

Luke Chapter 11 v 14 - 28

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Preacher: Peter Robinson

[0 : 00] Welcome to all of you. Just let folk find their seats as well. Good to welcome some visitors from various parts of the country. I don't know if we've got anybody from overseas particularly, but from various parts of the country.

Welcome you especially. Trust that together with us you might know the joy of fellowshiping with the Lord our God and worshipping Him. Now, why are we here? We're here again of course to bring praise and honour and glory to the Lord our God.

And David in his Psalm 103 begins, the AV puts it, bless the Lord, or we put it in our own translations now. Praise the Lord means the same thing, give honour, glory to God.

Praise the Lord, O my soul, all my inmost being. Praise His holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, all the good things that He's done for us.

And the greatest of course is the gift of His Son, the Lord Jesus. But we come, there's lots of nice seats here on the second row. We reserve them especially for people who are just one minute late to embarrass them.

[1 : 16] But lovely, welcome, welcome. Good to see you. We give thanks to God because He is not only the giver of our Lord Jesus Christ, the giver of every good and perfect gift.

He is our maker, our creator, and our first hymn sums that up. O my soul, arise and bless your maker. 625, let's turn to that hymn in our books and stand and worship and bless the Lord, all our souls.

So 625. Let's continue in our worship, in our praise as we pray together.

Let us all pray. O Father in heaven, we come to you once more this morning with great joy and thankfulness for your goodness to us. Your goodness to us as a church.

Your goodness to us as individuals. Your goodness to this world, even though it is largely ignorant of your grace and your faithfulness.

[2 : 24] Although largely, Lord, this world has no time for you today to sing your praises or to delight in your salvation. Lord, we thank you for rescuing and saving us.

We thank you, O Lord, that it is all of your grace and goodness that we're here this morning, found amongst your people, found singing your praises. It's not because we are better people than anyone else.

We gladly confess and acknowledge this morning that we are sinners. Sinners, O Lord, who have broken your law. Sinners who have gone our own way. Sinners whose hearts, O Lord, have been so very wicked and selfish.

And yet, O Lord, there by your grace and goodness you reach down to us in the mud, the mire, and the dirt of our sin. And you lifted us up and you cleansed us with that precious blood of Jesus.

You took away our sin. You put a new heart within us and a new spirit within us. And you made us new creations. We thank you that we're here, O Lord, again to thank you for everything, all that we have.

[3 : 28] You're our maker. Yes, our creator. You're the giver of the sun and the rain. You're the one that makes the birds to fly. You're the one that makes the fish to swim. You're the one who gives us strength for every moment, every breath.

But, O Lord, you're the giver of your son. You're the giver of Jesus. You're the giver of that one who is the only sinless human being who ever lived.

The very God, man, Jesus Christ, who walked amongst us. And by his life and especially his death and resurrection, has broken the chains of our enslavement and brought us into life in all of its richness and fullness.

And, O Lord, even so, we acknowledge that the blessings we have now of knowing you and enjoying you, of being with your people, O Lord, they're just a taste. They're just a sample of what is yet to come. For we know, as we've sung, that one day we shall see you face to face. We shall be caught up. You'll call us home. Lord, this world is not our home. [4 : 28] It's just a temporary campsite. But, Lord, we shall be with you and be with you forevermore. And all the sorrow and all the grief and all the pain and all the difficulty and the trials of this life that have weighed us down and spoilt this world, Lord, will be removed and we shall enjoy you.

And you will enjoy us. And, O Lord, there shall be no end to it. Oh, what a day that will be. How we look forward to that day when Jesus comes again. For us a day of great delight.

Oh, but, Lord, for those who have yet to trust, yet to receive, yet to take hold of that wonderful gift, that invitation, that call to come to you, Lord, it will be a day of great sorrow for them.

And so we pray, help us in this world to be lights and to be salt, to be your witnesses, and to proclaim the good news of God.

Lord, we pray that, Lord, even now, as we come into your presence and seek your face, that by your Holy Spirit, you would minister to us and deal with us and speak with us and make yourself known to us.

[5 : 36] And as we've sung already, make us more like Jesus. For this we ask in his name now. Amen. Amen. Let's turn together in our Bibles and to the Gospel of Luke and Chapter 11.

