

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*A Divided Household.*"

We concluded our series on outreach. This week I'll send an email to each home fellowship leader. I'd like to challenge you to pray about how God wants to use your home fellowship to reach unbelievers:

- Maybe that's reaching out to your neighbors
- Maybe it's putting on an event

For the rest of you, please be praying about how God wants to use you to reach unbelievers. If God puts something on your heart, please contact me and let me know how to support you, including:

- Announcing it
- Putting it in the bulletin
- Putting it in the weekly announcement email

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On Sunday mornings we're going to return to Luke's Gospel. I expect to continue going through it verse-by-verse...until I feel led to cover something else.

We're at one of Jesus' exorcisms, but although Jesus cast out demons throughout the Gospels there was one premier moment regarding His power over the demonic realm and it occurred in the following verses. Look at **verse 14**...

**Luke 11:14 Now he was casting out a demon that was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke, and the people marveled.**

Demons affect people differently in Scripture. In this case the demon made the man **mute**. The parallel account in **Matt 12** says the demon also made the man blind.

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Jesus cast out lots of demons, and He performed many miracles. Some of the miracles – such as raising people from the dead – seem more spectacular than this one, which is why you might wonder why **the people marveled** this time.

The reason is that according to the thinking of the day, the only way a demon could be cast out is if the demon first revealed its name so someone could have authority over it. If it didn't reveal its demon's name, it couldn't be cast out. Since the demon made this man **mute**, people thought this man could never be delivered.

The exorcism was so dramatic it caused many people to think Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. The parallel account says...

**Matt 12:23 All the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"**

The Pharisees have already been feeling very threatened by Jesus. This talk of Him being the Messiah is too much for them.

Since they can't have people thinking this, look what they said in **verse 15**...

**Luke 11:15** But some of them said, “He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons,”

We know from the parallel account in **Matt 12:24** that the **Pharisees** are the ones who said this.

Jesus' miracles were so obvious they couldn't deny them, but:

- They couldn't attribute them to the power of God, b/c that would make people think He's the Messiah.
- So they attributed them to the power of the devil.

Believe it or not, this isn't even the first time the Pharisees said this!

This is the first time we've seen this in Luke, but the parallel account is in **Matt 12**. Three chapters earlier in **Matt 9:34** the **Pharisees** said, “He casts out demons by the prince of demons.” So this is at least the second time they said Jesus was working w/ demons.

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Wouldn't it be great if **verse 15** read something like...

*“The Pharisees gathered around the man and rejoiced that he had been delivered and could see and speak. They said, ‘Thank you Lord for putting on this dramatic display of power and saving this man from Satan’s grasp. You are so gracious and wonderful, and so much stronger than the devil.’”*

Nope!

How would you feel if you were miraculously healed like this and the religious leaders of the day said, “This was done by satanic power”?

- This shows the Pharisees didn't care about the man.
- They only cared about discrediting Jesus and preventing as many people as possible from believing He's the Messiah.

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To explain their accusation...

**Beelzebul** means, “*Baal the prince.*” He was a false god of the Philistines. Since the Israelites hated the Philistines, they took the name of their god, **Beelzebul**, and referred to him as Baal-Zebub, which means “*Lord of Flies.*” Flies are associated w/ dung or manure, so the Israelites mocked the Philistines by saying they worshipped the “*Lord of Dung.*”

Over time this title came to be used for Satan, the lord – or **ruler** – **of the demons**. We can tell Jesus understood **Beelzebub** to be another name for Satan, b/c He referred to Satan after this.

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The crowds and Pharisees could not have made more diametrically opposed statements:

- The crowds said Jesus was the Messiah, or the Servant of God.
- The Pharisees said He was the servant of Satan.

This is the very worst thing they could say:

- They called the highest and holiest One the lowest and vilest one.
- They called the One who is pure good, pure evil.
- They called truth incarnate a liar.

This was the ultimate blasphemy, b/c they attributed Jesus' actions to the devil. This is why in the parallel accounts in Matt and Mark Jesus taught on the blasphemy of the Spirit after these verses.

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Nicodemus was another **Pharisee**, but he's the OPPOSITE of these ones...

**John 3:2 [Nicodemus said], "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."**

Nicodemus recognized anyone who did what Jesus had to be from God and using God's power.

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Look at **verse 16**...

**Luke 11:16 while others, to test him, kept seeking from him a sign from heaven.**

This request might look sincere, but it's actually an accusation. That's why it says they were **[testing] him**.

