

Oculi  
St. Luke 11:14-28  
March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Augusta, GA  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## A House Divided Against a House Falleth

*In Nomine Iesu!*

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

### **Sermon Text:**

But some of them said, "By Beelzebub the prince of the demons casteth He out demons." And others, trying *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. And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out demons by Beelzebub."

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

Lord God, Heavenly Father, Who hast sent Thy Son into the world to destroy the works of the devil, we beseech Thee, curb the tyranny of the wicked foe, and protect us against him, keep us from security, and graciously preserve us by Thy Holy Spirit in all temptations, that, being ever defended from the Evil One, we may until our end walk in Thy fear according to Thy Word, and finally obtain everlasting salvation; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

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

Our society loves to plug diversity as if our differences make us stronger. For the world the individual is the keystone; to set one's self apart from the rest; to be one's own man; this is the key to success in this world. But we are not stronger on account of our diversity—on account of our differences—but on account of our unity; our solidarity. This is what our Lord + Jesus teaches us today in the Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Luke. A house divided against a house falleth. A house that depends upon its differences; that depends upon its individualism will fall. We are stronger when we are united in purpose and goals.

The members of the multitudes, who we learn from another Gospel (which we heard a couple of weeks ago on the Wednesday of Ember Week in Lent) were the scribes and Pharisees, accused our Lord + Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebub. Now, Beelzebub in the Greek New Testament is actually Beelzebul, which means "Lord of the flies." Beelzebul was the name given by the Jews to the Philistine's chief god. Because the Philistines were the enemies of the Jews, and had been a constant source of strife for them, Beelzebul was associated with the devil, the chief, or prince, of the demons. They are basically accusing the Lord + Jesus of using Satan to cast out other demons.

Beelzebub, can also mean "lord of the house." So, when our Lord talks about houses being divided, He is employing a play on words. A house divided against a house falleth. The point our Lord + Jesus makes is that Satan's house is not divided. He rules his kingdom well. He has this world fully

under his thumb. He has certainly convinced this world of the lie that it is stronger the more people express their uniqueness. This is exactly what the devil wants of this world for the world to be divided. If the world is divided, if individuals are seeking their own ways, then they cannot stand against him.

The same is true of the Church. If the Church is divided against itself, it cannot stand against the assaults of the devil. This is the case for those churches which divide themselves from the Word of God, and from the teachings of the Christ. They divide themselves from the Kingdom of God by uniting themselves to the kingdom of this world and the devil by teaching all sorts of false doctrines, societal philosophies, and by making their churches safe havens for the teachings of mankind. They have forsaken the true purpose of the Church: to give the gifts that the Christ has won for us by His death on the tree of the holy cross to all those who cling to Him in faith.

When the world and the churches in this world divide themselves away from the Christ, they unite themselves into the kingdom of the devil; into the court, or palace, of the strong man. In his hatred of mankind, the devil does not allow his kingdom to be divided. He rules his court fully armed and keeps his goods—all those who have forsaken the Lord + Jesus—under his thumb. No one can break into his kingdom and steal his goods. His goods cannot be freed from his evil grasp. There is no hope of freeing oneself from his grip when that person is trapped in his kingdom.

Therefore, it is a laughable notion that the Lord + Jesus was casting out demons by Beelzebub. He was not using Satan to cast out other demons, because the devil would not allow his kingdom to be divided. He is in charge of his kingdom and does not allow it to be broken into. The devil understands the concept of being united in effort; of not being divided against himself. This is why the Lord depicts him as a strong man who guards his goods diligently. Satan would not allow his demons to be cast out if he had any say in it.

But thanks be to the Lord God, the devil has no authority anymore when the Son of Man comes into the world. The Lord + Jesus, Who is both God and man, is the Stronger Man. He can divide the kingdom of the devil at His will. The devil may be a strong man who guards his court fully armed and does not allow anyone to steal his possessions, but the Lord + Jesus is the Stronger Man than he. The Lord has so much more authority than the devil that He can divide the devil's kingdom with just His Finger. There is more power in the Finger of God, than the armor and bulwarks of the devil.

The Finger of God is the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost divides and conquers the devil's kingdom wherever the Word of God is preached in its truth and purity, and wherever the Blessed Sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution. He in this place, where the means of grace are given to all those who come into this holy House of the Lord God, the Finger of God—the Holy Ghost—is creating and sustaining faith and life in us. He is creating faith in us to cling to the Stronger Man—to the Lord + Jesus—and to forsake the devil and this world; to forsake our very own sinful flesh. The Finger of God creates faith in us so that we might be joined together in unity—in fellowship—with one another.

We are now a house that cannot fall, because we have been united together in Christian love under our Strong Man the Lord + Jesus, the Christ. We are now a part of His Kingdom. We have been rescued from the kingdom of the devil. Our Lord + Jesus has entered into the palace of the devil, and ransacked the joint. He has defeated the devil. He has conquered the world. He has redeemed our flesh from sin and death. He has divided the house of Satan by taking upon Himself our flesh, so that He could fulfill the Law which we cannot. He is sinless, where we are filled with sin. He offered up that innocent flesh and blood upon the tree of the holy cross, so that He might pay the penalty of our sins. By His suffering and death He has destroyed the devil's kingdom; He has divided the Beelzebub's house against itself, and great is its fall.

He therefore, brings us out of the house of bondage to the devil, to bring us into His eternal Kingdom. We are united into a Kingdom that truly cannot be defeated nor ransacked. In this Kingdom of the Lord God, we are united with all of the angels and archangels, with all the company of Heaven, all those who have come before us, and who will come after us. We are united together in fellowship with all those who cling in faith to the Lord + Jesus, the Christ.

Indeed, my dear friends, we have a foretaste of this Kingdom when we come to this holy altar and receive our Lord's Body and Blood given in bread and wine for the remission of our sins. For at this altar, we are united together in love towards our Lord God and in fervent love for one another. Not only are we joined together in unity with one another at this altar during this meal of forgiveness, but we are united to the whole Kingdom of Heaven. All of the multitudes of Heaven join us here at this altar, all the angels, archangels, and all the saints who have gone before us into Heaven. This is truly a Kingdom which cannot be divided against itself. It is a Kingdom which finds its strength in its common confession of the Faith; in its unity with one another.

May this Kingdom ever remain a beacon to all those who are trapped in the kingdom of the devil, who shun the Church and her Christ. For this world will fall because it is house divided against itself. But the Church will ever remain triumphant, because her Head is the Stronger Man, the Lord + Jesus, the Christ, Who came to this world and defeated the devil on the tree of the holy cross once and for all so that all men might be free of his tyranny. May this freedom be granted unto all of this fallen world. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

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

*Soli Deo Gloria!*