Luke and Chapter 11. Now, before I went on break, then we were studying Luke, and Joel has carried on Luke, so he's brought us up to Chapter 11 and Verse 14.

And we're going to read then from there. So page 1043. If you have one of the Red Church Bibles, page 1043. The Gospel of Luke, Chapter 11, beginning at verse 14 and reading down to verse 28. Here is God's faithful word. 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.

But some of them said, by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons. Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven.

[6 : 57] Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, 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? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebul.

Now, if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your followers drive them out? But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. When someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up his plunder.

Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it.

[8 : 07] 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 person is worse than the first. As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.

He replied, Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it. If you could turn back with me then, if you would, to Luke and chapter 11, to that passage that I read a few moments ago, verses 14 through to 28.

I wonder if you can guess what I'm thinking of. I'm going to describe something to you. You are allowed at this moment, and only at this moment, to shout out what you think the answer is. Marmite. It's brown and sticky. Not a stick. Okay. That's a joke. What's brown and sticky? A stick. No, it's not a stick. It is made of yeast.

[9 : 29] Marmite. And you spread it on bread, and all those who love it say, yum, yum. No, not many. All those who don't like it go, marmite divides the world into two camps, lovers and haters.

And marmites become so well known as being this divisive element, as it were, this simple, sticky, gooey sort of spread made of yeast, that it's entered into the Cambridge Dictionary to also be used to describe people as marmite people.

And I don't need to say these names, but there's two men in power at the moment who are often described as marmite characters. You either love them, or you hate them, or you, there's very few people who are indifferent about marmite characters.

A marmite character, somebody who's, people who are absolutely devoted to, and people who absolutely reject. Jesus spoke about himself in a different way, even stronger way, when he said this, later in Luke, do you think I came to bring peace on earth?

No, I tell you, but division. From now on, there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two, and two against three. They will be divided, father against son, and son against father, mother against daughter, and daughter against mother.

[11 : 02] Mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.

Possibly some of the most shocking words that Jesus spoke. I've not come to bring peace, I've come to bring division.

And that truth is witnessed in the pages of the Gospels, as people met with Jesus. In John chapter 7, we're told the people were divided because of Jesus. Later on, John 9, 16, they were divided. 10, 19, the Jews who heard these words, Jesus' words, were again divided. And here in chapter 11 of Luke, we see that truth that Jesus brings division lived out in the crowds of people who witnessed his miracle.

put it another way, if you are into physics, then Newton's third law of motion explains that forces always come in action and reaction pairs.

The third law states that for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. wherever Jesus went, whatever Jesus said, whatever Jesus did, his actions created a reaction in those around about him.

[12 : 23] Nobody was indifferent. They either loved him or hated him as we see here. Jesus heals this man. He was mute.

He couldn't speak. It was a spiritual disease, we can put it that way, that had affected him, a demon. Jesus cast out the demon and the man spoke. Two reactions. The crowd was amazed, but some said, by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he drives out demons.

In fact, if we look through the Gospels, we find more often than not, especially, of course, as we get near the end of Jesus' ministry, the reaction to Jesus was mainly negative and, of course, ultimately led up to his crucifixion.

His rejection by the large part of the Jewish nation and his murder at the hands of the Roman occupying forces.

Every person alive today is divided by their response to Jesus. Verse 23 of this passage we read, whoever is not with me is against me.

[13 : 41] The concept that you can sit on the fence concerning God or concerning Jesus is entirely false according to Jesus and he's never wrong.

You are either with Jesus, for Jesus, or you're against Jesus and away from Jesus. You are either, as Jesus goes on to say, gathering others to him, whoever is not with me is against me, whoever does not gather with me scatters.

You are either drawing people, encouraging people to follow Jesus or you are telling them to stay away from Jesus and by your life you are encouraging them away from faith in him.

It's very stark, isn't it? It's very black and white in a world of grey. That's because it is black and white.

You are either for Jesus or you're against him. Each one of us here this morning is on one side of that imaginary fence. What about those that were negative?

[14 : 53] Those that were against him? Those who said that he drove out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons. Beelzebul was one of the Jewish names for the devil, Satan, as we call him.

They were saying, Jesus, that man that you've healed and the other people that you've healed from spiritual demons, you've done that with the devil's power, not with God's power.

That's a very serious thing to say, isn't it? Very, very serious thing to say. Now, they didn't deny that Jesus had healed the man. They didn't deny that the man who couldn't speak now spoke.

That was clear. It was obvious that something had happened, a miracle had happened, but they wouldn't accept that this miracle was the work of God because if they did that, then they'd have to accept that Jesus was from God and they'd have to believe in him.

And there was no way that they were willing to accept Jesus and therefore they had to come up with another explanation. They had to invent another way of explaining what he was doing and so they could only think of this one thing.

[16:02] He was doing it with the devil's power. Now, in our day and age, in our country, and in the West, as a whole, most people, most reasonable people, most thinking people will accept that Jesus was a remarkable man.

they'll accept that he was a real person in history. That's beyond dispute, that he really did live, that he really was someone who went around and spoke and taught and was the instigator, the creator of this religion of Christianity.

Most people will accept that Christianity has influenced and affected millions of people. There are millions of followers. They acknowledge that this Jesus is somebody very, very special in the history of the world.

But they will not accept that he's God. They will not accept that he's God. The miracles, particularly his resurrection from the dead, they seek to explain away.

They don't say what the Jews said here, that he was doing the devil's work. They find a more rational explanation. There's another way to look at it.

[17:11] There's another way to understand, to explain how he did these things. Or, of course, it's much simpler just to say that the disciples and the apostles and those who were eyewitnesses and saw it actually just exaggerated and made up a fabricated story.

That's simpler, isn't it? Just discredit the New Testament and the Bible rather than accepting that these eyewitness accounts are true. But it boils down to the same thing.

They are against him. To explain away his miracles, to explain away and to deny that he is God is to be against him.

Now, the reasons that you may have even and the world has around about us for denying and rejecting Jesus may sound more civilized than believing in demons and the devil. But in the end, it boils down to the same reaction.

you're against him. Whatever explanations you have, whatever reasons you have and are holding on to it and believing and saying, well, this is the reason that I won't accept Jesus as the God of my life.

[18:20] I won't accept that he is the one that I must put my faith and trust in. Whatever reason you've got, it is unreasonable. And it's not true. But let's look at how Jesus answered these accusers, these rejecters.

Notice that they don't say it to his face. Some of them said, by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he's drawing out demons, Jesus knew their thoughts.

They didn't come up to Jesus and say, oh, you're doing this by the devil's power, just amongst themselves. But Jesus knew their thoughts. He knew their thoughts completely. And he knows your thoughts as well completely.

You can't hide from God. You can't hide from Jesus. You can put on a mask, as it were, to others. You can put on a facade, an outward appearance of all sorts of things.

And you can pretend and smile. You can give a good impression. But God knows your heart. And he knows whether in your heart you are for him or against him.

[19:29] He knows what you're thinking even this morning. perhaps again rattling through your rationale, your reasons why he is not the God of your life.

And Jesus knows how to answer your reasons as he answers these here. He knows how to demolish the argument that they're making, the argument they're putting forth.

He drives out demons by Satan, by the power of the devil. He demolishes their argument as he can do ours. But let's just look at what he says here to them. He answers them in two ways and then he goes on from there to press home the point of who he is as God.

Verse 17, any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined and a house divided against itself will stand. If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? Imagine it, that an army is going to war and two battalions are in that army and instead of fighting the enemy the two battalions fight each other.

Well, they're going to be defeated, aren't they? They can't stand. They divided, sorry, united we stand, divided we fall. That's basic common sense. And so Jesus says, how can I use Satan's power against Satan because that's nonsensical, that's illogical, that's unreasonable.

[20 : 53] They must clearly be on opposite sides if Jesus is working against Satan. And there's only one other side opposite to Satan and that's God.

And then he goes on to say, I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebul. Verse 19, now if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then they will be your judges. There were exorcists amongst the Jewish people. They recognized spiritual demons and there were those who practiced exorcism.

You can read about some of them later on in Acts 19. They came to a bit of a sticky end. They tried to copy the Apostle Paul but they hadn't actually sided with Jesus. What Jesus is saying is this, you've got people, your own followers who drive out demons.

Are you saying that they drive out those demons by the power of Satan as well? Well of course not. You're saying they drive out those demons by the power of God. Well if I'm driving out demons by the then I must be doing it by the power of God.

[22 : 01] Let them be your judges. In other words let those people who are driving out demons by the power of God show and prove to you that clearly I'm doing the same. In fact he goes on even stronger.

If I drive out demons by the finger of God and that's a very important little phrase, it goes back to the Exodus. the finger of God. It means, in one sense it means clearly that it's God's hand upon it but it means simply this, for God to do these things it's about as difficult as him wiggling his little finger. It's not hard. The power of God. If I drive out demons by the finger of God then the kingdom of God has come upon you. In other words, the king is here and the kingdom of God is in this place.

There's a kingdom and a king. So Jesus is demolished their arguments. I can't be working for Satan because I wouldn't be working against him if I was working for him and if I'm working for God then clearly as you claim your exorcists as it were are working for God too.

But now he wants to go even stronger. He wants them to understand something else. He presses his point further to prove that he must be God and this is the work of God and he uses a very simple illustration.

[23 : 31] When a strong man fully armed guards his own house, his possessions are safe. When someone stronger attacks and overpowers him he takes away the armor in which he trusted and divides up his plunder, takes his goods as it were.

It's clear what's being said. The strong man in the first instance is Satan. He protects his own house, his own kingdom. He keeps as it were certain people, we'll see why, under his control. devil. The devil is real. He's not a myth, he's not a fairy story, he's not a squeaky toy in the back of a car window.

He's the ruler of the minds and hearts of the people of this world, over you. Here's what John writes in 1 John 5 19. We know that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

We haven't time to go into all of this but just think about what happened yesterday in America and today. Think about what's going on throughout the world even today where murder and killing and all sorts of atrocities are taking place.

[24 : 38] There is real evil, isn't there? Real evil. How do we explain that? Oh, upbringing, education, background, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. The devil is real because evil is real.

And he's referred to elsewhere even by Jesus as the God of this world. Men and women are under his influence. Men and women are under his control in one sense.

He is guiding. He is playing upon their lusts, their desires, their appetites, their selfishness. We may not like the fact.

We may even choose to reject this truth, but the reality is that as long as you reject Jesus, you remain under the devil's power. You remain in his grasp.

You remain, as it were, behind his doors. You are unfree. You are captive. And for that very reason, Jesus came. He came as the stronger to attack and to overpower Satan.

[25 : 45] 1 John again, this time chapter 3. The one, the person who does what is sinful is of the devil. Have you sinned? You are of the devil.

Because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God came, the reason the Son of God appeared, was to destroy the devil's work. In other words, to set you free from the power of sin, to bring you out of his captivity.

That's why it talks about he takes away his armor. In other words, he defeats him. This is what Christ did at the cross when he took our sin and died in our place.

And therefore, he is raiding the kingdom of darkness. Jesus has come to raid, to set free, to deliver, to rescue you and me and whoever we are.

So whatever reasons you have that you may feel are valid to deny Jesus as the God of your life, they aren't valid and they aren't reasonable and they aren't sufficient.

[26 : 50] You've no excuse for brushing aside the call of Christ to follow him and to become his. But then there comes a warning here.

It's probably one of the most difficult passages in Luke, verse 24. But I think that we just simply read it as Jesus has said it. Verses 24, when an impure spirit comes out of a person, goes through arid places seeking rest and doesn't find it.

It says, I'll return to the house I left. When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order, goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself and they go in and live there and the final condition of that person is worse than the first.

What's going on? It's a description of what could happen to to any one of us. It's a warning.

In the context of which Jesus is speaking, in other words, in that day there were many people that he had met with who had been under the influence and control of demons. Maybe the man legion who had so many that he couldn't be chained and he cut himself.

[28 : 00] He was completely unable to hold down a life. Jesus set him free and delivered him. Those demons left him and went into the, if you remember, into the pigs.

There's this man, there's many others as well, who were delivered and rescued from spiritual powers. They had been cleansed, as it were, from these things. But there needed to be something else that filled them.

And that had to be Jesus. But to ourselves and to you, I have to say this. I believe that Jesus' warning is extremely stark and extremely important.

important. It's this, that many people today have been influenced to a certain degree by Christianity. In other words, what I mean is this, that they've heard about Jesus, they've heard about God, and perhaps you're one of those people, and over time their lives have become more moral.