They asked for a **sign from heaven** b/c the Pharisees attributed the miracle to the devil instead of to God. It's as though they were saying, *"If you are really working for God – versus working for the devil – prove it by showing us a miracle from heaven, versus a miracle that from hell."*

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Watch how Jesus responds...

**Luke 11:17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. 18 And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?"**

Jesus **[knew] their thoughts**. This is evidence of Jesus being God, b/c only God is omniscient, or only God is all-knowing.

Since it says He **[knew] their thoughts**, it's clear they didn't say some of these things aloud. His following statement would've taken them by surprise.

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Now I want to ask you to think about something...

The Pharisees' just made the vilest accusation imaginable, but...

**1 Pet 2:23 [says] when [Jesus] was reviled, He did not revile in return.**

This account is a good example!

Instead of returning **reviling for reviling** Jesus reasoned w/ them. Very mercifully He helped them see how wrong they were.

He did this w/ three arguments. We're going to look at each of them...

### **LESSON 1: THE PHARISEES' ACCUSATION WAS (PART I) ILLOGICAL.**

There are a couple things I want you to notice...

1. First, Jesus taught that there's a real devil who rules over a real kingdom.
2. Second, He taught that the kingdom is united and well-organized.

For any criticisms you can bring against the devil, you can't say that he doesn't rule his kingdom well.

He wouldn't be foolish enough to do what the Pharisees described, and give Jesus power if Jesus would use that power to fight against the devil's kingdom by casting out his own demons. Their accusation was very illogical!

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Look at Jesus' second argument...

**Luke 11:19 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.**

This brings us to the next part of Lesson 1...

### **LESSON 1: THE PHARISEES' ACCUSATION WAS (PART II) INCONSISTENT.**

**"Your sons"** simply means "your disciples, or your students," referring to the Pharisees' exorcists.

If Jesus cast out demons and it showed He was working w/ Satan, then why weren't their exorcists working w/ Satan?

- What power did they use?
- How were their exorcisms any different than Jesus'?

When Jesus said **therefore they will be your judges**, He meant their exorcists would figuratively serve as witnesses against them that they were being inconsistent:

- They applied this thinking to Jesus b/c they wanted to make Him look bad.

- But they wouldn't apply the same thinking to their disciples, b/c they didn't want them to look bad.

They showed a real hypocritical inconsistency.

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Look at Jesus' third argument in **verse 20**...

**Luke 11:20 But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**

Jesus mentions **the finger of God** b/c it refers to one specific moment they would all remember.

We have to take our minds back to Moses when he contended w/ Pharaoh's magicians. You might remember:

- Aaron cast down his staff and it became a serpent. Pharaoh called his magicians, and they cast down their staffs and they became serpents.
- Moses and Aaron turned water into blood for the first plague. Pharaoh called his magicians, and they turned water into blood.
- Moses and Aaron brought frogs over Egypt for the second plague. Pharaoh called his magicians, and they brought frogs over Egypt.

By the way...

Am I the only one who thinks it's weird Pharaoh's magicians just made things worse for the Egypt?

- They turned more water into blood?
- They brought more frogs over the land?

There wasn't enough blood and frogs for them?

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Listen to what happened for the third plague...

**Exo 8:16 The Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, so that it may become gnats in all the land of Egypt.'" 17 And they did so...All the dust...became gnats. 18 The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce gnats, but they could not. 19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "THIS IS THE FINGER OF GOD."**

By referring to this moment, Jesus was making a very sad - and almost unbelievable - point:

- The magicians were pagans who used the power of the devil to perform their miracles. But even they recognized – and acknowledged – the power of God when they saw it.
- The Pharisees, on the other hand, refused to: they saw even greater power...but they said it was the power of the devil.

In other words, the evil Egyptian magicians look BETTER than the Pharisees in Jesus' day, b/c they made a confession the Pharisees refused to make. That's pretty bad!

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If you look at the end of **verse 20**, Jesus said **then the kingdom of God has come upon you**.

This is another reason the Pharisees didn't want to say Jesus used the power of God...

They would be acknowledging Jesus brought **the kingdom of God** with Him, b/c the conquering of Satan's kingdom revealed **the kingdom of God [had] come upon [them]**.

And this brings us to the last part of Lesson 1...

