

Cross Fellowship Church
Overland Park, KS
June 23, 2019
Luke 11:14-36
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When testing and accusations come, we can be on our knees begging God for help. It may seem like when we walk through things that we've just asked God to help us through, incredible, hard pressures of testing can come. We don't lose heart in what God has done. I wanted to make that connection as we now enter into this. As we continue making our way through the Gospel of Luke, we come to this incredible controversy over Jesus. One problem that has been building since Jesus began his public ministry is that his miraculous works can no longer be ignored.

These miraculous works wielded by the word of this Jewish man in front of them has to have an explanation. Jesus is no stranger to controversy. These miraculous works were not hidden. The debate and skepticism found in these passages have to do with the power source working through Jesus. When we come to this passage, the supernatural works that Jesus is performing are way beyond mere human ability.

There is a source of power behind the scenes that requires a decision about who Jesus is. The first question comes up. Who is he working for: Satan or God? If we're honest, sometimes we can feel like God is not necessarily working for us. The second question is, can he give sufficient proof or evidence that will convince us that he is the Son of God?

Luke opens this section in Verse 14, which is all that we are given to set up this crucial section of Jesus commenting on his own work. Notice the simple structure of the verse. First you have the healing—the work. It's what Jesus did. Then you have the result, then you have the reaction.

Let's look at verse 14 together. **“Now he was casting out a demon that was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke”**—there's a result. Here's the reaction: **“And the people marveled.”** That's all we are given about this healing. It's the reaction of the crowd that Luke focuses on that prompts Jesus's comments. That should be noted first of all that marveling can be either positive or negative, depending on the context. Verse 15 and 16 records for us some of the crowd marveling that isn't necessarily seen as good. People can be amazed at what they see and not like it. They clearly saw what had happened, and the result of Jesus' work splits the crowd.

Let's look at verses 15 and 16 as we make our way through this passage. **“But some of them said, ‘He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons,’ while others, to test him, kept seeking from him a sign from heaven.”** The work of Jesus prompts a response from the crowd, and it's the judgments made about his work that Jesus speaks to. This section of Scripture is not about the man. It's not about the demon. The miraculous work

that is going on here is not denied. They all see it. But how to read exactly what is going on is the debate. In Luke's mind, the healing of the mute man is actually a sign that Jesus is the Messiah and was performed by the power of God. Luke is describing the crowd as some who are rejecting Jesus due to the wrong power source and for others, the healing is not a convincing enough sign.

The first group brings up Beelzebub, the prince of demons. They are directly attributing Jesus' work to Satan himself, and with the other group, it's hard to know exactly what would be sufficient proof given all that Jesus has already done. This shouldn't surprise us. On a side note, biblically speaking, no amount of proof or evidence can ever convince a heart to believe in Jesus. Many times unbelievers are silent about their unbelief, but what is beautiful about these two different types of unbelief that both groups are revealed to us in Scripture. We actually have their unbelief recorded for us. In other words, their source of unbelief has been publicly revealed for us to see.

How about you? When it comes to what you really think about Jesus, are you genuinely seeking biblical answers? There are people today that have actually no interest in seeking genuine truth. People don't want to be confronted and they will be exposed. Some of the hardest people in the world to deal with in the church today are professing Christians who are not honest as to what they really believe and think. Jesus teaches that people will not come to the light. They hate the light because their deeds are evil. God's Word, however, provides answers for all areas of unbelief. It's a beautiful thing when one realizes that they are lost. Realizing one is lost always precedes one coming to be saved. In other words, you cannot receive the good news without understanding the bad news.

