

The Finger of God

(Luke 11:14-20)

I. Introduction

- A. Not too long ago, a practical jokester walked into his local Wal-Mart store
1. He was wearing an orange jumpsuit with handcuffs on his wrists.
 - a. He went up a clerk and stated that he wanted to buy a hacksaw. Joke!
 - b. Well, neither Wal-Mart nor the police saw the humor and arrested him.
 - c. There was an ulterior motive for the stunt—making a YouTube video
 2. So sometimes some people don't appreciate you having an ulterior motive.
 - a. I have an ulterior motive for this sermon today—and I'll tell you later
 - b. But we finished a series on **1 John**; we'll start another on **Romans 12-16**
 3. Today's text in **Luke 11** is not part of a series; I do have an ulterior motive.
- B. As we survey the overall context, we notice a recurring theme of **CONFLICT**
1. **First**, there was conflict among the apostles over who is greatest (**9:46-50**)
 - a. Jesus uses a child to show who was great in his upside-down kingdom.
 - 1) To welcome a little child in His name was to welcome Jesus Himself.
 - 2) The one who was least of all would be the greatest in the kingdom.
 - b. The disciples then try to stop man exorcising demons in Jesus name.
 - c. He wasn't one of them! So they didn't get the point about the kingdom.
 2. **Second**, there is conflict with some Samaritan villages (**Luke 9:51-56**)
 - a. Luke's telling of the gospel story makes an important transition (**9:51**)
As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.
 - 1) "*Resolutely*" is literally "*set his face,*" idiom for a firm determination
 - 2) The rest of the book is Jesus heading to Jerusalem and the cross
 - b. Because he headed to Jerusalem, the Samaritans wanted no part of him
 - c. James and John wanted to call fire, still not getting greatness in kingdom
 3. **Third**, there was conflict with some perspective disciples (**Luke 9:57-62**)
 - a. Some who would follow Jesus did not understand the sacrifice involved
 - b. They had obligations—a father to bury or a family to tell good-bye
 - c. But kingdom business is urgent; can't put hand to plow and look back

4. **Fourth**, conflict would result from disciples working in kingdom (**10:1-16**)
 - a. Jesus sends 72 out preaching message “*kingdom of God is near*” (**10:9**)
 - 1) They were to heal the sick and even cast out demons (**Luke 10:17**)
 - 2) There would be conflict— some would oppose and reject message
 - b. But the message was the same, “*The kingdom of God is near*” (**10:11**)
 - c. Disciples would experience the same opposition and conflict as Jesus.
 5. **Finally**, there’s conflict when a scribe asks Jesus a trick question (**10:25-37**)
 - a. He asks, “What must I do to inherit eternal life” It was a trick question.
 - b. Scribe doesn’t really want to know an answer; he already knows answer!
 - 1) People can ask questions to show how smart they are, and you aren’t
 - 2) That is the scribe’s **ulterior motive**... but it is a good thing he asks.
 - c. Trick questions leads Jesus to tell best known parable— Good Samaritan
- C. OK, that’s a pretty LONG setup for text, but then I do have an **ulterior motive**!
1. Notice that all f these stories have **conflict**, and several mention **demons**.
 - a. It’s no surprise these two are stressed in our text— conflict and demons.
 - b. Jesus casts out a demon from a mute man; criticism and conflict follow.
 2. Let’s read the text, and remember I have “*ulterior motive*” (**Luke 11:14-20**)

II. The Finger of God (**Luke 11:14-20**)

- A. Luke doesn’t stress the miracle as much as the people’s reaction to it
1. **First**, the crowd was amazed that this mute man was able to speak
 - a. Matthew has a much longer version the miracle and debate that follows
 - b. He adds that the astonished crowd wonder if Jesus is Messiah (**12:23**)
 2. **Second**, others (Matthew, “Pharisees”) accuse Jesus of Satanic power
 - a. They couldn’t deny a miracle happened (*if Jesus were only a “faith healer”*)
 - b. So they assigned the power of the miracle to Beelzebub, ruler of demons
 - 1) Beelzebub (or *Beelzebul*) was originally a Canaanite god (**2 Ki 1:2**)
 - 2) It came to be a name for Satan—the ruler of demons would be Satan
 3. **Third**, some tested Jesus further by asking for a “*sign from heaven*” (**v. 16**)
 - a. Remember the Pharisees response to feeding or 4000? (**Mark 8:11**)
 - b. Second miracle to prove the first? *I guess that made sense to them!*