## **LESSON 1: THE PHARISEES' ACCUSATION WAS (PART III) BASED ON FAULTY PERCEPTIONS.**

What the Pharisees perceived – or what they thought they perceived – was completely wrong:

- Jesus was not part of Satan's kingdom.
- Instead, He was defeating it.

Jesus is the King and He has a kingdom. They were seeing one of the effects of Jesus' kingdom being brought from heaven to earth, or coming upon them, Satan's kingdom being defeated.

So they weren't seeing what they claimed to be seeing. Their accusation was based on faulty perceptions.

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Now that we understand Jesus' response to the Pharisees' accusation, I want to highlight an important lesson contained in His words. Look back at **verse 17**...

**Luke 11:17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls.**

Although these words are about two spiritual kingdoms – God's kingdom and the devil's kingdom – this looks beyond the spiritual to the physical.

Let me give you three examples the listeners' in Jesus' day would've recognized...

First, this was a not-so-subtle criticism, b/c what nation had been divided for almost 1,000 years?

The nation of Israel:

- Divided in Solomon's day...
- Became two kingdoms...
- Fought w/ each other...

Until they were conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians...showing **every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste**.

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Second, the conflict between the two nations continued into Jesus' day, as a conflict between the Jews and Samaritans.

Third, the Judea itself was divided by factions and conflict until 70AD when the Romans conquered the Jews...again showing **every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste.**

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Who looked at these words and made them more famous when he was trying to keep his own nation together?

Abraham Lincoln!

He built his "House Divided" around this verse.

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The part I'd like you to notice is at the end of **verse 17**. There's a very sobering statement: **a divided household falls.**

Jesus is teaching something that applies to **households**, or families or homes...and this brings us to Part I of Lesson 2...

## **LESSON 2: (PART I) A DIVIDED HOUSEHOLD CAN'T STAND...**

I'm going to read some verses and then describe what they look like in a united household and a divided household...

**Gen 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THEY SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.**

This verse is so important it's quoted 5 times in the NT, and each time Jesus quotes it He adds, **"So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER, LET NOT MAN SEPARATE."**

- Don't let anything divide what God has united...
- Don't let anything create division where God wants unity.

This could be considered THEE marriage verse and it identifies when a family or household begins.

In a united household you oneness and unity, but in a divided household:

- You have the opposite.
- You have a husband and wife who are NOT one flesh...they're divided.

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God wants us having strong **households**, so He's given us commands that protect us:

- A household that obeys God's Word will be united.
- A household that disobeys God's Word will be divided.

Here's what God says to husbands working for a united marriage...

- **Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.**
- **1 Pet 3:7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.**

This is what a husband will strive to do if he wants a united household:

- He'll love and cherish his wife sacrificially.
- He'll take his headship seriously, by being a spiritual man who prays and reads the Word.

But in a divided household you have a husband who:

- Doesn't love his wife
- Doesn't give himself for her
- Doesn't dwell with her with understanding
- Doesn't give honor to her or treat her as the weaker vessel
- Doesn't care that he's hindering his prayers

He cares about:

- His agenda
- His wants
- His desires

And this bring division to the marriage.

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Here's what God says to wives working for a united marriage:

- **Eph 5:33b Let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband.**
- **1 Pet 3:1 Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives.**

In a united household you have a wife who:

- Submits to her husband
- Respects him
- Recognizes his headship over the home

In a divided household you have a wife who:

- Is insubmissive
- Disrespects her husband
- Doesn't recognize his headship over the home.

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There's an interesting verse that speaks directly to women. I say that, b/c I don't see a corresponding verse for men...



**Pro 14:1 The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish woman tears it down with her own hands.**

Although I know men can do this too, since I don't see a corresponding verse for us, it seems to reveal the great potential women have to:

- Build up their homes
- Or tear them down

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Here's what God says to fathers working for a united household...

**Eph 6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.**

- In a united house you have a father who is patient w/ his children and trains them and teaches them about the Lord.
- In a divided house you have a father who exasperates his children, and neglects their spiritual training and instruction.

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Here's what God says to mothers working for a united household ...

**Titus 2:4 They love their husbands, love their children, 5 [they are] discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.**

- In a united house you have a mother who loves her children, is sensible, pure and takes care of her home.
- In a divided house you have a mother who neglects her husband and children, is immodest, impure and busy w/ too many activities outside the home

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Here's what God says to children who want a united household ...

