

Plundering the Devil's Strongholds

Luke 11:14-28

Sermon by Phil Kayser

We have taken two weeks to look at the incredible privilege that we have of seeking justice and restitution against Satan from the courtroom of heaven. And a number of you have mentioned that this has revolutionized your thinking and your prayer life. In fact, I have been excited to see that those two sermons have so quickly been put into practice by some of you. But those sermons also raised a number of questions about demonology as a whole. I was not planning to do this sermon – I have four or five more sermons in the foundations series. But there were enough questions, that I thought I better at least give a brief overview of the topic of demonology. Here's another passage which speaks of plundering Satan's kingdom. Those of you who were in the men's meetings earlier this year got a much more in depth look. But today I want to just give two major points. The first point is that demons are real, and they are powerful. We ought to never underestimate the power of the wicked one. The second point is that Christ's victory over demons is real and that every believer has access to this same power. There is no reason to fear the evil one. Instead, we ought to be motivated by this sermon to go on the offensive. You could think of the first two sermons as being the rights that we have to seek restitution when Satan has robbed us or he has robbed Christ's kingdom. This week's sermon goes beyond that and says that we don't have to wait till *we* are attacked to go after Satan. Instead, we can begin the process of plundering Satan's strongholds right now.

I. Demons are real and they are powerful

There is a ton that we won't be able to deal with today. And that's OK. Maybe it will whet your appetite for doing some study on your own. But let's look first of all at the reality and power of demons. The way many evangelicals fail to think about Satan day in and day out shows that they are not taking seriously Paul's admonitions in Ephesians 6 that we do not wrestle with flesh and blood, but with all sorts of wicked principalities and powers. Actually, I have a book by an evangelical missionary who said that demons were simply metaphorical ways of describing mental illness. It kind of shocked me to read that. I keep getting shocked by how many old fashioned doctrines have been dropped from evangelical theology. Are demons real, or are they simply metaphors of disease and institutional evil?

A. Personality of demons

1. Demons can talk (v. 24) and communicate to other demons (v. 26)

Well, point A shows all kinds of ways in which demons are described as having personality. Verse 24 records a sentence that one demon spoke. Verse 26 shows eight demons communicating with each other. Other passages shows demons communicating with Christ and speaking through the vocal chords of the individual. But with our without bodies, they can communicate. Verse 24 has this demon speaking even though he is not in a human body. All of that shows that demons are not merely powers or emanations. They are creatures that have rationality and language. And they use that communication against Christ's kingdom. Don't think that other demons don't find out about the things that our church is doing. I'm sure there are plenty of tattle tale demons.

Last weekend I was listening to Acts 19:15 where it talked about the sons of Sceva. These unbelievers saw Paul casting out demons in the name of Jesus, and so they tried it. They said to the demon, **We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.** And the demon said, **Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are you?** And the demon proceeded to tear at the sons of Sceva. But I find that phrase interesting. The demon said, "Paul I know." I'm sure there had been talk about Paul. Any time a Christian is having an impact against Satan's kingdom, you can guarantee that the word is spread rapidly through the ranks of demons. Any time Christians are failing to have an impact and are showing weakness and vulnerability, you can bet your boots that the demons are communicating with each other. They know, because they communicate. Don't underestimate the enemy.

2. Demons have self-consciousness
 - a. They speak in the first person ("I" v. 24)

Second, they are self-conscious. The demon in verse 24 speaks in the first person saying, **I will return to my house from which I came.** He is talking to himself or soliloquizing. That speaks of self-consciousness, a characteristic of personality.

- b. They can remember and make plans (v. 24)

Furthermore, he's remembering things from the past and making plans for the future. And in the same way, demons are not idiots today. The demons that have been assigned to attack you probably know more about your past than you do, unless you have used spiritual warfare to keep them at bay and at a distance. They remember, and they make plans concerning you. By the way, they remember your ancestors as well, and if there is a legal right that the ancestors have given, because of your covenantal relationship with your ancestors, unless you put their sins under the blood and renounce

any jurisdiction over you that the ancestors have given, you can continue to be afflicted. The sins of the parents can be visited to the third and fourth generation, and unless you cut them off, they will visit you.

c. They can get frustrated (v. 24)

Now, another aspect of personality is that this demon gets frustrated. He wants to find something that satisfies him and gives him rest, but he has no rest in verse 24. And I love that. I trust that there are a lot of demons who are frustrated because of the efforts of this congregation. But it's just another evidence that demons are persons. And it's my aim to frustrate them at every step of the way. Amen?