Jesus begins to reason with these two groups. Jesus warns both groups of people. In verses 16 through 26, Jesus warns the first group. Then the second group in verses 29 through 32, Jesus warns the second group of people. Let's look at what Jesus says to the first group who are accusing him of working through the power of Satan. **“But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, ‘Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.’”**

Verse 17 says that Jesus was reading their thoughts. Whenever Jesus is reading someone's thoughts, you can bet there is controversy coming. Ironically his knowledge of mankind's thought life is in itself a sign. Jesus already knows who is hostile towards him. I hope everyone in this room understands that every thought that you have is known and evaluated by a just and holy God. Genesis 6:5 says the Lord saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil. God saw all of that. Psalm 94:11, the Lord knows the thoughts of mankind. People are accountable for their thoughts before God whether they speak them out loud or not.

However, thoughts are to be shaped. 2 Corinthians says we destroy arguments against every lofty opinion against God and take every thought captive to obey Christ. But for these people who are not believing in Jesus, their thoughts are actually condemning them as Jesus is reading them. Jesus is reading their inward thoughts, which are twisted, evil, and broken from the fall of man. He speaks truth out loud, reasoning with their conscience. Jesus reminds them that division always destroys. It destroys kingdoms and households, and Satan himself is no exception. Division will also destroy him. This group of people claiming that Satan is the power source working to cast demons out of people, are saying that Satan and the demonic world are a house divided, a sure recipe for defeat. If Satan has finally reached the conclusion that the way for him to win the battle is that he now needs to cast demons out of people, then don't worry. Satan's kingdom will not stand. You don't have to worry about what Jesus is doing.

In other words, this logic is filled with holes is what Jesus is trying to communicate. That division destroys and you are claiming that now the demonic world is divided. At this point the question has to be asked, would Satan actually do this to himself? The underlying truth here is that the human heart hates God so bad that it will make up and follow ridiculous illogical theories rejecting God's way at all costs, no matter how foolish it sounds.

“And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.” Verse 18 teaches that the logic coming from Jesus himself and his question that he asked, how can Satan have a standing kingdom if he's working against himself? This assumes that Satan is very active in the world and the effects of his rule are seen by him actually keeping a human being, created in the image of God, mute. Jesus's point is that this charge doesn't make any sense. His accusers cannot acknowledge the strong satanic presence in the world and claim that Satan's fighting himself. Both cannot be true.

Since Satan's power is a given, the conclusion about Jesus must be wrong. Verse 19: **“And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.”** Continuing with their flawed logic, he asks about others as well, their sons. If Jesus is doing the same things that their sons are doing, then the conclusion of truth has to be that they are both operating under the same power source. By the way, if true believers in this church as well as any other church are doing the same things that Jesus does by confronting sin, protecting the truth, evangelizing the lost, loving and encouraging one another, even casting out a demon, and you don't agree with the church following Jesus, you might consider whose side you are on.

Jesus and their sons' exorcisms go together, the same way the church and the works of Christ go together. The demonic realm of fallen angels were never designed by God to indwell humans. This has been understood from the beginning. The judgment that they are making on him is the exact judgment that they are making on their own sons. In other words, if

Jesus was working by the power of Satan, are your sons also working by the power of Satan? The answer is obviously that these opponents would not claim that their sons are working by the power of Satan. They are only wanting to reject what Jesus is doing. Their problem is against him. Exactly like people today make up observed claims

In Verse 20, Jesus poses another option. That if it is found to be true, it completely turns the tables and they are standing -- they are the ones standing in direct opposition with God. Let's read Verse 20 together. **“But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”** Jesus is saying that if exercising authority over Satan by casting him out is by the power of God, then the people who oppose Jesus stand in direct opposition to God. Rejecting the presence and the power of the king of the kingdom in Jesus is their deep-rooted source of unbelief keeping them outside of God's kingdom. When Jesus tells these people that the kingdom of God is come upon you, he is telling them that God's kingdom has arrived with power working right in front of them and that they are in trouble by rejecting Jesus as Lord over their lives. The same is true for us. There could be someone in this room today whom the presence and the power of God's kingdom is fully seen and happening all around you. And you want to claim him as your Savior, but you reject him as Lord over your life in this reigning kingdom now.

