nursed” by feeding on the Word (as a *doer*, not a *hearer* only, for He told us, “My food is to do the will of Him Who sent me.”)

CONCLUSION: The line dividing almost faith from true faith is the same one that Christ draws between darkness and the Kingdom of light.

There is no neutral ground. [Closing with one of my poems: **TWO PATHS**

There are in life two paths to tread:
The way of light, and that of dread.
The first is bordered by God’s rules,
The second is the way of fools.
The fools’ highway is wide and worn
By proud feet plodding out their scorn
For limits that the Lord designed,
For wisdom from the Maker’s mind.
Each self as “king,” the prey they stalk
For greed and gain confirms their walk.
With rage and haste they all descend
Until in hell their journeys end.

The narrow road of heaven’s light
Leads through the darkness of the night
Where pilgrims, out of fear and love,
Pursue God’s glory up above.
To them, commandments aren’t austere:
They only make the pathway clear.
God’s Word lights up the pilgrim’s race
To see their Master face to face.
Two paths before each human heart:
Two destinations, far apart.
Choose, with God’s pilgrims, to ascend;
Don’t march along with fools, my friend.]

—Let’s pray....