3. Demons can travel, seek and find (v. 24)

Another thing that shows that these demons are not just metaphors is that the demon of verse 24 travels: **When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest** [I guess dry as opposed to the moisture of the body; but it could also be the language of frustration. But he travels.]. He talks in the same verse about returning. Verse 25 says, **And when he comes...** That's travel again. Verse 26, **Then he goes..** He is traveling to find other demons unoccupied and they travel then to find this man. Well, demons travel today too.

Just because we have had relatively little demonic activity in America in past centuries, is no indication that Satan is not powerfully present now. He travels. And all the indications are that America is being overrun by demons of every sort. The fact that you have not been plagued up until this time is no indication you will not be plagued tomorrow. Demons can travel, and verse 24 says they are seeking for a place where they can settle down. They are looking for some opportunity. They see a husband and wife arguing with each other heatedly, and they start rubbing their hands thinking, "Maybe this is an opportunity that we can use to make them ineffective." And then the demon watches them asking forgiveness of each other, and he is crushed, and he thinks, "Rats! I've got to look for some other opportunity." And he sees a child in rebellion, and he knows that rebellion, and after being confronted, the child asks forgiveness of God and father. And the demon travels on to another family looking for opportunities. Remember that's what Satan was doing in Job 1 – he was wandering to and fro in the earth, and he noticed Job, but complained, "Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side?" There was no opportunity for him to attack. And today, there is even less opportunity since the accuser of the brethren has been cast out of heaven and can no longer accuse the brethren like he did Job. But I think the issue of demonic travel has been underestimated in some circles.

On more than one occasion when demons were cast out of people in Ethiopia, they said that they were going overseas. Converted witchdoctors indicated that this was happening back in the 60's already. Reinforcements were being sent to attack America. Why? We don't know. Maybe it was because America has sent so many missionaries to Africa, and Satan was trying to counteract that effort. We don't know. But it is clear from this passage that at least some demons can travel.

4. Each demon has a separate identity (vv. 14,26)

Fourth, each demon has a separate identity. Verse 26 speaks of eight demons communicating with each other and strategizing on how to take on this man. Verse 14 speaks a demon who has a speciality – making people unable to speak. And by the way, there are many specialities that demons have been assigned. Other Scriptures speak of demons of uncleanness, demons of deception. Hosea chapters 4 and 5 speak of demons that lead to adultery. There are demons who specialize in bringing disease or various types of temptations. There is a huge army of unseen spirits with careful organization.

5. Demons have varying degrees of wickedness (v. 26)

Fifth, these demons have varying degrees of wickedness. Verse 26 says, **then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself.** Just as there are varying levels of skill,, understanding and wickedness among men, there are varying levels of skill, understanding and wickedness among demons. Don't let your guard down. When one demon is unable to pierce the protections in your life, he may conscript others more able than himself.

6. There are demonic rulers and followers (vv. 15,17,18) that form a hierarchy in a "kingdom" (v. 18)

Sixth, these demons are organized in such a way that some are rulers, and others are followers. Verse 15 speaks of Beelzebul as being the ruler of the demons, and Christ not only acknowledges the reality of such a ruler, but that this ruler has an organized kingdom. We won't go into the various levels of organization that the Scripture speaks of, but it is so well organized that it is a worldwide kingdom under Satan's rule. I think step by step you can see that there really is no way these could be metaphors of simply a doctrine. They are really beings.

Just as a side note, you might be interested to know just how big His kingdom is. The very use of the term "kingdom" implies large numbers, as does the word word Beelzebub, which means, "Lord of the flies." In the middle east flies swarmed everywhere. Trillions of flies. And that is an interesting title, because the Scripture indicates unbelievable numbers of

demons. They are like flies, or as Revelation says, they are like a plague of locusts that blot out the sun.

Let's try to get a little bit of a picture of how many demons there are. We know from Revelation 12 that demons comprise one third of the total number of angels. How many good angels are there? Daniel 7:10 speaks of there being millions and millions and hundreds of millions, but uses an expression that could be indefinite. Hebrews 12:22 speaks of an innumerable company of angels. Too many for a human to count. Matthew 18:10 indicates that every child of a believer has at least one angel assigned to them, since it uses the expression **their angels**. So there are a lot of good angels.

OK, let's transfer that to demons. Mark 5:9,15 indicates that Satan had so many demons available to him, that he was willing to waste 6000 demons on one man – or a legion of evil angels. That's a lot of demons to go around. Revelation 9 shows multitudes of angels arising from the bottomless pit upon the earth – so thick that it darkened the sky. In verses 14-16 it shows one contingent of demons under the leadership of four demonic angels, and the number of demons in that one contingent was 200 million. Revelation speaks of other contingents of demons as well. In some places they probably do swarm like flies. I imagine Washington DC and State Capitols as swarming with demons. They tend to go after the power centers, and that is why universally you find far more wickedness and perversion in the capitals of states and nations than you do elsewhere. And each one of those demons is doing his utmost to attack Christ's kingdom.

7. They have possessions (v. 24,21-22)

They have possessions that they seek to capture. Obviously the poor man in verse 14 was captured for a time. Verse 21 speaks of a demon who **guards his own palace** and speaks of **his goods**.

8. Demons are elsewhere called “evil spirits” (Acts 19:12) or fallen “angels” (Rev. 12:7,9)

And then, finally, demons are called angels and evil spirits. To question the reality of demons would be to question the reality of any angels whatsoever. So I think we have to take the demonic seriously. It is real. I had one lady tell me that she didn't like it when I preached on the demonic, because it scared her. But let me assure you that ignorance is not bliss. Ignorance can make you walk straight into Satan's snares. And Paul said in 2 Corinthians 2:11, **we are not ignorant of his devices**. Well, we should not be either.

B. Their work

1. They are united (vv. 17-18,23,26) in their opposition to Christ (v. 23) and His kingdom (vv. 17-19)

Let's look a little bit at their work. Christ goes to great lengths to show that demons do indeed have a purpose. They are united. Now I don't for a moment believe that demons necessarily like each other or always fully cooperate. The more evil a demon is, the more self-centered he will be, and the more his self-centered interests will be in conflict with others. But there is one thing that unites them – a hatred for God and for God's people. Verse 23 says, **He who is not with Me is against Me.** There is no neutrality. And every demon is against Christ. And if they are against, Christ, they will be against Christ's kingdom and His people. And we will look in a moment at that conflict of kingdoms in verses 17-23. But their work is to hinder, hold back and frustrate our kingdom work. Don't be surprised by hindrances, bureaucratic red tape, technical problems, hatred from men, resistance. Don't be surprised.

2. Demons can work inside or outside of a person (vv. 24-26) and seek to influence and/or control that person (vv. 14,21-22) to keep him at peace with Satan's independent kingdom (v. 21) and at war with Christ (v. 23)

Secondly, demons can work both inside and outside of a person. How this works, we don't know for sure. But verse 14 speaks of a demon who was inside the mute man somehow controlling either his brain or his mouth. Verses 24-26 speak of a person as being a house for a demon and entering a person and dwelling there. Satan's goal according to verse 23 is total ownership and total control. But if he can't do that, he will at least try to influence from the outside. Verse 21 says, **When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.** Why is it in peace? Because the things under Satan's control are not yet facing the warfare of God. It's not until Christians invade a pagan neighborhood that warfare begins there. But that implies that whether possessed or not possessed, whether at peace or not at peace, all such people are under Satan's control

When a person is outside the church, Scripture says that such a person is under Satan. He told the Pharisees, **you are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do.** They weren't possessed like this man was, but they were still under his influence, weren't they? The moment someone becomes a Christian, he becomes an enemy of Satan. There is no neutrality according to verse 23. In fact, the first Gospel promise of the Old Testament is Genesis 3:15 and it says that God will make the woman at enmity with Satan and Satan at enmity with the woman and her seed.

Whether inside or outside of a person, Satan and his demons will oppose you and God.

3. They seek to capture & guard areas (v. 21)

Third, demons seek to capture and guard areas. Verse 21 likens Satan to a strong man who **guards his own palace**. Satan tries to capture territory and people and set up strongholds to make those areas impervious to the Gospel. He does his utmost to guard his goods from your attempts to influence. And that means that if you do not have the power and presence of almighty God with you, you will not succeed in getting through those strongholds he is guarding.

4. They seek to destroy God's creation (v. 14)

Another thing that demons seek to do is to destroy God's creation. To mar it. They hate anything that reminds them of God. Verse 14 shows one such destructive act – to make a person unable to speak.

5. They seek to cause disorder (v. 23,25)

They also seek to cause disorder. Verse 23 says, **and he who does not gather with Me scatters**. There is an attempt to break up unity in the family and church – to scatter what God unites. Verse 25 says that when the demon comes back to the man who was rescued from the demon, **And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order**. That's the opposite of the state that he left it in – disorder. Whenever you see churches filled with lawlessness and disorder, you know that Satan has been at work in that congregation. That's why I am convinced that some so-called spiritual gifts are not from God's Spirit at all because Paul said that God is a God of order, and in verse 33 it says, **God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints**. And so Satan seeks to scatter and cause disorder.

6. They can evaluate areas of vulnerability (vv. 25-26 with 22)

And then, finally, this demon was exploring areas of vulnerability. Look at verse 22: **But when a stronger than he** [Christ is the one who is stronger than Satan: "when a stronger than he"] **comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils**. An entire book could be written on the implications of this chapter, but let me just point out one thing. It is only when Christ takes ownership of the spoils that Satan is rendered powerless and the man has nothing to fear.

I want you to notice that that's not the case with this man in verses 25-26. Christ is not present. Christ is not lord. This man has an empty house. Jesus has not moved into the house. The Spirit has not entered in to guide,

empower. Instead, this is an image of a person who is freed, but who continues to trust in himself for self-reformation. The Pharisees sought to cleanse their lives in their own power, but they still belonged to Satan. They still were utterly powerless against him. These demons recognize that the man is powerless, and they know they can have him any time that they want. **When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, "I will return to my house from which I came." And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.** Now, this principle doesn't just apply to those whom demons have possessed. In John 5:14 Jesus told a man whom he had healed of lameness, **See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.** This vulnerability issues affects even people who are merely afflicted outwardly. Willful sin gives Satan an advantage and makes you more vulnerable. And this passage indicates that demons are adept at evaluating areas of vulnerability in our lives.

So all this is to say that demons are real, and they are powerful. And it would be pretty scary if we just stopped there. If you examine other passages that deal with the demonic you begin to realize that apart from Christ, a demon could take us out any time. They are powerful indeed.

II. The victory of Christ over demons is real and every believer has access to this same victory

But praise Jesus! We are not apart from Christ. Point II says, "the victory of Christ over demons is real and every believer has access to this same victory." 2 Corinthians 2:14 says, **Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.** Our passage doesn't just talk about the power of Satan. It speaks of the even greater power of Christ. Christ is the stronger man in verse 22 who has overcome Satan through His death and resurrection. Christ is the one who has taken away Satan's armor in which he trusted, and made Satan helpless against his kingdom being plundered. When we use the sword of the Spirit, Satan is wounded. Why? Because His armor has been taken by Christ. That's why James says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Christ is presently plundering Satan's kingdom through you and through me, and He is dividing the spoils just as we talked about in the last two sermons. And so I want to look a bit at why this casting out of demons was such a phenomenal evidence of Christ's victory.

A. Casting out demons is an evidence that the kingdom has come

1. This was a new thing (vv. 14-15,19 with 10:17-24)

First of all, it was an evidence that the kingdom had come, and something brand new was happening. In the gospels, for the first time in human history (at least that we know about), demons had been successfully cast out of people. Now we take it for granted nowadays, but it was a miracle back then. And the reaction of the people over and over is the same as in verse 14: **and the multitudes marvelled.** Or as Mark says, **“they were astonished beyond measure.”** This is something new. Turn with me to Matt. 9:32-34. Keep your finger in Luke 11, but I want you to see two other passages that fill in some details. Matthew 9:32-34. **As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, “It was never seen like this in Israel!” But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.”** This was a new thing. No one had ever seen demons cast out in Israel. Turn to Mark 1:27. This is similar. It shows that the casting out of demons marked a new transition in history as the kingdom comes in. Mark 1:27. **Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.** They ask, “What new doctrine is this?” You don't see this in the Old Testament. This was a new doctrine or teaching that had been prophecied in the book of Zechariah. Zechariah prophecied that at the time of the kingdom Messiah would begin binding the demons and cleansing the land.

2. This was a sign of the presence of the kingdom (vv. 16-20)

And that is why their request in verse 16 is such a sham. It says, **And others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven.** Christ goes on to show how there could be no better sign that the kingdom of God had come. Verse 20: **But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.** The casting out of demons is par excellence the sign of the kingdom. Christ didn't postpone the kingdom or we would not be able to cast out demons today. Mark 16 adds to the great commission the signs of the kingdom, one of which was casting out demons. Every time a demon is cast out today it is proof that the kingdom of God has already begun. It is proof that Christ has crushed the head of Satan. Matthew 12:22-23 shows that at least some of the people recognized this, and after he cast out the demon it says, **the multitudes were amazed and said, “Could this be the Son of David?”** They think this might be the

Messiah who was prophecied to usher in the kingdom with such signs. The crowds knew that God was doing something. This was the time of David's son. And that's exciting to me. We are in the kingdom.

3. This was evidence that the time had come for Satan's house to fall (vv. 17-18)

But verses 17-18 indicate that the presence of genuine exorcisms was the evidence that the time had come for Satan's house to fall. Matthew words it this way: **But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you, or else how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.** It adds the words "Or else." Those words are clear. Without the presence of the kingdom, there can be no casting out of demons. The ongoing work of binding the hand of Satan is proof positive that we are living in the period of the kingdom conquest. It is the time when Satan's kingdom will progressively fall and be plundered.

4. Satan cannot be cast out until the Messiah overcomes Him (vv. 21-22 with 4:1-5 and Mark 16:15-20)

And the irony of it all is that Christians many times continue to believe that Satan is the one who is gaining the victory. They receive opposition from Satan much like Christ did in His ministry, and their conclusion is that we are living in the last time and there is nothing we can do but wait for a champion. Like David's brothers they are frustrated with the taunts of Goliath. But what we need to realize is that the Greater than David has already come. He has dealt a death blow to the head of the serpent, has bound the power of the strong man, and we are now plundering Satan's house.

If you skip over point B, and look at the last section, you will see thirteen evidences of the triumph of Christ through believers over the powers of the wicked ones. I will encourage you to read the verses that are attached to each point, but before we finish off this passage, let me summarize just a few of those encouraging points. Luke 11:20 indicates that Satan has been bound in some way by Christ's power. 2 Thesalonians 2:6 indicates that his working has been restrained. Hebrews 2:14 in the NASB says of Jesus, **He Himself also likewise partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.** Colossians 2:15 indicates that Jesus has already done something devastating to what this passage speaks of the strong man's armor. It says, **Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.** But get that phrase, "having disarmed

principalities and powers.” Is that not exactly what Luke 11:22 says: **But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted...** Colossians says he's been disarmed.

In Luke 10:18 Christ said, **I saw Satan fall...** Verse 19 says, **Behold, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy...** What incredibly encouraging words! Romans 16:20 says, **And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.** And He did. Rome fell to the Gospel despite unbelievable opposition from Satan. Colossians 1:13 says, **He has delivered us from the power of darkness...** And God is progressively destroying Satan's works. 1 John 3:8 says that this was one of the purposes of the first coming. It says, **For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.** James 4:7 says that Satan can successfully be resisted by us. **Resist the devil and he will flee from you.** And the verses in point 12 indicate that the authority that Christ had over demons has been transferred to all believers. It wasn't just the twelve who were given all authority over demons in Luke 9. The 70 disciples were given that same authority in Luke 10. And in Mark 14 and some of the other passages, all believers throughout the rest of time receive that authority.

