

A Devotional Study of Luke's Gospel

Study Eighteen: Luke 11:14-11:41

Part Eighteen: Day One

14 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. 15 But some of them said, "By Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons." 16 Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven.

11:14 – I am also amazed, along with the crowd, that an evil spirit has the power to prevent someone from speaking! I suppose that means that our inability to communicate can at times be the result of spiritual oppression and opposition. There are some problems that only have a spiritual solution—no amount of medical treatment was going to help this man. I wonder how long the man had been unable to speak? That doesn't matter, however, for nothing is too difficult for God to do.

Is there a problem with which you are struggling? You must at least consider whether the problem is spiritual and not natural. That is where discernment comes in, for the Holy Spirit can reveal to you what the nature of the problem is. Paul wrote:

By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold" when away! I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:1-5).

Ask the Lord for insight into your tough problem today and be open to its spiritual solution.

11:15 – It makes sense that evil spirits would try to hide their existence or deny their ultimate defeat. The people who said that Jesus did this by the power of Satan had a stronghold just like Paul referred to above. This stronghold was an opinion or view that powerfully influenced their attitude and prevented them from seeing the hand of God in their midst.

Can you imagine that some said that Jesus did what He did with the help of Satan?

If you are going to do things for God, your motives and your source of help will be questioned. Get used to it! If they did it to Jesus, they will do it to you. You shouldn't be sad when that happens, but rather rejoice! You get to follow Jesus in every way.

11:16 – Jesus had just healed a mute man and some asked Him for a sign from heaven! What did they want exactly? They did not ask this in faith, but rather in unbelief. What aggravation Jesus had to endure from His own creation! Jesus kept on doing what the

Father wanted Him to do, however, regardless of what people thought or how much opposition He encountered from the kingdom of darkness, using men and women as their agents.

Part Eighteen: Day Two

17 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall. 18 If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebub. 19 Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. 20 But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

11:17&18 – Jesus always knew their thoughts. He knows yours, too. I have often said that if God was going to “get” you, He would have “gotten” you by now. He is intimately acquainted with all your ways, however, and still loves you. Therefore, why not be honest with Him? Tell God what’s on your heart—your doubts, fears and anger. He already knows what they are, so telling Him is not for His benefit but rather for yours.

Jesus made a simple defense of His practice of casting out evil spirits. He could not do it by the power of darkness, for then that kingdom would be divided against itself. If the Church fully understood this principle, we would not have so many divisions that weaken our witness and power. **Do you think our enemy understands this and tries to keep us apart?** I am in no hurry to judge any church for what they do or believe. I must find some way to stand with them, for together we are to build God’s kingdom. Paul wrote: “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:2-4).

Furthermore, Jesus said:

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me (John 17:21-23).

Determine to do all you can to be in unity with other believers.

11:19 – By the way, Beelzebub literally means “lord of the flies.” It was a derogatory term used by the Jews to describe idolatry. The name carried the sense that dung attracted flies so that the object of the idolatry and the idolater were the equivalent of dung. Notice that Jesus addressed this insult directly and used the name Beelzebub in His response. Jesus used even this nasty insult to instruct the people in hope that some would repent.

Notice too that Jesus brought their insult closer to home, so to speak. He asked if their “followers” who were doing what He did were also in league with Beelzebub. It was one

thing to call Jesus a unclean idolater, but quite another to attribute the same to their sons and brothers who were also casting out demons.

You should note that if you are a follower of Jesus and do what Jesus did, then people will use the same insults on you that they used on Him:

"A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!" (Matthew 10:24-25).

11:20 – Jesus left them with this thought: If He did not cast out demons by the power of demons but rather by the power of God, then God's kingdom had come. This Kingdom, however, didn't have a literal throne, but a heavenly one with spiritual power and expression. Whenever I have encountered an evil spirit, I have seen that the kingdom of my God is superior to the kingdom of evil. I have therefore cast the spirit out or commanded it to stop in the name of Jesus.

You cannot counsel, pastor, reason with, or work with an evil spirit. There is only one thing to do with them and that is cast them out or bind them in the name of Jesus. If you are having a problem, **why not go through your home or office and anoint it in the name of Jesus, commanding any evil spirit to depart?** Anoint your children's bedroom or clothes and make the same command in the name of Jesus. Don't keep fighting a spiritual being with natural weapons. Use the name of Jesus and stand on the authority of the King.

Part Eighteen: Day Three

21 "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. 22 But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils. 23 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters. 24 "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' 25 When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. 26 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 man is worse than the first."

11:21&22 –If I were Jesus, I would have been heading home, nursing hurt feelings from the insult and ill treatment I had just received. Thank God I'm not Jesus! Jesus continued to teach the people who had called Him a dung worshipper! What grace! What a Lord we serve!

Jesus continued to show why He could not have been casting out evil with the help of evil. Only a stronger force could cast out the resident spirit. That could not be a power from the same kingdom; He had to do what He did as an expression of God's kingdom.