This entire context has been a look at the war between God and Satan. Humans are whom the war is fought over. Jesus now speaks a parable about the actual fight and outcome of this war between God and Satan. Let's look at Verses 21 and 22. **“When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil.”** Verse 21 is a reference to Satan. Satan is the stronger man, the weapons of Satan against the human heart are no match for the human to withstand. The truth is that Satan will not let go. He will not back down, will not give up any ground. He will not run out of ammunition. He is guarding day and night people whom he has taken captive. Guarding indicates that they are in prison with no hope of getting out on their own. Satan's tactic or strategy is to increase his hold at all costs.

Verse 22 is a reference to God who is stronger than Satan. God is the only one who can go in and directly attack Satan and easily prevail. Jesus says that God can strip Satan of all of his fighting power and protection. At that point, Satan is actually rendered helpless and vulnerable. Then God can easily go in and plunder and take from Satan the spoils, or people, and bring them out. Jesus is prevailing here in this case and he's making that clear. Jesus then makes this statement in Verse 23. **“Whoever is not with me is against me, and whomever does not gather with me scatters.”** The whole point of the parable comes down to what Jesus just said there. Jesus has just spoken about the victorious power and authority of God that God has over Satan. Jesus is now identifying who this God is. Jesus in this one-verse statement is claiming that he is victorious God exercising victory in power over Satan. This

language pictures a war. Jesus here is drawing distinct sides.

Notice in this language that there are only two sides that you can be on. When Jesus spoke this to these people, they would've clearly understood him to be meaning that if you don't repent and believe in him, then they are against God. Also if they are not working with him in advancing God's kingdom, then they are also found working against God. They are scattering people. Another few words, if you are not helping, then you are hindering. Luke is calling for a decision about Christ. There is no such thing as anyone being on the fence. There are only two sides. This is a crystal clear passage that if you are not with him then you are his enemy. God's kingdom has been inaugurated in his first coming and is still in the process of expanding. For those who have been healed with him and brought into relationship with him, what a glorious reminder of our victorious king defeating for us Satan, sin and death. Anyone here that has not been brought from an enemy state into a relationship with Jesus, our plea would be to please surrender and run to Jesus as your victorious king.

Genuine salvation is accompanied right to truths that are inseparable. Repentance and faith. Only turning to Jesus for healing without faith has consequences. When making a decision for Jesus, it is understood that it requires a life of faith. Let's read 24 through 26.

“When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order. Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first.”

This section serves as a warning. When the decision is made about Jesus, there is a warning. The story of the man with the cleaned up life. He's cleaned up, but the problem is he is spiritually empty. Nothing has been done to prevent re-entry of the evil one. It's basically teaching that people cannot hold neutral ground on their own. Trying to live and remain spiritually neutral can prove to be disastrous. Repentance is only halfway. The house must be filled with a stronger man; that is, Jesus. This faith in Jesus must be coupled with repentance. This man's house has been swept clean up, the demon has been cast out, but that is not the only way to fight against the evil one. This man's spiritual house has to be filled with the stronger man, Jesus, which is in the parable that he just spoke. This must be faith in someone stronger. Jesus is already identified. “If you are not with me, you are against me.” Jesus couples faith with repentance here. Both are present in the life of a true Christian. Otherwise, the opportunity for permanent reversal has been tragically lost. With the heaviness of what Jesus has just said about the tragic loss of a person that was reclaimed by the spiritual work of Satan.

Someone out of the crowd responds, an unexpected voice out of the crowd, a woman's voice cries out. Let's read Verse 27. **“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!’”** Responding to Jesus's message, a woman offers up to Jesus

what she believes. She tells Jesus her understanding of what it means for someone to be blessed by God. Something is definitely going on in this woman's heart for her to speak out as she did in the middle of this public crowd. It doesn't seem as if she's agreeing with a group that's saying she's operating under the power of Satan. They believed that people could actually be born into being blessed. Liking what she was hearing, she attributed the stark difference about Jesus to his mother and not God. She did see something different about Jesus and her heart was moved to let out something. She cries out that the womb that Jesus was in and the milk that fed him in the beginning must have been contributing factors for how someone like Jesus could have been the recipient of such blessing that demons obey him and a mute man could now speak.

