

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Luke 11: 14-28

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue to read Luke Chapter 11 and today we will read verses 14 to 28.

Chapter 11 begins with the disciples asking Jesus how they could become people of prayer like Him. The most essential part of Jesus' answer is found in the latter half of verse 13: when we ask God, "how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" In other words, when we live in continual agreement with the Holy Spirit and constantly ask the Father, He will abundantly give the Holy Spirit to us. Under the leading of the Holy Spirit, we are able to know God's will, and gradually we become aligned with Him. Throughout the entire chapter 11 of the Gospel of Luke, the emphasis is on the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives. From verse 14 onward, in this discussion about casting out demons, the central focus is still the Holy Spirit.

Verse 14: "And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled."

During Jesus' earthly ministry, doing good, healing the sick, and casting out demons were common occurrences. On this occasion, He cast out a demon that had made a man mute. When the demon was driven out, the mute man began to speak, and the crowds were amazed.

Verse 15: "But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

Beelzebub was the name the Jews used for the prince of demons, sometimes called the “lord of the dung heap.” Originally, the name referred to the “lord of the flies,” Baal-Zebub. When a demon possesses a person, it treats the person as a house in which it lives. By occupying the person, it becomes the ruler of that “house.” So when Jesus cast out demons, some people said that He was casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons.

Verse 16: “Others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven.”

In fact, Jesus had just performed a miracle by casting out the demon that made the man mute. But for those who did not believe, no matter what miracle was done, it was of no use—they still would not believe. Instead, they demanded a sign from heaven. In their hearts they already had a preconceived idea of what should count as a miracle.

Verse 17-19: “But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls. If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub. And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.”

This is an obvious principle that everyone understands. Satan’s kingdom organizes the whole world into a system so that people no longer serve God but instead serve Satan. The organization and control within Satan’s kingdom are actually very strict; therefore, it would not be divided against itself. If it were divided against itself, that kingdom could not stand. Jesus continued, “Because you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebub. But if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out?” The Pharisees also had followers or disciples who cast out demons. If they claimed that Jesus cast out demons by Beelzebub, then by whose power were

their own disciples casting them out? In this way, their own people would judge them and expose the inconsistency of their accusation.

Verse 20: “But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

In the parallel passage in Gospel of Matthew chapter 12, the discussion is almost identical. But in Matthew 12:28 it says, “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.” These two statements are actually consistent with one another, because the Spirit of God is the power of God. Jesus was clearly telling those who came to challenge Him that He cast out demons by the Spirit of God, or by the power of God. Before the kingdom of God comes, people are living under the kingdom of Satan, under his authority, listening to his commands and arrangements. When the Spirit of God comes—when the power of God comes—it means that the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Verse 21: “When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.”

Here, the “strong man” refers to Satan. Those who are under Satan’s authority are guarded by this strong man. He regards them as his own house, and therefore he guards his house. “When he guards his own house, his goods are in peace.” Many times, when our lives become overly comfortable, we need to ask ourselves: do we truly have the peace that comes from the Holy Spirit within us, or are we simply at ease under Satan’s authority? For under Satan’s rule, his system is also very tightly organized. Over time, people grow accustomed to that kind of comfort. Eventually, Satan even requires people to pay a great price in exchange for what appears to be outward peace.

Verse 22: “But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.”

“But when one stronger than he comes,” this refers to Jesus Christ, who is stronger than Satan. He comes to overcome him. “He takes away the armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil.” Originally, we were all under Satan’s authority. In such a condition, life might seem outwardly peaceful. But one day Christ came—He who is stronger than Satan. He overcame Satan and rescued us from Satan’s dominion. Not only did He overcome him, but He also took away the armor and weapons on which Satan relied and divided his spoil.

Verse 23: “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.”

With regard to the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, there is no middle ground. Whoever is not with Me is not in the kingdom of God but is against Me; such a person is in Satan’s kingdom. Whoever does not gather with Me scatters. At the same time, Jesus spoke these words directly to those who were challenging Him—the scribes and the Pharisees. They claimed that Jesus cast out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons. So Jesus plainly told them, “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.”

This seems to be the opposite of what Jesus said earlier in Gospel of Luke 9:50. There, when John the Apostle saw someone casting out demons in Jesus’ name but not following with them, he wanted to stop him. But Jesus said, “Do not forbid him; for he who is not against you is on your side.” So there is an important prior condition: which kingdom are you in? If you are in the kingdom of God, then even if our ministries differ in direction or our methods differ, it is not a problem—whichever is not against us is helping us. But if someone is in Satan’s kingdom, then Jesus says, “He who is not with Me is against Me.”

Verse 24: “When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’”

The dwelling place of unclean spirits was originally supposed to be in the water. Later, they came to the dry places and sought the human body as a house in which to live. After an unclean spirit is cast out, it goes about wandering, passing through waterless places, searching for a place to rest. When it cannot find one, it says, “I will return to the house from which I came.”

Verse 25-26: “And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”

This parable is very interesting, as it compares a person to a house. Every house must have an occupant—either an unclean spirit or the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. If the unclean spirit is cast out but the Holy Spirit does not indwell, then, as this passage illustrates, after the spirit is driven out and the house is cleaned and decorated, the original spirit returns. Seeing the house in better order than before, it brings along seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and the person’s condition becomes worse than it was before.

This shows that a person needs to belong to God. When we are saved, we need the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We must continually pray to God, asking Him to give us the Spirit so that our actions, behavior, and daily life align with the Spirit. Otherwise, like this person who was possessed, it may seem as though the house is well-decorated and orderly, yet without the Holy Spirit living inside, unclean spirits can return with greater force, making the person’s condition even worse than before.

Verse 27: “And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, ‘Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!’”

In the parallel passage, Gospel of Matthew 12:46 records, "While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him." Against this background, the woman (His mother) loudly said, “Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!”

Verse 28: “But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

Jesus did not deny that the one who bore Him and nursed Him was blessed—Mary truly was a greatly blessed woman. Yet Jesus’ response is very interesting: “But blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”. Here, Jesus once again contrasts physical relationships with spiritual ones. While physical relationships are certainly a blessing, this blessing is not as great as the blessing of a spiritual relationship.

What is a spiritual relationship? It is when a person hears God’s Word and is willing to obey it—that person is truly blessed. Through the question of His disciples about how to become people of prayer, Jesus introduces another principle: obedience to the Holy Spirit. By prayer, the Father will richly give the Holy Spirit, enabling us to understand God’s perfect will.

Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are like a house in which the Spirit dwells; unclean spirits no longer dare to touch us. At the same time, through the Holy Spirit, we develop a spiritual relationship with the Lord, which is far more precious than any physical relationship. In this way, we become truly blessed.

Let us pray together: Lord, as we come before You, we acknowledge that we do not fully know the Holy Spirit, and we often fail to experience His power. Have mercy on us. In our prayers, we ask that You give us the Holy Spirit so that we may learn

to follow His guidance within us. Help us to learn to make every decision and take every action under the leading of the Holy Spirit in prayer. We desire to value and cultivate this spiritual relationship. Help us, through our daily lives, to enter into the reality of this spiritual walk. Bless our lives today. We pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen!