

Oculi
St. Luke 11:14-28
March 23rd, 2025
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

By the Finger of God

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“But if I by the Finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you.”

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.

My dear friends, every word of the Bible is God’s Word. The Holy Ghost gave the Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists the very words and thoughts which they were to write down in the holy Scriptures. Every word of the Bible is what we call “God-breathed.” The Holy Spirit breathed into the holy writers the very words and thoughts that they were to write. This is why we do not say the Bible “contains” the word of the Lord God, for others take this to mean that not every word of the Bible is the Word of God, it only “contains” the word of God. This is also why we accept in faith that even those parts of the Bible which are beyond our comprehension and reason are true, because the Lord God Himself put those words and narratives into the holy Scriptures.

This is why we can be certain that the Holy Bible is the sole source and norm of all Christian doctrine—of all Christian teachings. This is how we know the teachings of the Bible are true, and that we can place our trust in them, because they are the very words of the Lord God. This is how we know that what we believe, teach, and confess is of the Lord God—it is His teachings to which we cling. This is also how we know that we do not teach the false doctrines of the devil and this world, by which many men’s sinful flesh is led away from the truth and deceived.

Because this is true, because every word of the Bible is God’s Word, because it has been given by the Holy Ghost, and because we can be confident that what we believe, teach, and confess is the true doctrine, we can also be certain that by this Word we can be enlightened, renewed, strengthened, and sustained in the teachings of the holy Bible. This is why the Lord gave the Word. This is why the company of the preachers is a great number; why the Word of God is spread into the whole world by the mouths of the preachers. It is to enlarge the Kingdom of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, in this sinful world. By the pure preaching of the Word of the Lord God, and by the right administration of the Blessed Sacraments according to the institution of the Christ, the Light of the Gospel is sent into all the world. The Gospel—the teaching that by the innocent suffering and death of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, all

mankind has been redeemed from sin and death—is sent into all the world by the preaching of the holy Ministers. This is the work of the Holy Ghost. It is the work of the Finger of the Lord God.

He wars against the devil's kingdom in this world by the Word of the Lord God. The Word of God divides and spoils the devil's kingdom throughout the world. Because we have the pure preaching of the Word of God hear in our midst, we can know for certain that the kingdom of the devil is also divided and conquered in our midst. Evil is driven back and destroyed. It is not because we are doing anything great and mighty of ourselves. Evil is driven back and destroyed among us, because the Holy Ghost, the Finger of the Lord God is among us to point us to the Christ, to our Lord + Jesus. Where the Word of the Lord God is taught in its truth and purity the Kingdom of Heaven is established and strengthened in our midst, and the devil's kingdom is ruined and divided.

This is why the devil and his kingdom on earth fight with such tenacity against the Church and against everyone who clings in faith to her teachings. He does not like that his kingdom is being divided in this world. The Lord + Jesus describes the devil in today's Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Luke in just this way so that we know how powerful he is. Our Lord lets us know how much peril we are in because the devil prowls around like a roaring lion in our midst. The devil is described by our Lord as a strong man who guards his possessions well. He has fortifications, and bulwarks, and slings and arrows. He himself is arrayed in heavy armor outfitted for battle against all who would seek comfort from the Lord God. He fights against all those who have the comfort of the Gospel, seeking to lead all men into great shame and despair.

We cannot defeat the strong man on our own. Think how often we fail when tempted by the devil? We choose our own will, the will of the devil and the world, just to satisfy our sinful lusts. How often have we tried to resist temptation, and then failed miserably? This is because we are in his kingdom. We are surrounded by many enemies who seek to destroy our faith. This is why we should never rely on our own abilities and will to save ourselves. We fail almost every time.

But for us fights a Valiant One! The strong man—the devil—is indeed powerful, but the Stronger Man can cast out the devil with His Finger. By the Word of the Lord God, by the pure preaching of the Word and the right administration of the Blessed Sacraments, the Finger of the Lord God, the Holy Ghost, is driving out the devil from among us. The Word of God binds the strong man, and loots his palace. He has no authority or strength to resist the assault of the Stronger Man, the Lord + Jesus. This is why, my dear friends, we gladly and willingly place our trust in Him. For He fights for us, and wins! He conquers the devil with one little word: + Jesus.

The Lord + Jesus is the One Who delivers us from death and the devil. It is He Who frees us from our bondage of sin and death. This is why it is proper for us to bow the head at the mention of His Name. At the Name of the Lord + Jesus, every knee should bow. We should bow because He has defeated the strong man, the devil, by perfectly fulfilling the Law of the Lord God, and offering up His life as a ransom for ours upon the tree of the holy cross. He went to battle against the devil on the cross, and through His death, He became the Victor. He rose again from the dead, showing that His sacrifice was accepted by the heavenly Father. We now have eternal life and salvation with Him gifted to us.

It is the Finger of God that writes this on our hearts. He turns our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. Hearts that cling in faith to the works and merits of the Stronger Man, the Christ. He gifts us with all the things that the Lord + Jesus won for us upon the tree of the holy cross. We have been given as a free gift, without any merit of worthiness in us, solely by faith, the forgiveness of our sins, eternal life, and salvation from the devil and his kingdom.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us give thanks to the Lord God, and His Beloved Son, for sending

to us, the Church, His Holy Ghost. For the Holy Ghost opens up our ears to hear the Word of the Lord God, and receive all that is taught and preached in it. The Holy Ghost opens up our eyes to see the salvation found solely in the Lord + Jesus through His work on the cross. The Holy Ghost fills our hearts with faith, to cling to the promises which He teaches to us through His Ministers. Let us therefore pray unceasingly that the Finger of God might continue to be sent into all the world to destroy the devil's kingdom, and unloose all those still held in the bondage of sin and false idolatry. Let us pray that the Lord God might send faithful Ministers into His harvest field. For the labor is heavy and the workers are few.

Let us give our Lord God thanks and praise that He has freed us from the bonds of sin and death, and brought us into the Church, so that we may be protected from the slings and arrows of the devil and his kingdom. For the Lord has placed into our hands His Word. He has given us His very Words written by the Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists through the plenary verbal inspiration of the Holy Ghost. We can be confident that every word we hear from the holy Bible is the Word of God, and that it has been given to us for our edification, for the strengthening of our faith, and to keep us in the one, true faith until we are called out of this vale of tears to our eternal home in Heaven. Lord, grant this unto us all. 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!