Perhaps looking at her own life and her own mother, she wondered if she had enough blessing at her own beginning to make it into the kingdom. Unfortunately, I think there are many people today who believe that they are blessed by God because of how they were brought up in this world. If you are here today and you somehow believe that you were brought up in a Christian home where you had a good mom and you must be blessed before God because of that, I can definitely say to you, nothing can be further from the truth. Being blessed for eternal life by God can in no way be passed through how one is born physically. We praise God for this, for how would one ever know if mom was pure enough for you to get into heaven? Jesus teaches that being blessed by God is something radically different than being dependent upon one's mother.

Let's look at Verse 28. Jesus speaks to that comment that this lady made. **“But he said, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!’”** Jesus lovingly corrects this thinking. I've seen this happen many times in sharing of pure gospel and the truth to people. Well-meaning intentions with wrong comments pop up out of people's mouths all the time. I believe that it is right for Christians to lovingly hold to the truth just as Jesus did. Jesus teaches first that being blessed by God is open to anyone. He goes on to say, “blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.” In my opinion, this is probably one of the hardest passages or is a very hard passage to preach and teach and get right. The thing about this is that Jesus opens this beautiful statement up, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it. That means that there is a possibility for people to hear the word of God and keep it. But at the same time, walking a balance of not giving people a formula to follow, like “this is how you get into heaven.”

How do we walk this balance? There are those who hear the Word of God and keep it. But this is not a formula that anyone of us or anyone on the face of the planet except Christ has kept. So Jesus teaches that those who hear the Word of God and keep it are those who are blessed. Hearing comes first, so how does one know if they are hearing the Word of God? Jesus qualifies the cure by the one keeping. Do not claim to have accepted Jesus if you are not hearing and keeping God's Word. Do not claim to be hearing God's Word if you are not keeping

God's word. When a person rightly hears God's word, it moves inward, deep into the heart and the effects of the inward hearing change the outward keeping or doing. Then we know that they have heard from God. Anytime God's Word is preached or taught, the response is called for and our lives are to be deeply affected by the hearing of God's Word. Our lives are to be shaped by the Word of God. Jesus Christ is the one that has perfectly heard and kept the Word for us. But as a person becomes a Christian, God's Word then becomes real. We do begin to hear it with spiritual ears and the Christian begins to move and respond. Those are the ones who are hearing and keeping the word.

When Jesus finishes correcting the response of the woman, Luke tells us there was another response that was happening. As the crowds were increasing, Jesus now addresses the second group of people back in Verse 16 whose response to his healing is still needing more proof. Let's read Verses 29 through 32. **“When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, ‘This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.’”**

Jesus addresses these people as an evil generation, because they continue to come to him seeking more proof about him before they willfully believe. They test him. Deuteronomy 6:16 says that thou shalt not test the Lord thy God. Do you remember who Jesus is meeting when he was driven by the Holy Spirit out into the wilderness? Satan tested him. Satan told Jesus that if Jesus would bow down to him and do what he wanted then Jesus could have all the kingdoms. Jesus said, “It is written, ‘thou shall not tempt’”—test, if you will – “the Lord thy God.”

The question has to be asked. Could Jesus have given more signs to help these people believe? Of course, the answer is yes. He wasn't fresh out of signs. He could've done more. The biblical truth teaches that the human condition before God is so evil that the heart is never changed by external proof. This is why this church holds to the sovereignty of God divinely working in the human heart is what's required for people to come to know him. There is more than enough proof and evidence standing in front of these people telling them that before God they are evil and their only hope is to repent. The same is true for us today. Neither this generation that Luke is writing to nor any other person will ever see the kingdom of God without first repenting from the heart. By the way, dear Christian, you should not be ashamed to publicly testify in your testimony of how you have repented from your evil heart.

