

## A House Divided

Sermon 35 in the Luke Series

### Luke 11:14-28

Today, we resume our study of the Life of Christ through the Gospel of Luke.

Luke is the largest of the gospels, and it also is, as best as we can tell, the least chronological.

Luke is concerned with writing accurate history, but he isn't interested with exacting chronologies. He tells us more than any other writer about the parabolic sayings of Jesus, but, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Luke has no problem using the eyewitness accounts, he has received from others, regarding the ministry of Christ and grouping them for us by subject.

Remember, the ministry of Christ lasted three years, and was basically an EVERY DAY MINISTRY, meaning that Christ would have publicly taught hundreds of times and possibly healed thousands of people.

### I. The Kingdom Maligned 11:14-16

We will deal more fully with “signs” next week with v. 29.

They were TEMPTING him.

The Greek word --  $\pi\alpha\iota-\rho\alpha-\zeta\omega$  -- has a negative connotation.

And the tense of it shows it wasn't just a request – they were asking and asking, you could even say heckling him.

John the Baptist – in prison had doubts about Christ.

Christ didn't come in the way that the Jewish leaders had taught.

He didn't come as a political leader, setting up an earthly kingdom.

That's what the Leaders wanted – that's what the people expected.

Even John the Baptist was confused – **Luke 7:20-23**.

John's wavering came from confusion.

John wasn't TEMPTING Christ.

John asks a sincere question – is it YOU or is it another?

He was having doubts because Christ hadn't come in the way he expected.

Back to Luke 11

These weren't the temporary doubts of a person in affliction.

These were UNBELIEVERS – TEMPTING HIM – asking for a sign.

They didn't believe in him.  
The signs were ALL OVER THE PLACE  
The blind see  
The deaf hear  
The dumb speak  
He cast out demons  
He healed all that came to him.

Their response – SHOW US A SIGN.  
Show us a sign from Heaven.  
How do you expect us to believe unless you prove yourself?

## II. The Kingdom Defended 11:17-23

### A. Christ's Argumentation 17-20

1. "*A house divided against itself can not stand*". – as Matthew puts it.

These are famous words – and I imagine almost every American has heard them at one time or another, and maybe not even known they were the words of Jesus.

This is true for kingdoms – civil war is the worst and bloodiest kind of battle – our own nations history proves that point.

How about turmoil in a marriage?

The one place where there should be safety and peace.

The one place on this earth where you should be able to go and be accepted and loved unconditionally.

How horrible is it, when that place is a place that you would just rather not be?

How about in a church?

From time to time I have dealt with churches in turmoil.

I've personally been a part of that – and I have had occasions to help churches that are going through that.

It's horrible.

Can you imagine, coming to worship – and there is this terrible and horrible division among the people who are coming together, supposedly to worship the same God in spirit and in truth?

Inevitably, the Spirit is grieved in these cases.  
People suffer in many ways.

A house divided can not stand.

2. How could Christ be destroying Satan by the power of Satan?

-- Why would Satan seek his own ruin?

-- What could be gained by Satan weakening himself?

-- There is only one way that Christ could be doing his power by Satan – that is if Christ Himself were Satanic.

We're going to deal with that in a moment.  
That is the unpardonable sin.

Christ's logic holds up, unless we think there is some massive Satanic conspiracy going on – and Christ is actually THE ANTI-CHRIST leading men and women AWAY FROM the Kingdom of God.

3. By whom do your children cast out demons?

The Jews had exorcists.

They cast out demons in the name of Jehovah.

Is the crowd ready to call them Satanic?

4. The Kingdom of God has come.

Notice the terminology Christ uses.

“The finger of God”

If we know our OT well, as this crowd did, that should ring a bell in our thinking.

When Moses did miracles before Pharaoh, Pharaoh had his magicians duplicate the miracles – and they did.

**The first plague:** Water became blood.

The magicians turned water into blood.

**The second plague:** Frogs

The magicians were able to conjure up frogs from the waters.

**The third plague** – dust became LICE.

Something NON-LIVING came alive.

The magicians tried, but they couldn't do that.

Their words as they helplessly stood before Pharaoh, themselves covered with lice was: "This is the finger of God."

Pharaoh's heart grew HARD and he would not let them go.

The signs were not enough.

By rejecting the signs – this crowd was putting themselves in the camp of Pharaoh.

**B. Christ's Illustration 21-23**

**1. The strong man = Satan. V. 21**

What is Satan doing?

He is not on the OFFENSIVE.

Satan is PRE-OCCUPIED with GUARDING his territory.

Satan has a strong-hold – he has possessions – he doesn't want to lose them.

Before the coming of Christ, almost THE ENTIRE WORLD belonged to Satan. He ruled without a rival.

Sometimes he took the form of Baal.

Sometimes he was Molech or Chemosh.

He could be any host of IDOL or FALSE GOD – or even ATHEISM – anything to keep men and women from the truth of Jehovah God.

Satan is not in the business of taking children of God and turning them into children of Satan.

In fact, he has NO POWER to do that.

He fights a DEFENSIVE war.

He tries to keep what he already has.

Still today, it is that way.

Men and women are lost.

Bound in the darkness of heathen night.

Satan wants to keep them in the chains of his captivity.

## **2. The stronger man = Christ v. 22**

Satan is a STRONG man, but his power is nothing compared to that of Christ's. When Christ comes, into the heart of a person – Satan is cast out – and a child of the Devil becomes a Child of God.

Paul puts it this way, “If any man be in Christ, he is a NEW CREATION. Old things are passed away. Behold all things become new.”

A new Life.

A new King.

A new Kingdom.

## **3. Which Kingdom are you in? v. 23**

Too many in that crowd were not content to see Christ bring in a spiritual kingdom.

It had to be physical – or they would not accept it.

The kingdom came – whether they would accept it or not.

Satan could not stop it.

The Jewish leaders could not stop it.

The unbelief of the Jewish crowds could not stop it.

Will a man fight against God?

Yes, sometimes he will. But he can never win.

## **III. The Unpardonable Sin Luke 12:10**

### **The Unpardonable Sin**

The unpardonable sin is mentioned Matthew 12, Mark 3, and Luke 12:10.

I get asked about the unpardonable sin often.

What is it?  
Is it possible that I have committed it?  
How do we know if someone has committed it?

As I said, we don't find the unpardonable sin in this context, and I think that is significant. But look at **Luke 12:10**. There it is.

Now turn to **Matthew 12:31-32**.

**A. Is it possible to commit today?**

I would answer yes. But it is rare.

VERY RARE, and I seriously doubt ANY OF YOU have committed this sin, and I am not sure I have ever met anyone who has.

**B. There are some prerequisites for committing this sin.**

1. It obviously isn't speaking ill of Jesus.

There are many who have done that, yet repented.

This very text tells us we can do that and still be forgiven.

2. It obviously isn't unbelief.

Every one of us were unbelievers at one time.

Every one of us had to come to Christ.

While it is true, those who die without repenting of their sins and believing in Christ will go to Hell, it is also true that when God opens a sinners heart, He makes him WILLING to believe, and the man who was an unbeliever becomes a believer.

Therefore unbelief can not be the unpardonable sin.

3. Other theories such as murder, adultery or those things we think of as GREAT sins or even the 7 Deadly sins have been speculated, but there are myriad examples of those who were like that and came to Christ. SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU.

To find out what the unpardonable sin is – we would do well to note

**C. Who was in danger of committing it?**

We saw something in the context of Luke. He says nothing to the multitude of the unpardonable sin. But, in Luke 12:10, we can see from the context of 12:1 that he is warning his disciples about THE PHARISEES.

Here in Matthew, in this incident, where Jesus PLAINLY WARNS of the unpardonable sin – **Matt. 12:24** – it is the Pharisees who are in danger of committing it.

#### **D. Defining the Sin**

If we carefully define the sin – we will see why the Pharisees were in danger of committing it, while the crowd could speak against Jesus and still be forgiven.

The sin is BLASPHEMY against the Holy Spirit.  
It is attributing the works of the Spirit of God to Satan and Demons.  
This passage is a direct warning to the Pharises.

The Pharisees were the RELIGIOUS LEADERS of the people.  
It was their job, along with the other Jewish leaders to teach the people the Word of God and it was their job to point the people to MESSIAH when He came.

Did the Pharisees do that?

No.  
They knew the Scriptures.  
They knew Messianic claims of Jesus.  
They knew that He had Scriptural support for those claims – and they knew that He demonstrated the truth in POWER.

So, they attributed THE POWER to SATAN.

They PURPOSELY deceived the very people they were commissioned to teach – even though they knew the truth.

You can see why they were in danger.

Not all the Pharisees.  
Some reserved judgment.  
Others, like Saul, would come to Christ later.  
Some, like Nicodemus were sympathetic to Christ.

But, those WHO KNEW THE TRUTH and then purposely called the Holy Spirit's work SATAN'S WORK were in danger of committing the unpardonable sin.

**James 3:1** – *Be not many teachers, for we shall receive the greater condemnation.*

Can it be committed today?

It's rare – but if a religious teacher KNOWS THE TRUTH of salvation through Jesus Christ and preaches ANOTHER SALVATION and purposely leads people astray – then, yes, I would say he is in GRAVE DANGER of committing the unpardonable sin.

### **Final Thoughts**

1. If you are concerned that you might have committed it, you haven't.  
The mark of the unpardonable sin is REPROBATION. See Romans 1 and you see how the reprobate mind thinks. It wants nothing to do with God, and God no longer deals with the conscience. If a man has committed the unpardonable sin, he has no care or concern about God at all. He's hardened.  
The very fact that you would be worried is hopeful.  
The very fact that you would care is encouraging.  
The question is – DO YOU CARE ENOUGH to humble yourself before the Lord Jesus Christ?
2. To commit the sin, it appears a person has to have KNOWLEDGE of the truth, but willfully deny the truth, and then teach others against the truth.  
If all that is true, and I think it is – religious leaders today are the ones in the greatest danger of committing this sin.
3. Christ did not say the Pharisees had committed the sin. He warns them of it, which means they were in DANGER of it, but had not necessarily committed it yet.

### **IV. Moral Reform is not Enough 11:24-26**

Jesus sets the stage for this parable, with the conclusion of the previous one about the Strong Man and the Stronger Man. **v. 23**

There is no moral neutrality.

Moral reform is not enough.

1. The man has a demon – and apparently does not even know it.
2. The demon isn't necessarily cast out – according to the Greek he simply “goes out” which can easily mean to go out of his own free will.  
The demon leaves the man – and “goes through dry places”.  
Jesus is speaking in language the crowd can understand.

The Jews believed that demons lived in the wilderness and in the desert.  
It's where you would expect to find them, and in this parable, where this demon goes.

But, the demon finds no rest – so he decides to “go back home”.  
The man is not part of the new kingdom.  
The demon wasn't driven out by the power of God.  
The life of the man wasn't changed.

3. Moral reform – yes?  
The demon returns to find his home “cleaned and swept”.  
Is the demon in this parable REPULSED at the newly cleaned life?

Oddly enough – the demon is OVERJOYED at the changes he sees.  
He brings 7 other demons, more wicked than himself to dwell in the man.  
The man is WORSE OFF than he was.

What is the problem here?

The problem is – there was a throwing off of outward sins – but no inward change in the man.

The man LOOKS better than he did before.  
The man APPEARS to be better than he was before.  
The man may be MORE PLEASANT to be around than he was before.

He is just as lost as he was before – and MAYBE EVEN MORE LOST – if such a thing is possible – after-all –

He's a self-made man.  
He's a different man – and he didn't need God to change him.  
He was capable of changing HIMSELF.

He is a shining example of SELF-SALVATION – the very sin that the Pharisees were most guilty of committing.

**v. 23**

The man is not FOR Jesus.  
The man has not been CHANGED BY Jesus.  
The man believes he has NO NEED for Jesus.

The man is even more firmly in the grasp of the kingdom of Satan – even though you would never guess that by looking at him.

“The last state of that man is worse than the first.”  
That is an amazing statement.

The key here is to understand that Christ is not simply talking about Demon Possession.

The point is the futility of SELF-REFORMATION without turning to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Pharisees were SCATTERING.  
The Pharisees were preaching a “gospel” of SELF-SALVATION.  
Many in the crowd were listening to the Pharisees instead of Jesus.  
Would they be FOR HIM or AGAINST HIM?

ARE YOU for Him or against him?  
How are you living YOUR life?

The only way to be FOR HIM is to bow before Him and give Him your entire life.

Your hopes, your dreams, your fears, your sins.  
You bow before him – and by faith believe in Him.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ – and YOU SHALL be saved.

PRAY

HYMN

Benediction: 11:21-23