

Oculi Sunday
St. Luke 11:14-28
March 8th, 2026
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald P. Dulas

When a Stronger Than He Shall Come

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“When the strong man fully armed guardeth his own court, his goods are in peace: but when a Stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, He taketh from him his whole armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.”

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, one of the features of the historic lectionary during Lent is that every Gospel reading has our dear Lord battling the devil, or demons. The exception to this is next Sunday's Gospel, the feeding of the five thousand, where we get a brief interlude before our focus shifts from concentrating on our sinfulness and our breaking of the Ten Commandments, to the Passion of our Lord. During the first half of Lent our attention is on our battle with the devil and his demons; it is upon our battle with the evil world, and our flesh. In our battle, we often fail. We are often conquered by the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh.

This is why all of the Gospels for this first half of the Lenten season see our Lord battling the devil, and his demons. Our failures are contrasted with our Lord's victories over the devil. In the first Sunday in Lent, our Lord showed that He is able to resist the temptations of the devil, showing us poor, miserable sinners that even though we may fail to resist temptation, that we have One Who has already resisted all of the temptations of the devil perfectly. His perfect obedience to the will and Law of the Lord God is credited to us through our faith in Him and His works.

The same is true of the second Sunday in Lent, where our Lord dealt with the Canaanitish woman whose daughter was grievously vexed by a demon. This Syro-Phoenician woman taught us how to continuously implore our Lord + Jesus for help in all times of trouble, especially when we are grievously vexed by the devil and his horde. For only the Lord + Jesus, the Christ, can free us from the bonds in which the devil has us firmly bound. The focus of that Gospel was more on the mother of the daughter vexed by a demon, but we are still shown how much power the Lord has over the devil and his demons, for when the woman's prayers were answered, we are told that her daughter was healed that very hour. There was no delay, no struggle on our Lord's part, to cast out the demon. He did not

even have to go to the daughter, nor be near her to cast out the demon. Simply by His Word, by His command, the devil is sent away.

We see that power and authority over the devil's kingdom in today's Gospel for the third Sunday in Lent. St. Luke the Evangelist tells us that our Lord + Jesus was casting out a demon, which was dumb. We heard about our Lord casting out a dumb and deaf demon from the son of a father who pleaded on behalf of his son this past Wednesday. It is unclear whether this mute demon from today's Gospel is the same demon. Most likely it is a different one. It shows the power and authority that our Lord + Jesus has over our enemies. With the boy on Wednesday, when the demon-possessed boy was brought to the Lord, the demon thrashed and wailed inside the boy. He knew the fate that he would soon face. The Lord would cast him out and command him never to return into the boy. By His Word the Lord casts out the demon, and shows his power and authority over the devil and his hordes.

And that is the point of the Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Luke appointed for today. Our weakness is contrasted with our Lord's strength and power; His authority and rule over the devil, and the demons. In our weakness, we are often conquered by the devil. In the Hymn of the Day the devil is depicted as a conqueror over us. One from whose grasp we cannot escape when left to our own power and strength. The devil conquers us every time. The same is portrayed in the Gospel reading. Our Lord + Jesus is the One providing the illustration. He is the One Who tells us just how powerful the devil is over us. Satan is shown as a strong man who is fully armed, and guards his goods—that is, us—in peace. With might of ours can nought be done, so is our loss effected. We are firmly in the devil's grasp, and by our own might nothing can be done to free us from his grasp.

The devil is a strong man, a battle-tested conqueror who will not let us go free no matter how much we beg and plead. But for us fights the Valiant One, Whom the Lord God Himself anointed to be our Savior and Redeemer. He is a Stronger One than Satan. When He shall come, that strong man Satan has no hope of victory. Through the Christ, we are freed from Satan's tyranny. Through our Lord + Jesus we are set free from the wrath and power of the devil. We are no longer in the devil's kingdom, for the Lord + Jesus has stripped the devil of all his power and authority. He has divided the devil's kingdom; He has shattered the kingdom of the devil by His death, so that all those who cling to Him in faith are now freed from Satan's kingdom and stronghold, and are brought into the Church; into the Lord's Kingdom.

In the Lord's Kingdom, we are protected from the assaults of the devil. He can harm us none, for the deed is done, our Lord's death has won us the victory over Satan's kingdom. By the Lord God's Word, the devil continues to be defeated, for we are in the Christ, and the Christ is in us through faith. And this faith is strengthened whenever we attend upon His Word, and receive His Blessed Sacrament of the Altar here in this place. For we are now in the Lord's Kingdom, and no harm will befall us if we remain in that Kingdom. No harm will befall us if we remain steadfast in our faith, if we continue to hear His holy Word, and receive His Blessed Sacraments. For through these means He continues to strengthen our faith so that we do remain faithful unto death, and receive the crown of eternal life.

It is when we step out of the Lord's Kingdom on account of our sinful flesh—our Old Adam—when the devil and his demons, when the world and our flesh, attack us and bring us back under the devil's power and realm. Through our enemies' temptations, we are drawn out of our Lord's Kingdom, and we find ourselves in the devil's kingdom once again. When we try to fight the devil by our own strength and will, we find ourselves captured by him once again.

This is why we must ever implore our Lord + Jesus for His help and protection, just as the Canaanitish woman did last Sunday. For our Lord has come into the devil's kingdom—He has come to this earth—and taken upon Himself our flesh, so that even in His weakened state, the devil is no match for Him. This is why we must need turn in faith continuously to the One Who has conquered Satan, and

not rely on our own strength and ability. Let us place our trust fully in the Stronger Man. For He has ransacked the devil's kingdom, and fractured it for good.

He did this by offering up His perfect and obedient works and life, as a ransom for ours upon the tree of the holy cross. In a couple of weeks, we will spend a couple of weeks focusing upon our Lord's crucifixion and death. We will see the great work that our Lord did to free us from Satan's tyranny. No one could have made satisfaction for our sins, but the Lord + Jesus. For only His works are perfect. Only He has perfectly resisted the devil's temptations. Only He has perfectly fulfilled the whole will and Law of God for us. Through our faith in Him we are credited with His works and merits. Indeed, through faith in our Holy Baptism, we are clothed with His righteousness. For in Holy Baptism, we have been buried with Him in His death. His death on the tree of the holy cross is our death on the cross. His punishment is our punishment. It is credited to us through faith in Him.

By this faith in Him, we are now firmly in His Kingdom. Nothing can harm us ever again. Though all the world is filled with devils, they can harm us none, for we are firmly in the Lord's Kingdom. The Stronger Man has come and thoroughly defeated the strong man, and ransacked his kingdom, so that we are now freed from his tyranny. Therefore, my dear friends, let us give thanks to the Lord + Jesus continuously. For He has set us free from the bonds of sin and death. We now have, through Him, eternal life and salvation. We have the forgiveness of all our sins. He has come down from heaven, and fulfilled all that was necessary for our salvation. He has thoroughly defeated Satan and his horde, so that we poor, miserable sinners may have the forgiveness of our sins, and we may live with our Strong Man, our Valiant One, our Victor over sin and Satan, forever and ever. May our Lord God 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!