No one will ever see God by sidestepping repentance. Like Jonah, a preacher of

repentance, Jesus is calling on these people to repent. This actually is a sign from God. A preacher calling people to repent is a sign from God. God's assigned today for people to respond in repentance to him is still through his messengers calling people to repent. Jesus gives two examples of people who have repented with less visible signs. He talks about the Queen of the South, also known as the Queen of Sheba. And the people of Nineveh. The first one, Queen of Sheba—you can jot this down—is in 1 Kings chapter 10. This is amazing. Jesus is giving the example that something greater than Solomon and Jonah is standing right in front of them. God himself is standing in front of these people and they continue to like Satan, testing him. “We need more proof, more evidence.” They are continuing to test God.

I would challenge you that there are still people today that have unbelievably seen the miraculous works of God working right in front of them and they continue to test God and put him to the test. I would lovingly tell you, this is wrong. This is wrong to do. The Queen of Sheba is the example here, a Gentile that comes, travels a long distance to find and see and hear about the wisdom of Solomon that has come from God. When she comes, she sees all of the wisdom. The Bible says that she came testing God. She came to Solomon to hear from the wisdom of God, and she came and tested. It says she brought all the hard, difficult questions of life. She brought them to Solomon. And Solomon began to explain to the Queen of Sheba answers from heaven. God's word has all the answers for people, and yet there are people that are claiming that they've heard from God and yet they've not been affected.

The Queen of Sheba was overwhelmed with what she had heard and seen about the wisdom of God. The Bible tells that she no longer had any more testing and any more questions against God. She was overwhelmed and the Bible says she was out of breath. Realizing she had come to the end of herself and she had concluded, “there is no way that I can get over and not see what God has done.” She was overwhelmed. Then she makes this incredible statement. **“The half wasn't told to me.”** What? When she saw all that God had done in Solomon's life, her mouth was closed. She was overwhelmed by God, and she closed her mouth and stopped it.

There are people today still continuing to test and test and test God. Christians, we have Christ. Something greater than Jonah and Solomon was standing right in front of these people. They continued to come up against God and tested. The people of Nineveh were sitting in ashes at the sound of Jonah's voice, “Repent. Judgment is coming.” They stopped what they were doing. How many people continue to profess to know Jesus and they continue right on as if it had no effect? The point of this is Jesus is saying these two groups of people will be raised up to testify in judgment of the faithfulness of God, the promise of God to his Word. God is calling people to a life and a faith by way of repentance. If you are here and you do not know Jesus really, your life is filled with sin. I hope that you won't be like these people that continue to come and put God to the test. But you will turn from your sin and see that you cannot match wits with God. You cannot out test him, and every question that you have, he does have

answers. These men will rise up in the judgment and condemn them for they repented at the preaching of Jonah. If you are here, our plea for you if you do not know Jesus is to please repent.

Let's read Verse 33 through 36. **“No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.”**

Jesus has just called this group of people to repent. He teaches them as well as us that darkness can be manifested not only causing somebody to be mute. Can you imagine, by the way, this mute man plagued by a demon? Jesus casts him out. The man can finally speak like others around him, then he's hearing this turmoil and conflict around him. Oh by the way, he did that by the work of Satan. What? Imagine how he feels when genuine work of God is working all around. I believe that there are people who actually see the works of God happening all around them, and they completely reject what God is doing. Has God sent someone you know, their heart on fire for Christ? They have brought them to repentance. Some of you might have parents that don't necessarily understand what God has done in your life. The reality is that God works right around people all the time, even if others don't understand what has happened. When God sets a heart on fire and he brings them out of darkness and moves them into his beautiful, glorious light, there are people around that do not understand all that God has done. That is designed by God to bring them to repentance. If you are here and you are seeing God truly work all around you and you are wondering, where am I? Our hope would be that you would see this as your opportunity to come to Christ.

He teaches that darkness can be manifested not only in muteness, but how somebody sees. Jesus begins by saying that no one would light a lamp and hide it. Basically what he is saying is God would not do this either. Nobody would light a lamp and hide it and God won't do this either. The purpose of a light is for people to see. God has sent Jesus, the ultimate light, set him on a stand so that those who enter the kingdom have seen Jesus. By God's design, you are equipped through your eyes to do the seeing for yourself. What you are seeing is how you will lead yourself. Remember, these people are staring into the face of God and wanting something more.

Jesus then gives a proverb about eyes or what you can see, that it directly has an effect on your body. Jesus teaches the eye can be healthy or bad. Jesus is not referring to someone who is physically blind, meaning the bad eye. These are physically seeing people who saw Jesus heal a mute man, who are also in darkness. Jesus is saying that it is possible to be physically seeing person and have a bad spiritually seeing eye also being filled with darkness yourself.

Verse 35 is the warning. The mute man needed healing and so these people who are in front of Christ as well as others who may be here today. Continuing to witness Jesus heal others and not seeing then need to be healed yourself reveals that you are evil and you will not escape judgment. It is true for these people in front of Jesus and it is true for us today. Bad spirits today are filling people with darkness who have never responded to God's call by way of repentance.

There is a way to know what light source is filling you. If that light source is truly Jesus himself, then there will be a visible evidence of a radical transformation. These have responded to Jesus by way of repentance and faith and they receive a new internal life that their eye sees and they become a beacon of light with the rays of Jesus the victor shining through. Honestly, as you are to evaluate your life, what light is in you? Everyone has a light, but that light can be bad or that light can be good. If you are wondering, well, what makes that light good? I will tell you that here's what God did. Jesus was headed to Jerusalem. He was headed for a particular purpose to be crucified on a cross, and he knew it. He had spoken of this. Can I tell you lovingly, he went to the cross for people like this. He went for people who are demon possessed. He went for people with bad spiritually seeing eyes. He went for people that tested him, and by the way, every one of us in some point in our life has tested God. Every one of us have tried to tempt God and get him to bow to us. Satan wanted Jesus to bow to him, but Jesus said, get thee behind me Satan. He told that to Peter.

God went to the cross and he was placed on a cross, arms stretched out, nailed at the cross of Calvary to pay the penalty for people who could not see, people who tested God, people who are possessed with demons. He died on the cross to pay the penalty for all sins for people who would repent and trust in Christ. If you are here today and you are wondering, why should I repent to this Jesus? Why should I come in a victorious way into a saving relationship with this Christ? Because Jesus is your only hope of ever getting past a holy God and ever getting past condemnation and judgment.

As Jesus hung on the cross, God poured out his wrath on his son. He poured out all of his hatred, anger, and vengeance. Jesus absorbed every bit of it and then he give up his life and he died. Why would he do that? These people who were in front of him testing. Because people can't make it into the kingdom continuing to have a life of testing and tempting God. Jesus hung on the cross and paid the penalty for that. If we by the grace of God would repent and turn and trust in Christ, the saving grace that God gives through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Bible teaches that all sins can be forgiven. What a glorious reminder, dear Christian, as we ponder and think about all that is out there to destroy us. All that is out there to take us down, all that is out there to hurt us, and your Savior Jesus Christ went to the cross and paid for you and for me.

If you are here and you are a Christian, I pray that this will be a wonderful encouragement that you don't have to fear having your house dwelt again with more evil spirits.

I pray that you will understand that you don't have to spend a life to continue testing God to see if he's there and if he's for you. The Scripture teaches that once a person has been transferred out of the kingdom of darkness and placed in the kingdom of light, God is for you. What a glorious reminder as we transition our time to the Lord's table.