They maybe started going to church even. And as they've heard about things that are mixed with Christians, there's been a change. They don't swear as much as they did, or have sought not to.

[29 : 14] They've cut out and cut down the amount of alcohol that they consume. In one sense, their lives are cleaner, or better, or less cluttered, or less, in their eyes, sinful than before.

than before. There's a change taking place. They're better people.

But here's the warning from Jesus. Like a person who's been delivered of a demon, these people are now in grave danger if they allow, as it were, their lives to remain empty.

But Jesus says, after a while, that spirit will return to them, and in fact, they will get worse. And their condition, their final condition, is worse than before.

One of the saddest sights for any Christian is when they see those who begin to come to church, begin to see some change outwardly in their lives, who even give the appearance that they are believers, and yet, in a short time, they turn around and they go back to the world, go back to their practices before, and are even worse than before.

[30 : 34] And in the short time that I've been here, these five years, sadly, I've known more than one person that this has happened to. And if you know, then you'll know what I mean.

And their situation is so much worse. They seem to be coming through. They seem to be changing. They seem to be those who were really Christian.

But their lives were only outward, and their hearts were still empty, and ultimately, very shortly, the law, the temptation, the desire, came back, and they were worse than they were before.

It's a tragedy. And the question surely must be this. How can we prevent this happening? How can you prevent this happening to you? Perhaps you're one of those people you've been coming to church for some time, and you've listened, and you've heard, and your thinking is changing a little bit, and your life is changing a little bit, but you haven't yet come over to Christ.

You haven't yet committed yourself to him. You're still, in your view, on the fence. But you're not. You're still in the camp. You're still in the dominion of the devil. He still has that hold on you, because until Christ comes and fills your heart by his spirit, there's a vacuum.

[31 : 49] And it can't remain a vacuum for long. How do we prevent that? We take hold of the words that Jesus spoke in reply to this woman. She says, blessed are you.

She's complimenting Jesus, in one sense, by saying, oh, the woman, Mary, who gave you birth and looked after you, she's so blessed, because she brought you into this world, and it's been a blessing to us.

But Jesus is saying this. You're only blessed. You're only happy. You're only saved. You're only truly alive when you not only hear God's word, but you obey it.

In other words, you hear Jesus' call, come to me and believe on me. Come to me and be filled with me. Come and put your trust in me. The Bible says, whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Ask Jesus to save you from your sins, so that you may experience for yourself the promise that he wants to fulfill in your life. That wonderful promise from Revelation chapter 3, verse 20.

[32 : 55] Here I am. I stand at the door and knock. Anyone who hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in. Your heart and your life cannot be evacuated.

Either Christ lives in you by his spirit, or sin lives in you by Satan. So we're back to where we began.

Do you love Christ? Do you hate him? Are you for him? Are you against him? There's only one side that you can be on.

Let me urge you, as Jesus urges you, whatever reason, whatever excuse that you've made to put off believing and taking Christ as your God, give it up.

It's empty and false. Ask him to come in. And he will. He always does. Let's pray.

[34 : 16] Thank you, Lord Jesus, that whenever you speak, you speak words of truth and clarity. You don't speak to us confusing, mumbo-jumbo. You don't speak to us words which can be taken this way or that way or can be interpreted this way or that way.

You speak clearly and plainly to us and you say, whoever is not for me is against me. We can't get away from that. It's clear and it's straight. And we thank you, Lord Jesus, that to be for you means that you are for us.

To be for you means that, Lord, you are our Savior and our Lord. To be for you means that we have been rescued and delivered from the power and the control of the devil.

It means that we are free. Free from sin's dominion over us. Free from the threat. Free from the condemnation. Free from the fear, Lord, that has lived, as it were, in our hearts all our lives.

We're free to know you, to love you, to enjoy you, to live. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that you came and at great cost to yourself, you destroyed the power of the devil.

[35 : 27] And at great cost, oh Lord, you died the death that we deserve to die so that we might live the life that you now live. Oh Lord, we pray that you would cause us ever more to say, I am on the Lord's side.

And to live lives that are the effective reality of those words. For we ask it in your name, oh Lord, our God, and for the sake of your Son, and for his glory and praise.

Amen. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Unto God, the blessed and only ruler, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see, to him be honour and might forever.

Amen.