Questions on Luke 11vv14-28

**Getting started**

1. What comes into your mind when you think about the Devil?
2. How much have you thought about him so far in your Christian life?
3. What impact upon your life, and the world, do you think the Devil has?

**Into the text**

1. What are the 3 reactions Luke records in vv14-16 to the miracle Jesus performed? How typical are these reactions today when you tell someone about Jesus?
2. What is the particular criticism of the people (revealed in Matthew’s account in Matthew 12v24 as Pharisees) to Jesus’ miracle? Can you think why they have come to this conclusion?
3. How does Jesus expose the flaw in their logic in vv17-20?
4. What does he want them to realise about the source of his powers (vv20)? How does Exodus 8v19 help us to understand Jesus’ point?
5. What does the image in vv21-22 teach us about the comparative strengths of the Devil and Jesus? Where do we see this displayed? (time permitting, have a look at Luke 4v1-13, Luke 4vv33-37, Luke 8vv26-39, Colossians 2v15, Revelation 20v7-10)
6. What does Jesus want his hearers to do in the light of his authority over the devil? (V23)
7. What is being warned against by Jesus in Luke 11v24-26? Can you think of people who need this warning today?
8. What is striking about the way Jesus responds to the woman’s praise of his mother (v27-28)? How does this complete the challenge Jesus starts in v23?

**Making it personal**

1. How does this passage sharpen your understanding of the Devil – his identity, his character, and his inferiority, compared to Jesus?
2. Do you see yourself as part of the plunder won from the Devil through the Cross? How does that make you feel towards the Devil and Jesus?
3. Jesus teaches that each person is either with him or – ultimately- against him? Had you seen the stakes being that high before in the decisions people make about Jesus?
4. Is there anybody you can think of who is enjoying the benefits Jesus is giving them, but without seeing the need to give him central place in their lives? What might you be able to say to them? How can you pray for them?
5. What is the ongoing challenge for you from v28?

Sermon on Luke 11vv14-28

‘Jesus - more powerful than the devil’

I’d like to ask you what comes into your minds when you hear these words: **‘The devil’**

* Is it someone real but evil (like a Hitler) or someone imaginary (like a Santa Claus)?
* Does he have any relevance to your life, and the lives of others?

Today, we are going to discover what Jesus wants us to know about the devil….

He wants us to realise that although the devil is a real and dangerous enemy, he has been defeated by Jesus. Jesus is far **MORE** powerful than the devil, and Jesus frees -and keeps secure- all who put their trust in him.

Let’s turn then to Luke 11 on p1043 of Bibles to listen to Jesus teaching…

Jesus has just met a man in a wretched state. A demon – that is one of the Devil’s agents of chaos- had entered this man, and deprived him of the ability to speak (image of man with mask over his mouth)

Just think how horrible this must have been for this poor guy. **Not** to be able to speak to his family, his friends, members of his community.

Jesus did a **mighty miracle** for this man. He drove out the demon from him, and – now- the man was able to speak again.

Little surprise then that people were amazed at the sheer power of Jesus.

But not everyone! Luke tells us – in v15 – that SOME people questioned HOW Jesus was ABLE to do this miracle…

‘By Beelzebul,

(that is) the prince of demons,

he is driving out demons.”

Well, that’s a very **strong** conclusion to have reached, and -if left uncorrected- could make us all recoil from Jesus, wanting nothing whatsoever to do with him….

So in vv 17-20, Jesus exposes (1) **The flaw in their logic**

‘*Why on earth’* , says Jesus, ‘*would the Devil decide to drive out his agents, these demons, from the lives of people?*

* It would be as crackers as Gareth Southgate sacking the best members of his squad!
* Or a party leader deliberately undermining the key members of his team
* Or the CEO of a business badmouthing his key executives to a client!

‘If Satan is divided against himself,

how can his kingdom stand?

~If this were to happen, Satan’s evil kingdom would fall, as certainly as a building would topple and fall (image of crumbling building)

That’s a powerful argument, I’m sure we can see.

But there’s another flaw in their logic Jesus wants them to see and feel. This comes from the fact that many of Jesus’ current critics approved the efforts of their own men to deliver evil spirits from the lives of people.

**‘**By whom do **your followers** drive these demons out?’

‘Surely -to be consistent – you’d have to say that they too did this by the power of Beelzebub.’

If you say this, your followers will become your Judges (Image of a Judge) warns Jesus.

‘*Rather*’, says Jesus, *‘you should realise that the source of my power is not the Devil, but the finger of God, v20 (*But if I drive out demons by the finger of God) and rejoice that the kingdom of God has come upon you**) .**

That phrase ‘the finger of God’ was the verdict of Pharoah’s magicians, when faced by the scale of the miracles God had enabled Moses to do.

Jesus is saying that the God who’d enabled Moses to oppose and defeat Pharoah centuries earlier is NOW enabling him to roll back the forces of evil and bring in God’s *eternal kingdom….’*

The first thing then that Jesus does is to expose the **flaw in the logic** of his critics**.**

~ But he wants to do **very much more** for them than just win an argument….

~ Positively, he wants to reveal to them how **superior** he is to the Devil (The supremacy of Jesus over Satan**)** so that they will choose to trust him, and follow him

Listen to the striking image Jesus uses in vv21-22

“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 armour in which the man trusted

and divides up his plunder.

Fans of James Bond movies will understand this image well. Take the last 007 movies [Poster of ‘No time to die’]. There, the evil baddy Sarin has kidnapped the beautiful Marianne Swann, and taken her as a prisoner to his well-armed lair. He’s safe, until Bond arrives, defeats the guards and shoots Sarin dead, so that Marianne can make her escape.

Well says Jesus, it’s a bit like that with the Devil and me….

The Devil is strong – he has dripped lies into the ears of people since the Garden of Eden, lies about God’s character, lies that we believed. He has blinded our spiritual eyes so that we fail to grasp the majesty and goodness of God. He has taken us captive, separated from God, with our lives spoiled.

The devil is a strong man – for sure- BUT his strength is puny compared to mine!

Jesus is stronger than Satan

He attacks and overpowers him

He takes away his armour

He divides up his plunder

Jesus has been doing this in his ministry so far- outwitting the devil’s temptations, snatching people from the devil’s grip. Indeed, the mute man now speaking (image of mute man now speaking) is a living example of plunder wrested from the Devil’s unwilling hands!

In a short time, Jesus will go to die on a Cross (image of Jesus on a cross) and listen to some striking words in the Bible describing the effect of the Cross

And having disarmed the powers and authorities

Jesus (He) made a public spectacle of them

**Triumphing over them by the Cross**

So, Jesus wants ALL to know

* That he is **not** in league with the Devil;
* Rather, he is **infinitely stronger** than him;
* He is winning **daily victories** over him,
* One day soon he will crush the devil’s power through the cross;
* There will come a day when the devil will be destroyed forever.

Because all that is true, says Jesus :- ‘**It’s time to pick a side!’**

~ This week, people in our country had to pick which party they wanted to rule over them

~ ‘***Even more*** *important than our decision this week’*, says Jesus, ‘*is the decision we make about Jesus.’*

**“**Whoever is not with me is against me,

and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

We can’t ultimately be neutral. We are either with Jesus or against him; gathering for him, or scattering.

Jesus knew he needed to be blunt because it is **all too possible** for people to want the benefits he brings, but to remain uncommitted to him….

I think that’s the point of his strange little image in vv24/25. He pictures that demon -driven out of the mute man- wandering around. He gathers 7 other evil spirts and then returns to the mute man, eager to capture him afresh.

Jesus is warning the man (Image of mute man)

‘It’s not enough to be freed.

You need to be filled with the Spirit of Jesus’

I think that Jesus would also want to warn his critics. He’d want them to realise that they need to turn from their hostility or their apathy to him, and recognise him as the one come from God to free them from the power of sin, the Devil and death itself, and fill them with his Holy Spirit. Jews had been waiting for God to send a Messiah to them for centuries, and ‘*Here I am’* says Jesus. *‘Don’t miss out on the only one who can rescue people.’*

He'd say **the same to people today**. I am often invited to go and pray with people from the village, asking for God’s help for them. If those prayers are kindly answered with a ‘Yes’ by God, Jesus would want them not merely to be happy with the benefits they have received, but he’d want them to be filled by God, eager to live closely with God, living under his guidance, wanting to please him…

~ What do we have to do to receive those deep blessings from Jesus. It’s not complicated and is crystal clear from the final 2 verses of this exchange

A woman comes up to Jesus (image of woman and Jesus) obviously very impressed by what he’s done and the teaching he’s given: “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.” she says

But look at the surprising reply Jesus makes

“Blessed **rather** are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”

~ Isn’t that amazing – the blessing of God falls NOT automatically on members of Jesus’ biological family, but rather on those who have decided to **join his side**, by hearing his word and obeying it.

~ Is that you today? If so, you are blessed. **Continue** to hear and obey Jesus’ word, trusting in all he did for you on the Cross to break the grip of Satan upon you, praying expectantly for the Lord to fill you with his Holy Spirit. Rejoice in those amazing blessings of God, and share them with others…

~ If that is not yet you, well how about coming to Jesus today and ask him to free you and fill you, even today. If you do, today will be an even better day for you than Thursday was for Keir Starmer. For it will mean that you not just win power for 5 years, but enter the Kingdom of God ‘ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven’ for all eternity…

[Prayer]