B. How we should exercise this victory over darkness

So I want to end by looking at the steps under point B that describe *how* we should exercise Christ's authority and victory over darkness. In ourselves we have no power.

1. Pray for the Spirit's power (vv. 9-13)

The first thing we must do is to pray for the Spirit's power. The three sections before this confrontation with the demon deal with prayer. Verses 1-4 is the Lord's Prayer, verses 5-8 is the prayer illustration of the friend coming at midnight, and verses 9-13 is the admonition to ask, seek and knock. This is not something we need to agonize over. God will give the Spirit's power to those who ask. Verse 13 says, **If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!** Pray for the Spirit's empowering.

2. Trust that Christ is stronger than Satan (vv. 14-23)

Secondly, you need to have faith that Christ is stronger than Satan. Now you may feel so weak and helpless that you know you can't resist Satan. That is a good place to be in. Because then you recognize that you need Christ. Christ said, **without Me you can do nothing.** But Scripture

says, **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.** When you are ready to throw in the towel and call it quits, you are denying that Christ really is stronger than Satan in your life. Satan will seek to bluster and intimidate you like Goliath did Israel. But this passage says that Satan's power has been bound. And we need to be convinced of that.

Jesu Das is an evangelist in India. I remember his story back in 1994. When he arrived at one village, he was horrified by the incredible demonism manifested there. The priests were able to kill cattle, dogs, people with spells that they cast. People had scars and fear of the demonic. There were no believers, so he started preaching in the marketplace. When many people began coming to the Lord, the priests became outraged and warned him that if he did not leave the village they would call on their gods to kill him, his wife and their children. But Jesu Das did not leave. Instead, he claimed Christ's power for spiritual warfare. And in a short period of time the witch doctors came to him asking him of his secret power. And at first he was puzzled at what they were talking about. But they said, "This is the first time that our power did not work. After doing the pujas, we asked the spirits to go and kill your family. But the spirits came back and told us they could not approach you or your family because you were always surrounded by fire. Then we called more powerful spirits to come after you- but they too returned, saying not only were you surrounded by fire, but angels were also around you all the time." As Jesu Das preached to them of the grace and power of Christ, these priests were convicted of their sins, repented with tears, renounced their gods and became Christians. As a result, hundreds of villagers followed suit. Now he could have been intimidated by the Goliaths that taunted his God. But he didn't. Others have experienced Christ's grace and power in the midst of beatings and sufferings. But they too have become more than conquerors through Jesus Christ. As Revelation 12:11 words it, **And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.**

3. Dedicate yourself unreservedly to Jesus (v. 23)

That is what Christ is calling us to be: out and out for Jesus; to not love your lives so much that you will deny Jesus, but to love Jesus so much that you will willingly abandon your lives. Verse 23 says, **He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.** If you are not out and out for the Lord you are fair game for Satan's attacks. It might be thought that there is safety in retreat. That's wrong. There is safety only in following our Captain. The only true safety comes in giving up your life and everything else and seeking to live out and out for Christ.

4. Guard your relationship with Christ and with others. Oppose Satan's attempts to conquer by dividing us. If you are at odds with anyone in God's kingdom, get it straightened out (v. 17)

A second protection mentioned in this passage is the need to guard your relationships with others. Verse 17: **But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom [note that phrase Every kingdom, which includes God's kingdom. "Every kingdom] divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls.** It's not just Satan's kingdom that can suffer in this way. When husband is divided against wife, 1 Peter 3:7 says you better get it right **that your prayers may not be hindered.** 2 Corinthians 2:11 says that we must forgive brothers who ask forgiveness, **lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.** Ephesians 4:26 warns us not to let the sun go down on our anger, lest we **give an opportunity to the devil.** Guard your relationships. When you are out of relation with each other, you will be out of relation with Christ, and will not have the same protection against Satan's attacks.

