

## The Gospel - St. Luke 11:14

JESUS was casting out a devil, and it was **dumb**. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through **Beelzebub** the chief of the devils. And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to **desolation**; and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house **whence** I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and **garnished**. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the **paps** which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

**dumb:** mute, unable to speak

**whence:** from where

**Beelzebub:** Satan, or Satan's chief lieutenant

**garnished:** furnished, decorated

**desolation:** ruin, laid waste

**paps:** breasts

**Background:** Jesus called Satan the "father of lies," (John 8:44). Satan tempts the faithful to rebel against God. The Greek word for devil means "separator" or "slanderer." Satan seeks to accuse people before God, and pull them away from Him.

**Summary:** Jesus' mission upon earth was to destroy the works of the devil. Upon Our Lord's casting out a devil, Luke reports three different reactions from those who witnessed the miracle: some wondered; some accused Jesus of being teamed up with Satan; and some asked Jesus for a sign from heaven. It is not reported that anyone worshipped Him, or even thanked Him. It appears that no one present was then "good ground" on which Jesus might cast the seed of the Gospel.

He knew their thoughts, and taught them by showing them their illogic. If Satan were in a conspiracy with Jesus, and withdrew from the man's body at Jesus' command, he would lose his possession of the man forever. And, since Jesus' teaching by which the miracle was done turned men to serve God and mortified sin, Satan would also lose his grip on men's minds.

Jesus continues, showing the truth of the matter. The heart of an unbelieving sinner is the devil's palace. Satan is the strong man, armed with the power of sin and corruption. The "peace" of the sinner is his good opinion of himself. He is not mourning his sins, or considering change.

The conversion of a soul is Christ's victory as the "stronger Man." He breaks the devil's power, and takes the "spoils": the powers of mind and body which once served sin in bondage now serve Christ in freedom. Jesus says that anyone who does not join with Him in this effort is against Him. There is no neutrality possible.

The parable: The house represents the soul. The unclean spirit has gone out, but the house has not been filled with the Holy Spirit. It still belongs to Satan. It is swept, but not washed; it

## The Epistle - Ephesians 5:1

BE ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling **savour**. But **fornication**, and all uncleanness, or **covetousness**, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not **convenient**: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no **whoremonger**, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an **idolater**, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore **partakers** with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) **proving** what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather **reprove** them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are **made manifest** by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

**savour:** taste or smell

**fornication:** unlawful sexual activity;  
adultery

**covetousness:** greediness, wanting things  
another person has

**convenient:** appropriate, suitable

**whoremonger:** pimp, person who associates with prostitutes, or is an agent for them

**Background:** As in many of his letters, Paul calls the Christians to whom he is writing to live holy lives. In Ephesians he tells them who they are by being in Christ, and the greatness of His power in those who believe. Before they were Christian, they were "dead in trespasses and sins, having no hope and without God in the world." Now, however, they are "seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," and "members of the household of God." He beseeches them to live worthy of their calling. In today's lesson he goes into detail about things which cannot exist in a holy people, which will shut them out of heaven.

**Summary:** In Ephesians 1, Paul prays for the Ephesians, that God will give them wisdom to understand the hope of their calling, and the glory of His inheritance in the saints. A person who wishes to know these things must have his heart set upon holiness, which is love to God expressed in obedience. Jesus said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," and promised to live with those who do.

Christians must avoid keeping company with people who do not care about avoiding sin and the "unfruitful works of darkness," or they will be drawn into sin themselves. Some ways (to avoid) in which a person can participate in another's sin are: by encouraging, commanding or provoking someone to sin; hiding someone's sin; being silent about it when it is right to speak; praising or defending it; consenting to it, laughing about it.

Before we knew Christ, Paul says, we were in darkness. We did not know the light of the Gospel, nor the light of the Holy Spirit. Sin comes from the darkness of ignorance, seeks the darkness of concealment, and leads to the darkness of hell. Now we have both the Gospel and the Spirit. Awake, Paul says, both to the sinner and the saint. To the sinner, awake and repent from spiritual death. To the saint, awake from spiritual deadness and laziness, and be a witness to Christ.

is garnished with appearances, but not surrendered to Christ. If Christ casts out an unclean spirit, it can never return. A man trying to give up sin, without the grace of Our Lord, is bound to relapse, and bring on more sin.

At last, as Jesus finished His parable, a woman expressed appreciation for what He was saying: "Blessed is the womb that bare thee..." Our Lord led her to the higher consideration of keeping God's word. In so doing, He offered her the opportunity she had envied, of being family to Him. Keeping God's word (holiness) is being God's family, and so knowing Him not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and forever.