Jesus was a logical thinker and presented His arguments and defense in convincing terms. I love Jesus and I enjoy studying His ministry manner. There has never been nor will there ever be another like Him.

11:23 – This verse can seem a bit hard to grasp, so let's look at another translation: "Anyone who isn't helping me opposes me, and anyone who isn't working with me is actually working against me" (New Living Translation). Since these evil spirits were not working with Jesus but responding to His command to come out, then they could not be working together with Him in any way, shape or form. Jesus logically proved that He could not be in league with evil while casting the evil out of people.

11:24 – Jesus indicated that evil spirits are intelligent beings with purpose. They need a fleshly place to "rest" so they can manifest their behavior. **(Remember the pigs that went rushing down the slope after the legion had been cast out of the man in Luke 8:32-33?) If you don't "believe" in the existence of evil spirits, then how can you be a follower of Jesus?** Jesus not only believed in their existence, He interacted with them. **If they don't exist, who was Jesus talking to and casting out? Was Jesus accommodating the people and their superstitions?** He was not! He was the Son of God and He was dealing with spiritual reality.

11:25&26 – Jesus then taught that evil spirits try to come back to the person or animal where they once resided. Unless there is something there more powerful to prevent their return, they will re-inhabit their former abode. What's more, this evil spirit will come back home, bringing companions with it to make the person's life even more miserable than before.

It is ludicrous to think that evil spirits stopped operating after Jesus' death or since the age of the apostles. The kingdom of darkness is alive and active. I am glad, however, that Jesus is also alive and active. Evil spirits still obey His commands and I want to stay close to Jesus so He can protect me and mine. I also want to stay close so that when I encounter evil spirits, I will be protected by Jesus' blood and name. Evil spirits are a reality and you need to be equipped to deal with them when necessary. Denying their existence or ignoring their presence will never deal with the problem.

Part Eighteen: Day Four

27 As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you." 28 He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." 29 As the crowds increased, Jesus said, "This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah."

11:27 – A woman in the crowd listening to all this was carried away with admiration, not for Jesus, but for Mary, His mother. The stories of Jewish mothers are legendary and here was presumably one Jewish mother declaring the blessedness of the woman who gave birth to this great Teacher and Rabbi named Jesus. But association with God or the things

of God doesn't make anyone special in God's eyes. Jesus was quick to temper her exuberant proclamation.

11:28 – Jesus said that the blessing wasn't in association, relationship, position or rank, but in obedience to God's word. Someone had just called Jesus a bad name and now someone was praising His mother and indirectly declaring that Jesus was great and therefore, so was His mother. Jesus wasn't swayed by insults or compliments. He stayed focused on His mission and wasn't deterred by the positive or negative reaction of anyone. In fact, John reported: “But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man” (John 2:24-25).

Jesus knew the fickle nature of man and still served man. Yet He gave Himself only to the Father and His will and from that mandate He served mankind. We need to consider this and replicate it in our own lives, keeping the focus on the Father regardless of how people respond to our ministry.

11:29 – Once again we see that Jesus wasn't influenced by the responses of others. The crowds began to assemble but Jesus wasn't impressed. He launched into a sermon that was critical of the very crowds who were coming. He had addressed the comment from verse 15 that He was in league with the devil. Then He addressed the demand from verse 16 that He produce a sign from heaven to prove His validity (as if casting out a demon isn't enough of a sign!).

The people wanted a sign and they were going to get one, but it would be the sign of Jonah, which Jesus went on to explain. Notice how clear He was with His followers about His coming suffering and death. Then notice how vague or veiled He was with the crowds who came to listen and judge. He condemned their desire for a sign and called them a wicked generation. Imagine how a devout Jew received this comment that he or she was wicked.

Don't ever be impressed with your crowds or lack thereof. A crowd of people isn't an indication that you are doing something right, and a lack of people isn't an indication that you are doing something wrong or poorly.

Part Eighteen: Day Five

30 For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation. 31 The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here. 32 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.

11:30 – I had never noticed that Jonah was a *sign* to the Ninevites. **Does that mean the Ninevites knew his story of being in the whale?** If they did, perhaps that added urgency to their repentance, for they knew that God had sent Jonah and dealt with him severely as he tried to run away from his mission. Jonah's story is a short one; perhaps you should read it today and write down any insights you get from the reading, especially any similarities between Jesus' mission and Jonah's. It is interesting that Nineveh repented when Jonah delivered his message, but the Jews stubbornly resisted Jesus' message.

11:31 – Jesus was referring to the Queen of Sheba, who visited Solomon in 1 Kings 10. She will rise at the judgment with all other humans and will voice her condemnation, as will the residents of Nineveh, because the Jews didn't respond to Jesus' ministry. The Queen had to make a concerted effort to go and see Solomon. When she saw and heard Solomon, she marveled. Jesus had come to the Jews and they ignored or discredited His wisdom, which was greater than Solomon's.

