

Oculi
St. Luke 11:14-28
March 4th, 2018
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

The Kingdom of God Has Come

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

During this season of Lent we rightly reflect upon our sin and the consequences that the weight of our sin has had upon us and world. We see this in our Gospel for today. Our Lord + Jesus Christ casts out a mute demon. The Greek word, “kophos,” can actually mean mute and deaf, therefore, the Church throughout her history has always interpreted this to mean that this man was both mute and deaf. And this even follows our human reason, because the reason a person is mute, is because he has not been able to hear the words that are spoken; we learn to speak from hearing the words. Therefore, this man is both unable to hear and unable to speak. Also, we learn from the Evangelist St. Matthew that this man was also blind. This man cannot speak, hear, or see.

Now this teaches us a spiritual lesson, for all of us, before we heard the Word of God, sat in spiritual darkness unable to hear the saving Word of God and unable to praise God for all of His wonderful works. Therefore, this man is a picture of us before our Holy Baptism, and it is picture for us of all those who remain outside of the Christian Church, on account of their unbelief. Before our Holy Baptism we belonged to the devil’s kingdom. All those who are outside of the Christian Faith belong to the devil’s kingdom.

This is not a point to take lightly, for what is the task of the devil and his angels? It is to war against and destroy the Word of God wherever it exists in this world. That means that you are an enemy of the devil. This is another point that should not be taken lightly. For we exist within the devil’s kingdom. The world is the kingdom of the devil; it is his “palace” as our Lord describes it in the Gospel for today. And in this “palace” of the “strong man” the devil, he is heavily armed. What is the devil’s armor? It is sin and the consequences of sin; it is the spiritual powers of darkness which seek to pervert and destroy the Word of God—rendering it of no effect to those who reject it; it is the religion of the world which teaches that we do not need our Savior’s perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice for us, but rather we can save ourselves by being a good person and doing good works; and the devil’s armor also consists of our very own sinful flesh which is always assailed by temptation and trial—through which he urges us either to pride or shame and despair.

This is the world in which we live. As a Christian in this realm of Satan, do not expect to *NOT* face trial and temptation. The devil will attack you wherever he believes it will do the most damage—by causing your health to fail; by attacking you financially; by attacking your family unity, or members

of your family to draw them away from the Word of God; by making your life miserable at work or by whatever other means will lead you into shame and despair and cause you to forsake God and His holy Word.

This is exactly what the demon in the Gospel for today did to this poor man. The demon knew that if this man was able to hear the Word of God, he would surely proclaim it. Therefore, this man was left to spiritual blindness, spiritual deafness, and spiritual muteness, just as he was physically blind, mute and deaf.

We too, before we were baptized with the holy washing of the Holy Ghost and water, were spiritually blind, deaf and mute. We were unable to see the glories of our Lord; we sat in darkness under the power of the devil and his angels; we were unable to hear the Word of God, and appreciate what our Lord has done for us by His perfect fulfilling of the Law, and His suffering and death on our behalf on the tree of the holy cross; and we were unable to praise the Lord our God and all of His good gifts to us with our tongues and mouths.

Sadly, this is the state in which many in the world still exist. And this realization should alarm us, and cause us due sorrow, for this world is trapped in the devil's kingdom, as the devil's "goods," and protected from outside invasion by the devil's armor.

But thanks be to God! For our Lord + Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate, has come down from Heaven to enter into the "strong man's" kingdom to defeat the "strong man." For, He is the "stronger Man." Our Lord casts out the demon from the man in today's Gospel by His Word. Therefore, it is the Word of God—the very Son of God made flesh—which drives away Satan and destroys his power over this world. Our Lord has bound up Satan and his demons by His holy cross—the tree upon which all the sins of mankind were paid.

On account of this binding of his power, Satan howls all the more louder against God and His people. Even in this our Lord does not leave us without hope. For our Lord attacked the kingdom of Satan with His life-giving Word, and He left us designated instruments to use to assist us in the battle against Satan and the powers of darkness. The designated instruments He left us to use are the means of grace: Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, the Holy Supper, the Preaching of the Word, and the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren. By these means, the Finger of God, the Holy Ghost, works salvation in the hearts of believers where and when He chooses.

Think about that for a moment, our Lord defeats the "strong man" in the "strong man's" kingdom, in the "strong man's" palace, while the "strong man" is surrounded with his battlements and while the "strong man" is in his armor, with His finger. In this image, too, we see a picture of the Holy Trinity and how the One True Triune God works to defeat Satan, for the right arm of the Father sends the Son, Who is His right hand, and the Holy Ghost does the will of the Father and Son, Who is the Finger of God. So, we see one limb, but there are three parts, arm, hand and fingers. But more importantly we see how our Triune God works to save us and the rest of mankind from sin, death and the devil. He uses His holy Word to open blind eyes, to unstop deaf ears, and to loosen mute tongues.

For this reason, it is important for us to remember always what a great gift our Lord has given to us—His holy Word. Let us not despise it, nor neglect, nor reject it. God's Word is the most important tool in your arsenal against Satan; against sin and temptation and the trials of this life. For the Word of God teaches us that, yes, Satan is a "strong man" and he has rule over this world and over many persons in this world, who attack us at every turn, but the Word of God also teaches us that a stronger than he has come into this world and defeated Satan; bound him up; and has given us His holy Word to keep back the powers of darkness through the work of the Holy Ghost.

Remember this especially, even if Satan scowls fierce as he will, he has no power against the Word, for when he attacks the Word of God, and those who cling to it (even if he brings the whole host of Hell), we have fighting for us our Lord Christ and all the angels of Heaven. We have also the Holy Ghost, Whose task it is to create, enlighten, strengthen, and sustain faith and life within us who have heard and received our Lord's holy Word. We have been baptized and been made children of God. Our Lord protects and defends His children, especially when we cry to Him and make our sufferings known to Him. We have been forgiven through the words of absolution spoken by the pastor; this is as valid and certain as if God Himself spoke it; and because this freeing Word has been spoken to us, it serves as another reminder that we are a part of the people of God and His kingdom. And we have the Lord's Supper, wherein we receive the Lord's true Body and true Blood given in bread and wine. This is a testament, the Lord's last will and testament to us, that He loves us and desires for us forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. In short, our Lord protects us from the power of the devil, the world and our flesh by His holy means of grace, where we see, hear, taste, smell and touch our Lord's salvation. This is how the Kingdom of God comes to us daily and weekly, whenever two or three of us are gathered together around God's Word.

This is the message with which we as holy Mother Church on Earth have been tasked. It is the Church's task to continue the work of our Lord—destroying Satan's kingdom by His Word—until He comes again on the Last Day. Therefore, we as the Church in this location must continue to preach the Word in its truth and purity and administer the Blessed Sacraments rightly according to Christ's institution, so that those who sit in darkness, and who are spiritually blind, deaf, and mute to God's Word, may by the enlivening power of the Holy Ghost, have their eyes opened, their ears unstopped, and their tongues loose to proclaim that there is only One Savior, our Lord + Jesus Christ, and salvation is found through faith in Him alone. May God Almighty grant this unto us all. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo gloria!