- B. Jesus' answer to those who accuse of Satanic power is twofold—
1. **First**, why would it make sense for Satan to drive out his own demons?
 - a. Satan is evil, but he's not stupid! Why would he exorcise himself?
 - b. Satan uses his power to enslave and kill, not to release and save!
 - c. It is God's power that releases people from the stronghold of Satan.
 2. **Second**, Jesus points to double standard of those who accused Him.
 - a. They believed demons could be exorcised— were Jewish exorcists!
 - b. So where did that power come from? If it came from God, so must Jesus
 3. Only honest conclusion was the miracle was "*finger of God?*" (**Exo 8:19**)
- C. Jesus has the power to overpowers the evil one (**Luke 11:21-22**)
1. This is **allegory**; Satan is armed man who guards his house & possessions
 - a. Jesus is stronger man who enters Satan's house and overpowers him
 - b. That was point of exorcism—overpowered Satan and took his spoils
 - c. Jesus is more powerful than Satan; He had come to overpower evil one
 2. Remember in **Luke 5** where a lame man is lowered thru a roof to Jesus?
 - a. Friends go to great lengths, showing great faith, to get him to Jesus
 - 1) Jesus saw their faith, and said to him, "*Your sins are forgiven*" (**5:20**)
 - 2) Pharisees jump on that—"Who can forgive but God?" Fight is on!
 - b. Jesus asks if it's easier to say "*You are forgiven*" or "*Get up and walk*"
 - 1) Question is one of verifiability; how can you tell if sins are forgiven?
 - 2) He heals the man to verify Jesus has the power to forgive (**5:24-25**)
 3. That is the point of this exorcism story—both for Pharisees and for us.
 - a. The point isn't that we are to go around casting out demons like Jesus.
 - 1) Member's friend couldn't get F-15 engine to work—cast out demon!
 - 2) Point isn't whether demons possess people (or jet engines) today.
 - b. The point is Jesus has the power to defeat Satan's power in our lives
 - 1) Satan's is the strong man who has strong power in the lives of people
 - 2) That power may be addictions, anger, racism, greed, lust or apathy
 - 3) Which is the most powerful? Whichever one you're struggling with!
 - c. Point of the story -- Jesus is stronger than any of Satan's strongholds!

- D. So what happens after God's power removes evil from our lives? (**Lk 11:24-26**)
1. Jesus portrays a man from whom a demon has been removed as a house
 - a. The house has been swept clean and everything put in order
 - b. The problem is that the house remains empty and unoccupied
 - c. So the demon simply moves back in and brings some friends with him!
 2. Nature abhors a vacuum, and that is true of our spiritual lives as well
 - a. Isn't enough to evict evil; we must fill the void with God and good!
 - b. What the biggest failure with dieting to lose weight (besides not starting)
 - 1) Anyone lose weight and then find it again... along with its friends?
 - 2) Why? We didn't fill the void with good eating and exercise habits
 - c. It not enough to lose the bad, you have to fill it up with God!
 3. Jesus warns us about being casual with evil in our lives (**Luke 11:23**)
He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters.
 - a. Discipleship is no Sunday stroll with Jesus; we must commit to him fully
 - b. The nooks and crannies of our hearts and lives must be filled with God
 - 1) Inwardly, that is through prayer, scripture, meditation, reading
 - 2) Outwardly, it takes place thru formal and informal fellowship
 - 3) Upwardly, it is through worship and service to God by serving others
 4. **Invitation:** Have you accepted Jesus' power to save? Are you filling your

III. Conclusion

- A. So what was my ulterior motive for the lesson this morning?
1. Our text this morning just happens to be our NT daily reading for today
 - a. If you did already your daily reading for today—then it sounded familiar
 - b. If you didn't already do your reading, we did the NT part together
 2. If you haven't been reading, then start NOW (*you don't have to catch up*)
- B. David says this in his poem to the Law of God in **Psalm 119**
- ¹⁰⁵ *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*
- ¹⁰⁶ *I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws.*
- ¹¹¹ *Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart.*
- ¹¹² *My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.*
- C. Let's resolve to keep the light of God's word shining on path of our lives