**Eph 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: 3 "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."**

- In a united house you have children who obey their parents; they honor their father and mother.
- In a divided house you have children who are disobedient; they dishonor their parents.

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The point is:

- A united house is characterized by obedience to God's Word.
- Conversely, a divided house is characterized by disobedience to God's Word.

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Please look at **verse 17** one more time...

The verse isn't worded the way we'd expect. We'd expect it to say, **"Every kingdom divided is laid waste"**

But Jesus added the words **against itself**. He said, “**Every kingdom divided AGAINST ITSELF is laid waste.**”

Then in **verse 18** he says, “**If Satan is divided AGAINST HIMSELF, how will his kingdom stand?**”

Jesus isn't just talking about division. He's warning about destruction that's caused from within!

And this brings us to the next part of Lesson 2...

## **LESSON 2: (PART I) A DIVIDED HOUSEHOLD CAN'T STAND (PART II) BECAUSE IT'S ATTACKING ITSELF.**

Jesus is talking about internal strife and conflict. The verse that comes to mind is...

**Gal 5:15 if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.**

Picture a household that's attacking or destroying itself from within...a family that's **divided** by fighting and quarreling.

Albert Barnes said, “*A kingdom or a family can prosper only by living in harmony. The different parts and members must unite in promoting the [other's welfare]. If divided it [can] fall.*”

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Jesus said if Satan would've been casting out his own demons, he would've been destroying his own kingdom.

We recognize how foolish it would be for him to do that w/ his kingdom...but who can do this w/ their households?

We can when we attack each other.

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Earlier I quoted Jesus' words in **Matt 19:6** and **Mark 10:9** when He said, “**What God has joined together let not man separate.**”

This sounds like Jesus is warning against people outside the marriage causing division. But when people divorce is it usually b/c of people outside the marriage...or b/c of the people in the marriage?

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Proverbs contains verses that contrast a divided and united house...

- **Pro 15:16 Better is a little with the fear of the LORD – A united household... Than great treasure with trouble. A divided household...**  
**17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, – A united household ... Than a fatted calf with hatred. A divided household ....**
- **Pro 17:1 Better is a dry morsel with quietness, – A united household ... Than a house full of feasting with strife. A divided household ...**

Based on these verses...

- A divided household is filled w/ **trouble, hatred, strife, and toil**
- A united household is filled w/ **fear of the LORD, love, and quietness.**

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As I was reflecting on Jesus' warning this week – and households standing or falling – there's a parable that came to mind, b/c in another place Jesus told us how to have one versus the other.

Turn a few chapters to the left to **Luke 6:46**. We're familiar w/ these verses so I'm going to read them pretty quickly...

**Luke 6:46 “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? 47 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49 But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”**

One household falls. But the other stands.

Let me tell you what is NOT the difference between them: one **hears Jesus' words** and the other doesn't.

They both heard Jesus' words. That's what they have in common!

The difference is obedience to these words:

- One **hears [Jesus'] words and does them.**
- The other **hears [Jesus'] words [and] does not do them.**

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Whether we're husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, or children we all need to recognize:

- When we obey Jesus' commands, we're helping build united households...
- When we disobey Jesus' commands – whether we recognize it or not – we're helping Satan divide our households. We're acting as instruments he can use to have us attack each other.

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Let me close w/ one verse that can give us great unity in our households AND give us the motivation to obey...

**Eph 4:32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.**

We're memorizing this verse as a family. When we were talking about it yesterday I told the kids that it could simply say, "**Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,**" and stop there. Ricky said, "If it stopped there, it would still be a great verse," and he was right.

But it also says, "**Even as God in Christ forgave you.**"

I can't say for sure why this part is added, but I can say I'm very thankful for it, b/c it does two things...

First, it gives us the motivation to obey. We don't always want to:

- **Be kind to one another**
- **Tenderhearted**
- **Forgive one another**

But when we think about **God in Christ [forgiving us]**, and what that cost, we can't help but be moved by the Gospel to do even in a small way for others what God has done for us.

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Second, it reminds us **WHY** we can obey, b/c it reminds us of the Gospel: the Gospel is **God in Christ forgave you.**

- If we had to obey these commands in our own effort, we'd have to feel pretty discouraged and defeated.
- But if we remember we have the power to obey these commands, b/c the Gospel is at work in our hearts and lives, we can be encouraged: **Phil 2:13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**

As your pastor, if I can pray for your marriage, family, or household, please allow me that privilege.