

Greetings! The theme for our morning's meditation is, 'The Power of God is manifested in the works of Jesus'. Jesus had cast out a demon that was dumb and when the demon had left the man he began to speak. The reaction was that the crowd marveled at Jesus that even the demons obeyed his voice. The reality of the expulsion is taken for granted and no one contests what has been done. But some within the crowd were not convinced about what Jesus had done and they were saying that he was casting out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons. Jesus was depicted by his critics as an agent of Beelzebul. In other words Jesus was subservient to the devil. Others were not willing to take on the sign of the exorcism as a sign of the kingdom.

Jesus knew their thoughts and said that a Kingdom divided against itself will not stand. If there is infighting within any kingdom, then there is danger within rather than without. If Satan is divided against himself then how will his kingdom stand? If Jesus was releasing persons from the captivity of Satan then Jesus was indeed working against the powers of darkness. For if the 'Son shall set you free, you will be free indeed'. Jesus then questions them that if he were indeed casting demons by the power of Beelzebul, then by what power were their own people exorcising? In other words they too were casting out demons with the help of Beelzebul. Jesus knew that they would not accept this and therefore says that they should indeed be their judges.

Jesus uses another metaphor to explain what he was doing, 'When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil'. The picture here is of a house which is being guarded by a strong man, who can only be defeated by one who is stronger than him. Jesus is the one who is stronger than the devil and therefore has released persons who are in bondage to him.

Jesus says, 'But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you'. The finger of God is in fact used in Exodus 8:19 where the third plague of gnats cannot be performed by the court magicians and they exclaim that this is indeed by the 'finger of God'. The OT image recalls God's intervention on behalf of his people when Pharaoh was hardening his heart. Jesus says that if the exorcism that he has done is indeed by the power of God then the Kingdom of God had come upon them. Jesus had come down to the earth and was establishing his kingdom on earth by his power that was made manifest and by which the powers of this world were defeated.

Even when we were sinners, and were in bondage, Satan was not our legitimate owner. He kept us in darkness and held us in his deceitful power, because he is an usurper, thief and accuser. Jesus has disarmed Satan the accuser who constantly attacks us. We need to know that Satan is a defeated foe. Evil has a strong grip on people, but that strong grip is decisively broken when the kingdom of God comes in its power. Luke shows both in the Gospel and in Acts that there is power – saving and healing power in the name of Jesus (Acts 3:6, 16; 4:10-12). That same power has been made available to us through the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit. May we lead victorious lives with the power of the Holy Spirit knowing that Satan is a defeated foe.