Jesus testified that He was greater than Solomon. Yet the Lord had promised Solomon that there would never be another king like him: "I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be" (1 Kings 3:12-13). That means that Jesus was no ordinary descendant of Solomon, for He declared Himself to be greater. This indicated that Jesus' kingdom was not to be like Solomon's but greater than Solomon's. The Jews wanted someone to sit on the throne of David, but Jesus came to establish a new spiritual throne and Kingdom. The Jews struggle with this truth to this day.

By the way, if this claim isn't true, then Jesus could not be a prophet, but rather a self-promoting, crazed individual because He declared Himself to be greater than Solomon and Jonah.

11:32 – Jonah was considered to have been a prophet, but Jesus was a greater prophet and missionary than Jonah. This must have offended the Jews, for both the Queen and the Ninevites were Gentiles and not Jews. Jesus was saying that some Gentiles would rise and condemn the Jews for their lack of responsiveness to Jesus.

We owe Jesus our attention, allegiance, obedience and even our very lives. He is superior to any king, prophet or wise man the world has ever known. We are not free to consider whether we will respond to His message or commands. We are to respond and obey. **Are you convinced that what Jesus said was superior to any and all other voices? Do you see Him as the supreme figure in human history?**

Part Eighteen: Day Six

33 "No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light. 34 Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. 35 See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. 36 Therefore, if your

whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you.”

11:33 – Notice the context in which Jesus made this statement. Jesus did His good works for all to see. In ancient times, it was said that someone who had evil in mind would light a candle and then hide it under a bushel. Then when all were asleep, the person would take off the cover and have light to do evil deeds. Jesus wasn’t doing evil deeds by casting spirits out of people. He was doing good deeds—lighting a candle so to speak—so that there would be light in a dark world.

11:34 –The Jews had an incorrect perspective on some spiritual things and this caused them to see the good that Jesus was doing as evil. There is a popular word in modern circles and that word is paradigm (PAIR-a-dime). It means the model or mindset which one uses to interpret the events in one’s world. The Jews had an old and incorrect paradigm, and that caused them to misinterpret the current actions that Jesus was doing. Because they had a “bad eye” or wrong way of seeing things, then they could not correctly interpret what Jesus was doing.

It is easy to do what the Jews were doing. One can adopt a certain assumption about how “things are” and that is the way it is, no matter what other evidence presents itself. At one time, man’s paradigm was that the world was flat and that the sun circled the earth. When men came forward with evidence to prove those views incorrect, they were ignored or persecuted. **Do you have any paradigms that are keeping you from seeing the truth about someone or something?** If you do, Paul had the remedy for a “bad eye.”

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will (Romans 12:1-2).

11:35 - Do you need a mind change that will help you see new things in new ways? If so, then ask the Spirit to renew your mind and that renewal will transform your whole being. This will make your eye (paradigm) good, and will enable light (right perspectives) to fill your body. Jesus said to see to it that your eye is filling your body with light. That means that you may have to change your mind and admit you were wrong about certain assumptions or conclusions you have held.

Someone once said that he no longer put his views in concrete, but rather tacked them to a bulletin board. He did that so it was easier to change his mind when he was wrong. **Are your views in concrete, having to be blasted out to change, or are they loosely held on the bulletin board of your mind?**

11:36 – A correct mindset of spiritual things and Jesus will cause your whole body to be full of light. I hope that is the situation in your life. If not, then make up your mind to get your eye right.

Part Eighteen: Day Seven

37 When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table. 38 But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the meal, was surprised. 39 Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. 40 You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? 41 But give what is inside [the dish] to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.

11:37 – Now Jesus provided another practical example of someone with a bad eye that affected his perspective on life and Jesus. Jesus went to have lunch with a Pharisee.

11:38 – The Pharisee was looking at Jesus through the eye of legalism. His ritual said that Jesus should wash thoroughly. From the Pharisee's perspective, he was surprised and shocked that Jesus neglected such an important ritual. His "eye" told him that washing was important. Obviously Jesus did not share the Pharisee's view.

11:39 – Once again, Jesus knew the thoughts of those around Him. He knows your thoughts, too. Jesus addressed the wrong eye or paradigm that the man had. The Pharisee's "eye" said that one must wash the outside of man, leaving the inside untouched and evil. Jesus was telling the Pharisee that he needed a new paradigm to understand spiritual things! He was looking at things all wrong and had his priorities out of line.

11:40 – When you have an inaccurate paradigm, you have two options: defend it or change it. If you defend it and build your life around it, you are a fool according to Jesus. Jesus showed that God's priority was to heal the inside of man. The Pharisee's priority was outward conformance. The Pharisee had to change, but instead they decided to kill Jesus so they could keep their paradigm or eye. That is how strongly we can believe the wrong thing and give our life to it.

11:41 – It is hard to understand exactly what Jesus meant here. He said to give the inside to the poor and everything will be clean. When a Jew tithed or gave ten percent of his income to God, that made all the rest of his income "clean." Giving a portion actually made the whole holy to God. Perhaps Jesus was saying that making attempts to sanctify your inner man according to the will of God will therefore devote all your being to God.