

Sermon Summaries: Moral, Religious and Demonically Possessed
Preached on the 10.3.19 by Angus Fisher Acts 15, Luke 11:21-26

This message was given in laying a foundation, before we continue on in chapter 15 of Acts, in showing who these false brethren truly are, and why they preach what they preach; and in explaining this, the main portion of the message was an exposition of the story given in Luke 11:21-26, concerning true and false conversion, and that the outward reformation of religion apart from the regeneration of the soul, produces a man who is, the Lord says, twice the child of hell (Matt 23:15), and that it was better for those that are such to have never known the way of righteousness (1 Peter 2:21) for their last state is worse than the first (Luke 11:26). And, no doubt this sermon was also given for the reason that we, as believers, might understand that no matter how morale we become, how devoutly religious, how reformed our lives are, and how much knowledge of the scriptures we might gain, that there is no true salvation apart from the Grace of God in and by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have remission of Sins; and by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour (Titus 3:5-6). And so in that respect this message is given with the design that we might not find any hope or comfort in our own outward works of religion, which would be to trust in a refuge of lies (Isaiah 28:15), but to rather find all our hope of salvation and comfort in the finished work of Christ our Saviour, who was manifest to destroy the works of the Devil, who's dominion once we were under (Eph 2:1-3).

The exposition of Luke 11:21-26 was given in two parts, beginning with Verses 21-23. Vs 21: First the strong man is identified to be Satan, for on earth there is not found his equal; and this strong man is said to be armed and to have a palace, in which he keeps his goods in peace. This palace is interpreted to be the world, as the scriptures say that Satan is "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" and he said to be the god of this world, and to have deceived the whole world (2 Cor 4:4, Rev 12:9). And so his "goods" which are kept in peace, are said to be all those in the world who have been deceived by Satan, whether they be religious or not, professing Christians or heathens, they have been blinded as to the glorious truth of the gospel, and so necessarily any hope or peace they have is a false peace, seeing as they know not the only way of salvation, which is by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 15:11).

Now this false peace can be either a religious or secular peace, for there are multitudes in the world who are but ignorant of what awaits them after death, as was observed from Psalm 73 which says of the foolish and wicked that "there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm" not knowing that they are, at all points in life, a breath away from meeting a holy God in judgment; for the fool hath said in his heart "there is no god" and this is the peace of the atheist, having been deceived by the god of this world. Secondly there is a false peace for the religious, the one who seems outwardly to be Christian, who lives a morale and devoted life, which is more so addressed in verses 24-26.

Vs 22: We next came to ponder a much more pleasant topic, being the stronger than the strong man, who only can be the Lord Jesus Christ. And so this verse is a description of the salvation and deliverance that the stronger man brings, for he is said to come upon the strong man, and overcome him, and take away from him all his armour in which he trusted, and to divide his spoils. And there was a verse

quoted, so clearly showing this to be Lord, which says "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" 1 John 3:8. Now the place where this victory over the devil took place was the cross of our Lord whereby he did spoil Satan's goods, as is said in Col 2:13-15 "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it". For, all those for whom Christ shed his precious blood are no longer under condemnation, having had their sins purged by the blood of Christ, and can no longer be accused by the accuser, having overcome him by the blood of the Lamb (Rev 12:10-11). And so these that are thus justified, and called, are no longer under the power and dominion of the strong man, but have been delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ, in whom they have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins (Col 1:13-14). So it was observed that Christ, after His victory and undoing the work of Satan, has the power and the right to take to himself his chosen people out of Satan's kingdom, at whatsoever point it pleases Him.

Vs 23: It was observed on this verse, in light of what has been said thus far, and in the context of the rest of the relating verses, that you can only belong to that of one kingdom; you are either a servant of Satan or a servant of Christ.

The second Half of the sermon was given covering Vs 24-26, and covers more the subject matter of false conversion, and my memory does fail to recall much of what was said concerning these verses, so I can only give a short summary of what was said covering them.

The main Point of what these verses are telling us, is that what is worse than an openly wicked, and profane person that is oppressed by a demon, is one who outwardly seems to be a clean, morale, professing Christian; a seemingly devout believer, one who's life has been "swept and garnished" as the verse say's, and yet is home to seven demons. The danger is that one who is outwardly clean and morale, and has not had their heart purified by faith (Acts 15:9), are prone to self-righteousness, pride and hardness of heart towards the gospel of free grace. Angus observed just what these seven demonic spirits can be in a unregenerate religious person: a spirit of ignorance, a spirit of pride, a spirit of self-sufficiency, a spirit of self-righteousness, a spirit of covetousness, a spirit of intellectualism, a spirit of malice and enmity against the truth, and against the Lords people, for "Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him" (1 John 5:1). And so the conclusion is that the unregenerate man who finds religion and moralism, is worse off than in his first state; there is more place for him to be prideful and self-righteous, and more for him to trust in for salvation, though indeed his works are a refuge of lies and shall be swept away, either in true salvation and coming to the knowledge of the righteousness of God, or in that last day of judgment, when they shall be judged in righteousness, and shown to be those who work iniquity, and told to depart from the Lord, who never knew them (Matt 7:23).