5. Pursue a walk of holiness (v. 28) and don't give Satan any resting place in your life (v. 24)

Fifth, guard your personal walk of holiness. Verse 24 says, **When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest.** What is that rest that he is seeking? One version translates that as a place of rest. Another as a place to stay. He is looking for an opportunity to gain a foothold in someone's life. And even believers can give a foothold to Satan. The word "foothold" is used in Ephesians 4:27: **nor give place to the devil.** If we do not come for cleansing from Christ on a regular basis, our bold sins can give Satan an opportunity to find a resting place in our lives. That's why Christ says in verse 28, **More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!** Holiness.

6. Don't trust in self-reformation (v. 25)

But don't ever think that your own power will amount to anything. We are talking about Jesus living *His* life and *His* power through you. Sanctification is totally different from self-reformation. Verse 25 describes the powerlessness of self-reformation. **And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order.** Pagans can clean up their lives. They do it all the time through groups like AA. They can quit getting drunk, take seminars to improve their communication, learn to control their tempers, and yet do it purely from selfish interests and apart from God's grace. Paul speaks of such as **having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.** That

kind of self-righteousness does not protect from Satan. It is walking close to God that makes Satan tremble. I remember my Dad talking about one of us boys who was scared to death of a neighborhood bully, and the child went to get Dad to walk with him. And suddenly this timid child lost all fear. He had no illusion about his own weakness. Even if he worked out with weights for a week, he wasn't going to face that bully. But when Dad was walking hand in hand with him he was fearless.

7. Remind yourself that only Christ's resources are sufficient (vv 14-23) and only the Spirit's empowerment can protect (vv. 9-13)

And it's the same with us. Only Christ's resources are sufficient. This passage is not about how wonderful and strong we are. It is about how wonderful and powerful Christ is, and as verse 23 words it, whether or not we are *with* Him or against Him. If we are with Him, and if we are claiming the Spirit's empowerment that verses 9-13 talk about, then we can continue to plunder Satan's kingdom.

Satan is still a strong man. Don't get me wrong. He can still cause great trouble inside and outside the church. And that's why we spent the last two messages dealing with restitution and getting back what Satan has robbed from the church. But praise God, the kingdom has come, Christ's death has bound the power of the enemy, and Christ has given every believer the power necessary to push back the forces of Satan. Flip back to Luke 10:17-20 says, **Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this [in other words, don't rejoice that demons can't hurt you. That's just defensive. But it is in snatching souls from Satan's kingdom that Christ's power is especially known, and so he concludes] rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.**

That is the ultimate victory – salvation. And those are the ultimate spoils from Satan's kingdom – souls snatched from the fire. But we want to take not only the demonic palaces, but all the goods in those palaces. Every thought must be taken captive to king Jesus. Every area of life must be brought to serve King Jesus. Politics, medicine, legal services and business must be given to our King until all things are placed under His feet. Encouraged by this sermon, may we conquer new territory for the crown rights of king Jesus. And may He receive the glory and praise. Amen.

C. Further encouragement's to not fear Satan's power:

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Preached at DCC by Phil Kayser on 8/10/2003

1. He is "bound" by the cross (Mark 3:27; Luke 11:20; Rev. 20)
2. His power is restricted and restrained (2 Thes. 2:6f)
3. He has been rendered "powerless over believers" (Heb. 2:14)
4. He is defeated, disarmed, and spoiled (Col 2:15; Rev. 12:7ff; Mark 3:27)
5. He has "fallen" and was "thrown down" (Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:9)
6. His kingdom has been replaced by God's (Dan. 7; Luke 11:20)
7. He was "crushed" under the foot of the early church (Rom. 16:20)
8. He has lost "authority" over Christians (Col 1:13)
9. His works have been destroyed (1 John 3:8)
10. He must "flee" when "resisted" (James 4:7)
11. His demonic hordes are subject to the authority of Christians (Matt. 10-12; Mark 1:27; 6:7; Luke 9:1; 10:19; 1 John 4:4; Jude 4:4; Jude 6; Rev. 12:9; etc.)
12. Sometime during history but after Christ's death (Zech 13:1,6-9), demons will be cleansed entirely from the land.
13. Even at the end of time when they are released for a short time, it will only be to demonstrate their ultimate destruction away from God's people and the presence of His majesty (Rev. 20:7-10).

Conclusion: Let us plunder Satan's kingdom and take all to the glory of Christ!